South End *News*

January 25, 2018 [Vol. 39 , No. 3]

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Local news for and about Boston's best neighborhood

ASK DOG LADY

Advice on Pets, Life, Love

By Monica Collins

Dear Dog Lady,

The dog was around before the kids. Now my kids are 1 and 3. The dog will not play with them. She just runs away and growls. She will gladly play with adults. Why not the kids?

—Wally

Dear Wally,

The baby and toddler are dog rivals—not supreme leaders worthy of high status, respect and admiration. The dog eyes the kids warily and doesn't quite understand why they're not covered with fur and eating out of a dish on the floor.

To ease the dog into play with the kids, you should get the ball rolling (literally). Bring out a plaything—a tennis ball is good—and start a game with everybody involved. You and the three-year-old can take turns throwing the ball and commanding the dog to fetch. The one-year-old can watch from the sidelines and laugh. When the game ends, allow the three-year-old, with your supervision, to feed the dog a high-level treat (freeze-dried liver or chicken) as a reward for playing nice. Repeat this routine again and again—and again. Always make sure you're supervising.

Dear Dog Lady,

I frequently travel with my eight-year-old bichon frise, Charlie. I have found many rest stops on the interstates with outdoor places to walk dogs, but I also see signs that do

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Melinda Lopez in the ArtsEmerson production of Mala, directed by David Dower, playing at the Huntington Theatre Company Photo-Paula Marotta

Mala is good to the core

Mala,
Arts Emerson production presented by Huntington Theatre Company at Roberts Theatre in Calderwood Pavilion, Boston Center for the Arts, through February 4. 617-933-8600 or bostontheatrescene.com

By Jules Becker

Melinda Lopez returned to her two-culture family—her Cuban roots and her husband's Jewish traditions—once again last year in her own work. The veteran actress and Huntington Theatre Company playwright-in-residence had already tapped that singular combination in her affectionate award-winning play "Sonia Flew" (Huntington Theatre 2004 premiere, with IRNE and Norton honors).

Now she is reprising her more recent autobiographically influenced work— the one-actress play "Mala," a 2016 premiere at Arts Emerson's Paramount Center—as a presenta-

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Embracing Shakespeare

Shakespeare in Love,
SpeakEasy Stage Company, Wimberly Theatre, Calderwood Pavilion, Boston Center for the Arts, through February 16.

By Jules Becker

Did Shakespeare ever experience writer's block? Did Christopher Marlowe prove a secret occasional influence? Did Shakespeare have an

Continued on page 2

George Olesky and Jennifer Ellis in SpeakEas-y Stage Company production of Shakespear-e in Love (© Nile Hawver/Nile Scott Shots)

All together?

The South End's myriad of neighborhood associations talk mergers

By Michele D. Maniscalco

Residents of both the South End and other downtown areas have long been perplexed that the South End has 16 individual neighborhood associations, some covering as few as three or four square blocks, while other neighborhoods have one or two associations to represent them.

The idea of consolidating as a means of pooling resources and increasing clout with the city has arisen periodically, and over 20 years ago, the South End Forum came together to discuss and tackle concerns that are common across the South End, such as public works and traffic.

Consolidation talk became more concrete recently when the New York Streets Neighborhood Association, which formed to serve residents of the Ink Block complex, began the process of joining the Old Dover Neighborhood Association (ODNA), which had previously included that area. ODNA president

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News from…

Friends of the South End Library

Submitted by Marleen Nienhuis

The next scheduled South End Writes speakers are historian Lauren Prescott, executive director of the South End Historical Society (Feb. 25, Boston's South End, a postcard history series); State Representative Byron Rushing (March 27, My Life and Debt in the Massachusetts State House); biographer Megan Marshall (May 8, Elizabeth Bishop: A Miracle for Breakfast); and novelist Allegra Goodman (May 22, The Chalk Artist).

