**Obituary**

**Sarge Cat, suddenly of unknown cause**

**Submitted by Phys Gardner**

Sunday morning, December 30, 2018, the South End lost one of its longtime citizens, beloved “community cat” Sarge, a big orange and white neutered male, was a handsome, amiable gent. He was loyal and devoted to his bonded consort Tia Calico (not in the big batch of 2015), fought only to defend himself, and was a friend to any cat in distress, bringing lost friends and hungry strays to our kitchen window for food and rescue.

Too wild to tolerate close human contact, he lived his whole life as a community cat on the streets around the Villa Victoria and Blackstone Square. At 12, he was healthy, active, and had outlived the average feline lifespan at least three times over. By MA state law, any cat who lives, or spends time, outdoors must be provided a shelter by their feeder, and he survived the bitter New England winter snug in a homemade insulated shelter, which he generously shared with any other cats who needed warmth in inclement weather, friend or foe.

Sarge was a familiar sight around the South End and many of us enjoyed watching him walking casually along fence tops, lounging on a roof in the sun, or trotting around the park at night, patrolling.

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**Rich and Expressive**

**Small Mouth Sounds,**

**SpeakEasy Stage Company, Roberts Studio Theatre, Boston Center for the Arts, through February 3, 617-933-6600 or bostontheatrecircle.com**

**By Jules Decker**

Is the world too much with us? William Wordsworth asked exactly that in an early 19th-century sonnet to that effect. Jess Wohl sure agrees. Her witty, insightful and often amusing 2035 play “Small Mouth Sounds.” Here urban pressures are escaped and technological trapings are verboten during a weeklong stay at a meditation retreat in the woods designed with disarming simplicity by Cristina Todesco. In fact, this clever playwright—who actually experienced a retreat herself—has written a largely silent but always involving 100-minute work in which words largely take a back seat to feelings, body language and reading the essence of others.

Now SpeakEasy Stage Company— in a fast food pressure and guest director M. Bevin O’Gan— is

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**Notice of Public Meeting**

A community meeting regarding the proposed cannabis establishment at 633 Tremont Street will be held on Thursday, January 10, 6:30PM, at the AC Hotel Marriott, Barclay Conference Room, 225 Albany Street, Boston.
Sarge
Continued from page 1

the neighborhood.

I had the honor of being his caretaker for over a decade. In the early 2000’s, unsterilized cats abounded in this neighborhood, bearing multiple litters of kittens annually. Trap-neuter-release (TNR) is the humane approach to reducing the street cat population. In Boston, this is a volunteer effort assisted by the Animal Rescue League and Charles River Allegany. When I called to report all the stray cats running through our yard, I got recruited as a volunteer.

In 2007, I trapped Sarge for sterilization and vetting, and cared for him daily ever since with the help of my kids and roommates. His photos show him to be a proud, nervous-looking cat, a common symbol of a caretaker. He was always TNR’d. Through TNR, hundreds of feral cats, rescue of a feral colony, for roaming and, as many kittens for taming, over the years the feral colony near Blackstone Square gradually reduced from 16 to 3, to just Sarge. His demise ended a chapter of the South End story.

Sarge became part of our family, visiting often and sitting at the window for company, and was much loved, although he couldn’t tolerate being indoors nor being close to humans. He will be missed.

On Saturday, December 30, at least four separate neighbors saw a cat laying in West Newton Street or Newland St., checked for signs of life, and sadly called 911 to report it dead. Animal Control killed it, regarding the cat dead. However, the removal of dead animals falls to the Dept of Public Works.

By the time I heard from a concerned neighbor that a cat had been found dead nearby, it was too late. Efforts to find out what happened were complicated by it being Sunday, the imminent New Year’s holiday, lack of recorded details, and no way to reach the DPW staff who handled the removal. Initially, there was some concern that one or more cats might have been poisoned-horrible but plausible given the heightened cat activity related to all the recent utility work.

However, it now seems probable that he was struck by a car. Although several people had called in to 911, there was only one “case” on record, for removal of a dead animal, closed with little detail and no additional notes from subsequent callers.

After multiple calls with neighbors, to 911 and DPW, a staffer eventually located a photograph, which brought some closure by positively confirming the cat’s identity—sadly, it was our Sarge. Surprisingly, there’s no established protocol for identifying dead cats and dogs picked up by the City. Is it long or short haired, neutered, coat color and pattern, tag, tail, face markings, and size? For cats, is it ear-tipped? Many pet owners rely on microchips to provide contact information in case of emergency.

However, it only works if the animal is scammed for a chip, which isn’t current practice. DPW doesn’t have a scanner. Thanks to DPW staff for engaging in discussion and hopefully following up on suggestions such as photographing, labeling by location found, taking a written description, and scanning for a microchip, for any pet-type animals in future. Sarge lost beauty to our neighborhood with his genial though elusive presence. Thanks to a caring neighbor, a visual of candles, flowers and photos marks his site. In his memory, or in honor of community cats, contributions of any amount are invited to ARL, Boston-Community Cat Services, 10 Chandler St, Boston MA 02116.

This poem was written for Sarge by a new South End resident, Patience Andrew, a poet from Nigeria working at Teens Empowerment this year as an Atlas Corps Fellow.

I saw him through the windowpane
Gazing calmly, peacefully
I only could wish for such presence
With a comedy fur
I felt naked to his piercing eyes
As one knowing my weakness
Yet not judging, reminding me
Life is here and now

But is this just a cat?
Or is it the conscious connection he brings?