Boston Public Library (BPL) president, David Leonard, will attend the FOSEL Annual Meeting on Tuesday, January 30, at 6:30 PM, when you, the audience, will elect a

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Online

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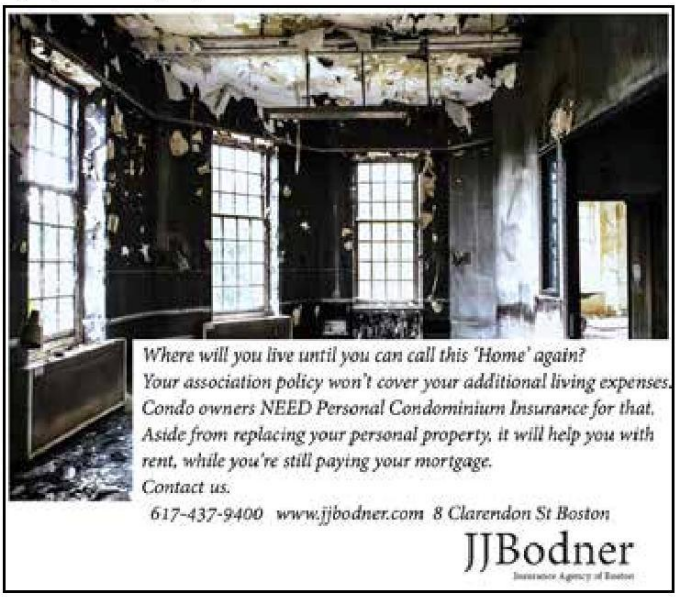
Online



Shakespeare

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actress muse ready to crossdress to play men?

Fans of the enjoyable 1998 film "Shakespeare in Love"(1999 best picture Oscar) will recall these and other intriguing speculations of that light-hearted film. In 2014 Lee Hall ("Billy Elliot" the musical) adapted the witty Tom Stoppard-Marc Norman screenplay for the stage. While faithful to the script, Hall's play focuses more on the challenges of playwriting and the world of the theater than on the movie's fired up romance between Shakespeare and merchant's daughter turned talented thespian Viola de Lesseps.

Pure romantics may prefer the emotionally stronger and more tautly focused film to the theater conflict-centered adaptation. Even so, SpeakEasy Stage Company, under the remarkable direction of Scott Edmiston, has made the Calderwood Pavilion premiere theater to embrace.

A kind of love at first sight for the production's winning design ensues as audience members enter the Wimberly Theatre to behold Jenna McFarland Lord's wooden stage set that harks back to its Elizabethan Age predecessors. Her design is flexible enough to handle the demands of the play's 1593 rival venues—Henslowe's Rose Theatre and Richard Burbage's Curtain Theatre. At various times—with the assistance of Judith Chaffee's expressive choreography and period movement and Ted Hewlett's sharp fight direction—ball merrymaking and pub revelry and face-offs come to vivid life.

Rachel Padula-Shufelt establishes a kind of design bridge between the Renaissance and modern times with a repertoire bringing together courtier and casual couture on the one hand and stylish leather attire on the other—a combination that is striking if not exactly enlightening. Karen Perlow's rich lighting possesses the nuance of a master painter's careful brushstrokes.

Visual enhancements notwithstanding, "Shakespeare in Love" heart ultimate resides in its story and the way in which cast members deliver its courting of the audience. Shakespeare buffs will know that the great playwright wrote with striking facility, but Edmiston's ensemble make the play's early examination of a supposed writer's block—as in the film—a satisfying scenario. Newton native George Olesky—in a generally auspicious SpeakEasy and Boston debut—does catch the early frustration and diffidence that both film and play ascribe to Shakespeare as he writes a sonnet or works on a play initially entitled "Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter."