I do not know
How to stop
Seeing his face
And how much
I taught us
to give all we hold
In our sweaty palms
Was he just a cat?
Certainly, no He was more...

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Letter to the Editor
A Boston Boom, but not for everyone

As someone who was born and raised in the South End, I knew the neighborhood well. My favorite place to go was the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) building, which housed the Alexandria Hotel. Unfortunately, this building was auctioned off to the highest bidder.

Thinking about that building, I also remembered the old opera house abandoned for years. The opera house site is now upscale condos, but the Alexandria Hotel seems to be heading in the same direction.

The public notice in the South End News talked about a planned hotel with most likely expensive restaurant and café space on the ground floor and a rooftop eatery. Growing up in my childhood neighborhood, things were always tough for working-class families like mine. As the building boom in Boston continues, it has become a bane for low-income and working families.

Doesn’t anyone care about working-class folk anymore? Our Boston Boom is not booming for many of us but only for those who can afford the high life. Boutique hotels, expensive restaurants, what about the rest of us?

We are becoming a city of housing extremes. The very rich and the very poor. The rest of us just keep getting squeezed out of our future in Boston.

God forbid, developers think about ordinary folk and that goes for our elected officials too.

Sal Giarratani, East Boston

Guest Opinion
Continued from page 1

this shutdown continues, hunger in America will be back big time. You will have millions of people unable to buy the food they need to survive. No one who has access to hard earned tax credits can count on to pay for rent, medicine, food and heat at this time of year. Landlords who can’t collect rent subsidies are in a bind.

The average benefit for the 19 million households receiving SNAP is $245 per month. More than 68 percent of SNAP funds go to families with children, 44 percent go to working families.

The SNAP program is used in 1.4 million households where veterans live. Without this benefit, children, seniors and the veterans who have selflessly protected our nation will go hungry.

With millions of people losing their consumer power without the benefits that enable them to buy food, the shutdown will have a major impact on groceries and small businesses that serve poor communities where shoppers rely on their SNAP benefits.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) are not receiving any federal funds during the shutdown. Massachusetts has received funding through January for school lunches through the Child Nutrition Programs funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. After that, there is no funding for school lunches.

The Department of Housing & Urban Development is basically inoperable, with the vast majority of employees forced to stay home without pay. Dire situations involving low-income housing issues have been reported — with no help available. Low-income families make up 72 percent of HUD-assisted households — and more than half of those receiving vouchers are elderly or persons with disabilities. Funds for basic housing operations and housing vouchers are available through January — after that it is unclear what will happen.

Low-income families and their landlords face loss of Section 8 housing subsidies, causing families to lose their homes and landlords to possibly evict them to get paying tenants to prevent falling into foreclosure.

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Calendar

Thursday, January 10

Notice of Public Meeting
A community meeting regarding the proposed cannabis establishment at 605 Tremont Street will be held on 6:30PM, at the AC Hotel Marriott, Barclay Conference Room, 225 Albany Street, Boston.

Shop at Whole Foods Day for Community Servings
Whole Foods Market selected Community Servings as the recipient of its Winter 2019 5% Day. When you shop at a participating Whole Foods Market on Thursday, January 10th, 5% of proceeds will be donated to provide medically tailored meals to our critically ill clients and their families, 33 stores across Massachusetts and Rhode Island are participating. Visit your local Whole Foods Market on Thursday, January 10th and support Community Servings.

Saturday, January 12

SPIN for Scholar Athletes: Charity Ride at Turnstyle
2:30PM, Turnstyle, 310 Harrison Avenue

Dog Lady

Continued from page 1

his first post-surgery poop.

I admit I was concerned about Shelby but
also amazed at how my ex-colleague and her
husband, who are retired on a fixed income, prob-
ably spent much money for their dog’s
surgery. What are your thoughts on extreme
and very expensive care for pets?

—Susan

Dear Susan,

Dog Lady’s thoughts? Best not to think
about—until you have to.

Dealing with an ill pet is one of the hard-
est things a pet owner has to endure. And if a
terminally ill vet office refuses to correct
a problem—and predicts a sad outcome with
beneficial results and an owner has the funds
to pay for it—the question is moot. However,
it is all too personal. “Ask Dog Lady” could never
pressure to tell anybody what he or she should
do in such a situation. For now, let’s not fret
Shelby, obviously a beloved pet.

As the New Year begins, Ask Dog Lady
brings back the following question and answer
dealing with the same tender issue:

Dear Kevin,

Never second-guess love. Stop trying to
figure this one out. The woman at the dog
park chose the option she believed was right
for her and her pet. You should not question
a dog owner who believes in the boundless
possibilities of a three-legged dog.

This situation of risky care for a domestic
animal reminds Dog Lady to urge you, dear
readers, to renew your pet’s pet as a New Year begins. Treat your animals with kind-
ness, responsibility and respect. You may not
have lots of money or patience but the animal
in your care always deserves the best of you.

Write askdoglady@gmail.com.

Letters Policy

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.

e-mail:
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—Kathie Gaynor, author, Speaks Out: Change My Heart, Change My Life

Tuesday, January 15, 6:30 PM

A Return to the South End: You’re invited to hear the distinguished former resident Joan Diver talk about her debut memoir, When Spirit Calls: A Healing Odyssey.

With an introduction by Reverend Timothy E. O’Connell, Vicar, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church

The event is free. Seating is limited. Books are available for purchase, sale, and signing. We serve refreshments.

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