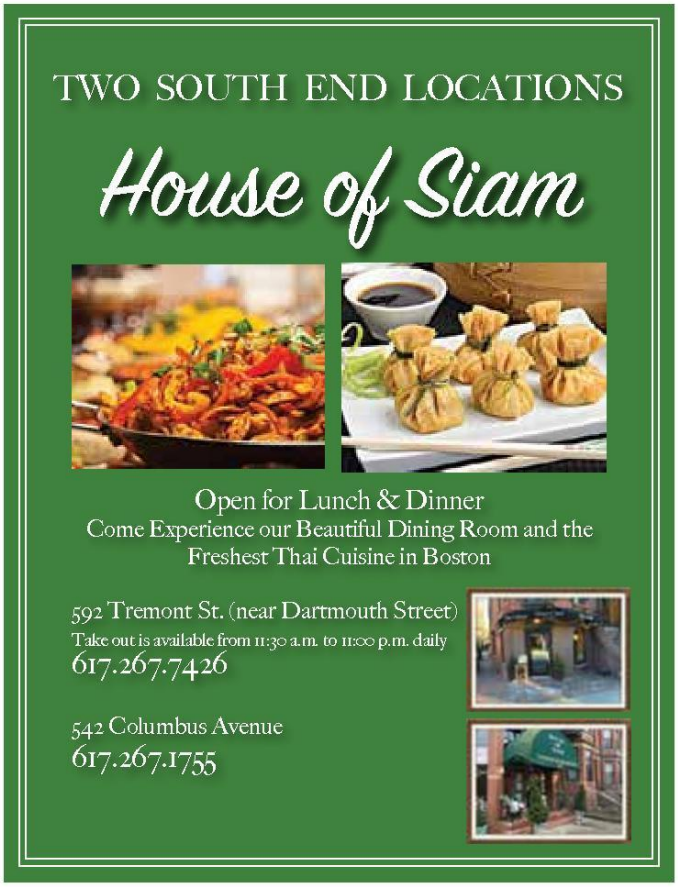
At the same time, he needs to be more dynamic as Shakespeare comes into his own as a theater force. Where contemporary dramatist Christopher 'Kit' Marlowe plays a fairly minor role in the film, here he does take on a pivotal position from time to time—especially as a kind of Cyrano de Bergerac prompting Shakespeare with poetry that touches the heart of Roxane-like Viola de Lesseps.

Eddie Shields, a gifted actor who has been demonstrating impressive range in the likes of SpeakEasy's area premiere of "Casa Valentina" and Actors' Shakespeare Project's revival of "Edward II," consistently dazzles as Marlowe— both as the flamboyant quipster advising Shakespeare and the accomplished though vulnerable author of "Dr. Faustus."

Jennifer Ellis is equally arresting as Viola—whether disguised and calling herself Thomas Kent in order to act in a Shakespeare play, sharing a passionate romance with Romeo or resigning herself to a match made with relatively poor Lord Wessex, played with wise understatement by Louis Wheeler. She naturally moves between the boyishness called for from acting find Kent and the captivatingly charming Viola (think of the heroine of alluded to "Twelfth Night") that is meant to be seen as Shakespeare's inspiration. Ellis proves as much of a standout here as Gwyneth Paltrow is in the film.

There are several strong performances in support as well. Jesse Hinson takes off as premier actor Ned Alleyn from his first entrance and brings matching panache to the role of Mercutio. Omar Robinson has the right pretentiousness as Burbage, while Ken Baltin makes the most of his considerable comic talents capturing rival Henslowe's ongoing struggles to keep Rose Theatre viable. Nancy E. Carroll catches Queen Elizabeth I's majesty, and Carolyn Saxon proves a properly vital Nurse. Underrated and versatile actor Steve Auger (Praxis Stage's "Incident at Vichy," for one) delights in three roles.

Near the end of the play, the point is made that "something is out of joint." Shakespeare buffs—this critic included—may feel that observation applies to Hall's sometimes overly busy adaptation. Still, Edmiston and company make SpeakEasy Stage's rousing "Shakespeare in Love" premiere "a palpable hit."



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Theater

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tion by Huntington at the Calderwood Pavilion. Once again, under the seamless guidance of Arts Emerson artistic director David Dower, she is poetically alluding to the experiences of her own Cuban-American family and her husband's.

While this very thoughtful play has a Lopez persona speaking vividly of the passing of a striking father and focuses largely on the care-giving of a Lopez persona for her dying mother, it also speaks significantly of her husband's religious observance at the passing of his parents and their daughter's interest in the Jewish customs related to mourning.

"Mala" wisely mixes humor—for example, detail about the caregiver's four earlier boyfriends (three Jewish and one a ginger) —with candor—such challenges as her mother's subdural hematoma surgery—right from the start.

The chronicler daughter—a kind of Lopez persona— advises knowingly about caregivers' cell phones and details the difficulties of convincing her proud and tough-minded mother Frances to go to the MGH emergency room when necessary. If you suspect that this piece might end up a feel-good tribute to beleaguered children helping their ailing parents, think again.

Lopez is not depicting the daughter in question as a totally sweet, all-knowing daughter. In fact, the dying 92 year old mother unfairly accuses her of being "Mala," Spanish for 'bad'—bad to the core, in fact. Although she becomes the attentive Good Cop to her rarely visiting scientist sister Bad Cop, she does have moments of high tension and rancor with Frances.

Still, the Good Cop grows closer and closer to her terminally ill mother (cancer) during long stretches together while eating clementines and watching Spanish telenovelas. Those stretches- during the especially harsh 2015 Boston area storms- are beautifully enhanced by Kristine Holmes' white dominated scenic design, Scott Pinkney's nuanced lighting and Arshan Gallus' evocative sound design

Lopez' culturally conscious narrative also looks at the mother's emigration from Cuba and her strong connection with her native culture—including the remembrance of a Cuban lullaby. By contrast, there is the loving recall of father in-law Bernie and mother-in-law Bobbie—the latter who would note that 1492 was not only the time when Columbus embarked on an exploration for Ferdinand and Isabelle but also the year Jews were banished from Spain as a result of the Inquisition.

Mala, who believes in Darwin (some theatergoers will recall Lopez' provocative 2011 IRNE Award play "From Orchids to Octopi" with Underground Railway Theatre at Central Square Theatre), does speak with respect of the Jewish custom of covering mirror and memorial candle lighting in the house of mourners.

At the same time, the gifted actress smoothly interweaves other peoples' stories signaled by the smart projection design of Ari Herzig. For example, Lopez convincingly becomes a short Italian-American hairdresser named Gina, dealing with a hospice factor.

Eventually Lopez—through Mala's recollections and observations—admits that nothing fully prepares anybody for dealing with the formidable responsibilities of caring for a dying parent, challenges that of course confront all people.

Melinda Lopez in the ArtsEmerson production of Mala, directed by David Dower, playing at the Huntington Theatre Company January 6 - 28, 2018, South End / Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA. © Photo: Paula Marotta.

Although the unassuming daughter remarks that "Death doesn't make one wise," she does warmly advise fellow caregivers and all human beings alike, "You are capable of more than you thought possible." If "Mala" the play still seems less extraordinary than Lopez's deeply heartfelt performance, it does engagingly affirm the need to embrace the value of caring in the face of human limitation and mortality.

All Together

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Ken Smith said, "It isn't a complete merger yet, but the intention as we re-affiliate is to one day be one association again. We never stopped supporting and representing our Old Dover members who lived in the north side of East Berkeley and will continue to during this period of transition."

He explained further, "The benefit isn't to Old Dover; rather to the residents themselves. It behooves them to belong to a group that meets regularly and is working tirelessly with city officials and local police to improve the safety and security of this beautiful neighborhood. We can also save time for developers and city officials by presenting to this neighborhood only once and not at two separate venues."

Steve Fox, who heads the Rutland Square Neighborhood Association and the South End Forum, commented on the pending merger, "…for Old Dover and NY Streets, it sounds to me like they have struck what seems to be the best of all possible worlds. They will continue to cooperate on issues of mutual concern, but New York Streets will meet quarterly to deal specifically with their unique buildings and environment…A 'brownstone neighborhood' is a bit different from high rise, densely populated glass and steel complexes. Recognizing that difference is important even as both associations work together on issues of common concern."

According to Fox, possible merger discussions are also taking place among the Blackstone/Franklin Squares Neighborhood Association (B/FSNA) and Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association (WSANA); Claremont Neighborhood Association (CNA), Hurley Block Neighborhood Association and Chester Square Area Neighborhood Association (CSANA); and Rutland Street Neighborhood Association and Rutland Square Neighborhood Association.

Merging was on the agenda at the January meetings of two of the largest groups, B/FSNA and WSANA. Vadim Kuksin, co-president of B/FSNA, said at his group's January 16 meeting, "Our neighborhood association faces a lot of the same challenges and has a lot of the same goals as the neighboring associations. I feel like at times we are dividing resources to conquer these same challenges. I also think that each neighborhood association struggles with volunteers. If we combine with one or two other groups and there is a handful of passionate people that care about their community and have time for the neighborhood association, I think it would be very beneficial."

Two members of the Rutland Street Neighborhood Association were in attendance, and Kuksin brainstormed with them about joining forces on the two groups' special events such as Rutland Street's Halloween hot-dog cookout and B/FSNA's Christmastime tree and wreath sale and Heart of Gold college scholarship fundraiser. One of the Rutland Street representatives said he had talked informally with the head of the Hurley Block Neighborhood Association and got a receptive response.

Toni Crothall, head of B/FSNA's Friends of Blackstone and Franklin Squares, commented, "I think that some neighborhood associations have a culture and personality that they want to hold onto, and they should. I think we should be open to sharing administration, making sure that we are in the same conversation."

Crothall stressed the importance of having clearly defined objectives and operating procedures for newly merged organizations. "We want to be sensitive to a smaller group merging with us; we don't want to swallow them up," Kuksin said. Co-president Joe Schutt quipped, "We want it to be a true merger, not an acquisition."

Both the WSANA leadership and the Rutland Street members resolved to talk further with their members about specifics such as a group name, finances and other considerations before coming together again with recommendations.

B/FSNA treasurer Matt Mues attended WSANA's January 22 meeting, at which WSANA discussed merging, possibly with Blackstone/Franklin. WSANA board member Bob Minnocci noted that B/FSNA has a strong organizational infrastructure with a 501(c)3 designation, and such infrastructure makes an organization more effective. Like Kuksin, Minnocci spoke of the struggle of maintaining consistent participation from members and volunteers.

"A lot of people show up to advocate for their various causes, but they don't show up every month. We depend upon their participation to give us the strength that we need and being with another organization would make that larger." One resident proposed a "federal/state/local" style structure, envisioning a merger of perhaps three organizations with committees to handle localized and specific matters and projects and the larger group considering larger issues.

WSANA president George Stergios opined that it would make sense to approach a contiguous association as a merger partner and proposed discussing the idea at future WSANA meetings to contemplate questions such as whether to approach a large or smaller group.

Stergios also suggested looking at the agendas of possible merger partners for common interests. B/FSNA's Mues mused, "I am not the spokesman for Blackstone/Franklin, but we are huge we talk about the parks a lot. You guys don't want to talk about parks all the time."

As it happened, both B/FSNA and WSANA discussed change s to the Cosmopolitan project, the redevelopment of the Immaculate Conception Church at 771 Harrison Avenue, from apartments to condominiums with no additional parking spaces being constructed.

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The South End News welcomes letters to the editor.

All letters must be signed and accompanied by a mailing address and phone number.

Because of space limitations, letter should not be more than 200 words.

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Letters policy

To be considered for publication, letters must be no longer than 500 words; refrain from extreme personal attacks; be signed and include an address and daytime telephone number. Writers should refrain from making incorrect statements since they may be barred from future issues. Deadline is noon Tuesday for Thursday's paper. To send us letters: Mail to PO BOX E14, Boston, MA 02127; FAX to 617.464.7286; E-mail: letters@southendnews.com

Calendar

South End/Lower Roxbury Police Panel Meeting

Monday, January 29, 2018
6:00 - 8:00 PM
D4 Station - Community Service Office,650 Harrison Avenue

13th Annual Ellis Progressive Dinner

Monday, February 5, 2018
5:30 PM 9:30 PM
The Beehive541 Tremont Street

The Ellis South End Neighborhood Association will hold its 13th Annual Ellis Progressive Dinner on Monday, February5th. It's a marvelous way to meet new neighbors and sample gourmet offerings from our neighborhood restaurants.

More at www.ellisneighborhood.org

Heart of Gold Scholarship Event 2018

Thursday, February 8, 2018, 6:00 - 8:00 pm
Estragon, 700 Harrison Ave, Boston

The B/FSNA is having its annual fundraiser for its South End Scholarship. This is our 11th year. Last year we raised over $40,000 and awarded over $32,000 to 15 recipients. For the last 10 years, our neighborhood association has awarded scholarships ranging from $1,000 to $2,500 to over 45 South End high school graduates to cover textbooks, computers, or supplies for college or trade school.

Show us your "heart of gold" by attending our fundraiser party.

Tickets are $50 in advance, $75 at the door.

This year we will be enjoying delicious Spanish tapas, wine, beer and cocktails, courtesy of Estragon Tapas Bar. Enjoy live music and bid on lots of exciting items at our live and silent auctions. All proceeds benefit the Scholarship Fund of BFSNA.

http://www.blackstonefranklin.org/

Dog Lady

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not allow dogs in the indoor areas where the restrooms are. I am okay with leaving Charlie alone in the car for a few minutes when the weather is mild in the spring and late winter. I would never consider it in the summer when the car heats up quickly! Do you have any suggestions?

—Darlene

Dear Darlene,

Summer seems so far away. Yet, we should always keep up the conversation about not leaving dogs in cars on hot or cold days. Actually, you really shouldn't leave your dog in a car unsupervised. And you should never tie up your dog outside unsupervised in a strange place. In dire straits along the highway, Dog Lady would probably ask a benign looking person walking with a dog in the outdoor rest area to hold darling's leash for a sec while she ran like lightning to the WC. For the most part, with the exception of Hitler and thugs who train dogs to fight, dog people are good people.

You have been traveling with Charlie for many years. You must have worked out your own routine. Dog Lady invites readers to share about this. Do you leave your dogs tied up or in the car while you run to do an errand?

Dear Dog Lady,

Please advise if there is some sort of ramp available for older dogs. Or can we easily build something? Our Airedale is 12 and can't get those creaky legs going on the steps up to the landing in the garage.

—Gloria

Dear Gloria,

Build it and your venerable Airedale will come. Ramps covered with carpet for aged paws to grip are easy to construct and a blessing for elders. Until your dog gets the hang of how it works, line the ramp with freeze-dried liver or boiled chicken chunks as motivation to use the conveyance.

When Dog Lady's dog Shorty became quite elderly, she bought him two steps from a dog catalogue to so he could climb into the bed. Despite the treat motivation, sweetie pie resisted all entreaties to ascend this stairway to heaven. He wanted to be picked up and placed on the bed, which eventually is what happened.

Write askdoglady@gmail.com

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Call Jeff at (617) 464-7280 ext. 202
or email: sales@southendnews.com.

bpda | **Public Meeting**

142 SHAWMUT AVENUE DISPOSITION PLANNING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

476 TREMONT STREET
Castle Square Housing
Community Room
Boston, MA 02116

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) invites you to a community meeting to discuss the possible disposition of the BPDA-owned vacant land parcel located at 142 Shawmut Avenue in the South End Urban Renewal Area.

MAIL TO: **REAY PANNESI**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
PHONE: 617.918.6239
EMAIL: Reay.L.Pannesi@boston.gov

BostonPlans.org | @BostonPlans

Teresa Polhemus, *Executive Director/Secretary*

bpda | **Public Meeting**

ROXBURY STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5
6:00 PM - 7:45 PM

980 HARRISON AVE
Boston Water and Sewer,
2nd Floor Training Room
Roxbury, MA 02119

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee (RSMPOC) was developed to oversee projects that fall under the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. Since last year's launch of PLAN: Dudley Square the RSMPOC meetings also include progress reports on the initiative. All meetings are open to the public and community input is desired. RSMPOC meetings are held in the evening the first Monday of the month at the Boston Water & Sewer Commission (BWSC) in the 2nd Floor Training Room. Free parking is available in the BWSC parking lot. PLAN: Dudley Square workshops are typically every third Monday of the month, location varies.

Please come join your neighbors and the City of Boston to help shape the future of the neighborhood!

MAIL TO: **COURTNEY SHARPE**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
PHONE: 617.918.4431
EMAIL: Courtney.Sharpe@boston.gov

BostonPlans.org | @BostonPlans

Teresa Polhemus, *Executive Director/Secretary*

Resources

Free Tax Preparation Services

If you worked in 2017 and made under $54,000, you may be eligible for free tax preparation services at your local neighborhood service center.

Services by appointment and during walk-in hours vary by site

Your local neighborhood service center. Call 617-635-4500 or go online at http://www.bostontaxhelp.org/2018-tax-sites to find the site nearest you.

More info: Don't forget to bring all required documents to your appointment! Call 617-635-4500 or http://www.bostontaxhelp.org/what-to-bring/ to find more details. Tax preparation services available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese, French, Russian, Czech, Japanese, Mandarin, and Cantonese.

Junior Celtics Academy

A fundamental basketball drills program for 3rd to 6th grade participants. These skills are taught by drills and games designed by Celtics coaches to improve participants' performance over the course of the program. Top 10% of most improved participants will be awarded a ticket to a Celtics home game. One youth will be nominated as captain from our site and will be recognized on-court at halftime of a home game.

February 10, 2018 – March 17, 2018

Salvation Army Kroc Center, 650 Dudley Street, Dorchester, MA, 02125

More info: This program is FREE. Limited spots available. Register at the Boston Kroc Welcome Desk or contact Anthony Henderson at 617-318-6942 or Anthony.henderson@use.salvationarmy.org.

Boston Teachers Union presents Parent 2 Parent Conference

A conference for parents and educators to share and learn from each other, support parent engagement, promote parent advocacy, and strengthen parent and teacher collaboration.

Saturday, January 27, 2018, 8:30am-3pm

Madison Park High School, 75 Malcolm X Boulevard, Roxbury, MA, 02120

More info: The event is free with breakfast and lunch provided. Volunteer-run childcare is available with pre-registration. Register online at www.btu.org/parent2parent

Financial Literacy - CHEC Monthly Networking Forum

Learn how to manage your money and not be managed by your money. Topics include easy strategies to eliminate debt and grow your credit score, how to create and stick to a budget, and simple ways to save money on a limited income.

Thursday, February 15, 2018, 12-2pm

860 Harrison Avenue, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA, 02118

More info: Validated parking available. This is a networking event, so don't forget to bring business cards and fliers. To RSVP, leave a message at 617-534-2432 or email ltavares@bphc.org. Contact immediately for individual arrangements (ASL interpreter, etc).

YEAR UP Recruitment

For young adults interested in taking their next step in their journey towards a career & higher education, Year Up's mission is to close the opportunity divide through a one-year intensive program. This free program serves youth ages 18-24 who receive an educational stipend and earn up to 31 FREE college credit recommendations while taking classes and completing an internship at top companies in Boston to prepare them for a professional career.

Visit Year Up's website http://www.yearup.org to view the Fast Track Sessions

Year Up, 45 Milk Street, Boston, MA 02109

More info: To learn more, contact Saida at SReyes@yearup.org or call the Admissions Team at 857-305-9990 to RSVP for an upcoming Fast Track session. Interested applicants should fill out an online Student Interest Form at www.yearup.org

South End Library

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new board of officers and directors. (They serve two- and one-year terms, respectively.) Leonard is a member of Friends of the South End Library's (FOSEL's) Honorary Fundraising Committee and has been a strong supporter the BPL/FOSEL public/private partnership to renovate the South End branch. Information about the slate of board candidates will be made available on this website.

At the meeting, you will get updates about the latest developments in library and park renovation. We serve delicious refreshments. If you would like to become part of FOSEL's all-volunteer board, email us at info@friendsofsouthendlibrary.org.

The January Local/Focus installation in the library's Tremont Street window features the award-winning Zeitgeist Stage Company, including a live screen with a running slideshow of images from past and future plays. The Zeitgeist, now in its 17th year, will open its next performance run of Mark Gerrard's Steve, on March 2 at he Boston Center for the Arts.

Coming up next in the Tremont Street window is a display by one of the neighborhood's great institutions, the Community Music Center of Boston. Local/Focus showcases local artists, creative entrepreneurs and non-profits in the South End library's window to inform you, the community, about their various programs, specialties and events.

The Boston Parks Department presented its proposed redesign, Concept C, for Library Park to the South End Historic Landmark Commissioners in early January. Concept C was one of the three proposals, the one preferred by the audience in a December public hearing at the South End library. Commissioner John Amadeo requested more details on three matters, specifically how to protect the mature pin oak near the library building; how to ensure that the foot traffic through the park on curved paths would be unencumbered by park furniture; and how to make the proposed concrete material used for new footpaths and patio more interesting with historically appropriate touches such as thermal bluestone and bricks. The Parks Department will resubmit a revised proposal so construction can begin in early spring, as planned.

Last but not least, our fundraising campaign, Wrlting the Next Chapter, is continuing to receive checks from you, our very supportive donors. Our initial goal of raising $50,000 for the First Phase of the interior renovation by October 2017 has now crossed into $70,000 territory, thanks to you, fantastically generous contributors. Thank you. The excess funds will be applied to the Second Phase's private fundraising 'tranche,' for which we will also request additional capital funding from the BPL in its FY 2019 budget. FOSEL will be meeting with city officials and our elected representatives to advocate for the library in the next few weeks when city agencies' budget plans are being hatched. Usually, in April or May, the City Council holds budget hearings for Boston's libraries, at which point we will ask again for City Council support. Stay tuned.

The BPL has concluded that the total estimated cost of the proposed interior downstairs renovation (Phases One and Two) will be approximately $600,000. The BPL set aside $132,000 in capital funding in FY 2018 for the South End branch; FOSEL committed to raising another $50,000, privately. The Friends hope to collect most of the private contributions for the Second Phase --to add to the to-be-determined additional FY 2019 public funding-- from local businesses, developers, and service providers, proud to support a public library in the community where their customers and clients live. In that spirit, EVERSOURCE Energy has already contributed generously to this effort in the South End, as have Casa Cuong, Cambridge Trust Bank and Community Bicycle, among other establishments.

For more information, visit www.friendsofsouthendlibrary.org. The South End Branch of the Boston Public Library is located at 685 Tremont Street.

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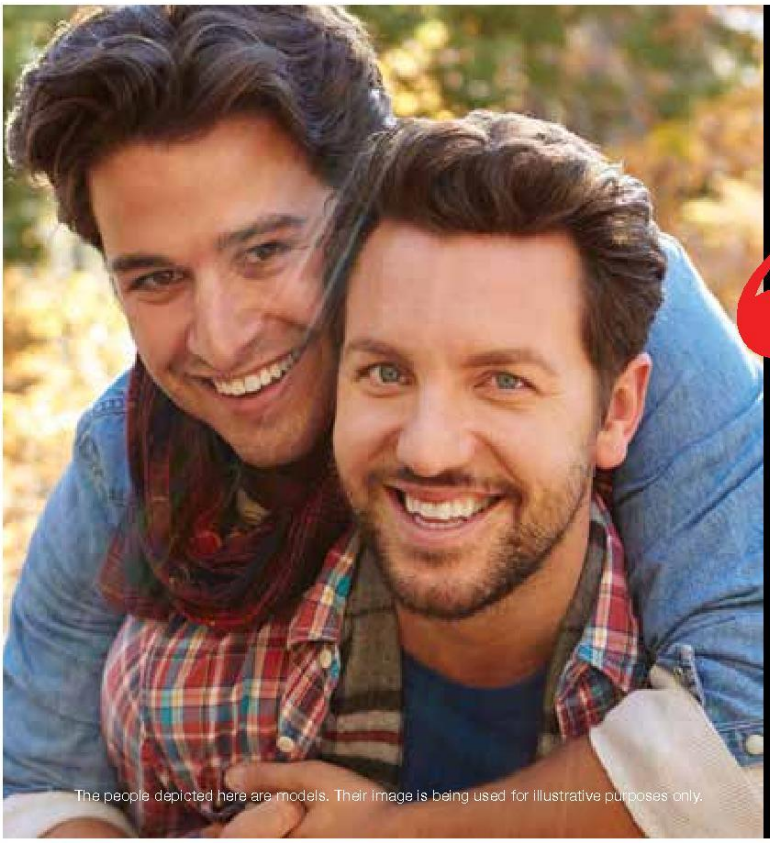
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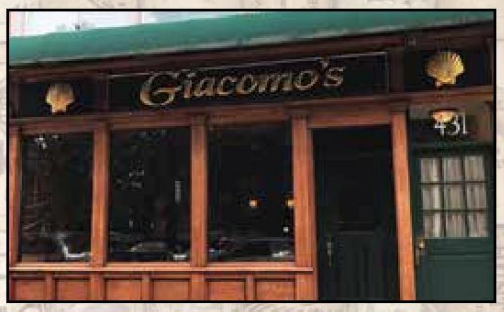

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