Lion King a rite of passage for all

Disney Presents
The Lion King,
Citizen Bank Opera House,
through October 27, 800-482-2737
www.moscotbroadway.com

By Jules Bercov

It may be no accident that Julie Taymor directed the Tony Award-
winning Broadway musical "The Lion King,"

While the gifted Broadmoor na-
tive (an innovative reviv of "The

continued on page 3

SRO For Barnet

BY MICHELE D. MARISCALCO

South End author, historian
and co-founder of the South End
News Ahron Barnet spoke to a stand-
ing room-only of over 60 people at
the South End Branch Library, 675
Tremont Street, about her new book,
"Once Upon a Neighborhood: A
Timeline and Anecdotal History of
the South End of Boston."

Wearing a T-shirt bearing
the logo of bygone Washington Street
landmark, The Radio and TV, Barn-
et talked about the writing process,
read passages from the book and
answered questions, and afterward
sold autographed copies of her
new work, selling out her on-hand
inventory.

Because some people could not
be admitted to the room due to lack
of space, there are tentative plans
for a second book talk by Barnet
at the South End Library on the
evening of Tuesday, October 15.
This date is not confirmed at pres-
time. Please check for confirmation

continued on page 2

Pill Man comes to
Methadone Mile

BY ROSABE MEJIA

The Worcester man and his
creation - a model made mainly of
old opioid bottles with a skull for
a head - have been traveling New
England to bring attention to the
opioid crisis and to show people with

continued on page 5

City unwraps Mass/Cass 2.0
plan to clean up Methadone Mile

BY MICHELE D. MARISCALCO

Mayor Walsh today released
details of a plan to clean up Metha-
done Mile and Neuman Square
through additional resources and
workers aimed both at "deconcen-
trating" addicts and homeless
people by getting more of them
into treatment and shelters - some
outside those areas - and through
faster cleanup of the needles and
other debris they leave behind and
stepped up police presence.

Walsh is also asking local
churches, residents and businesses
to help churches provide more
resources to shelter and aid addicts,
residents and businesses by forming
a new volunteer group to watch over
local kids as they walk to school in
the area.

Central to the plan is the idea
that addiction is a public health is-

continued on page 4

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Piano
Continued from page 1

celebrate the piano's return to its birthplace. Gran's favorite, Nicholas Pearson, coordinated the transfer of the piano from the home of the donor, a South Ender who was moving from her Pembroke Street home, to the gallery. Donosow believes the idea for the gift was planted when he responded to a Facebook post in the spring offering a free Chickering piano. Donosow said, "I contacted them and said, 'I am the historian at the Piano Factory and we would be glad to talk to you about it.' I exchanged a few texts with the woman, and I never heard back. What I heard tonight is that someone contacted the South End Library, and Erik and Nick know someone who works there, and they connected the dots." Gran said he received a phone call in late July from the piano's owner, who had been referred to him by a friend who works at the South End Branch Library. Gran said, "She said, 'I have a Chickering Piano and I want to see it go home.' I said, 'We don't really have a budget for buying pianos,' and she said, 'I want to donate it.'"

Three pianists from the gallery, Pearson, treasurer Diane Sundstrom and clerk Frederick King visited the donor to see the piano. Pearson coordinated the piano's transfer from the Pembroke Street home to the Piano Factory gallery, which is in the lower level of the building. The move required permitting for a crane to remove the piano from the donor's third-story residence.

"There was a Volvo that did not get out of the parking space this morning, so the piano was dangling on the Volvo. Luckily, the piano did not fall and crush it," Gran noted. The piano was successfully transported to the gallery on the day of the reveal party. The move cost approximately $3,400. After the piano receives some necessary maintenance and tuning, the committee plans to host performances of music from the time of the piano's construction.

Commenting on the unexpected and historically significant gift, Grau said, "It was a surprise. We hadn't planned on anything like this, but when it came along, you have to take it. What I've been thinking about for the gallery is, how are we preserving the history of the building? What have previous tenants done and how are we using this space in the future with more contemporary exhibits? We need to strike a balance so that everyone is included. It's a community gallery; everyone needs to be involved."

(Right) Marcie Bilodeau, Nicholas Pearson, Haley Neville, Erik Grau.
Photos by Michele Maniscalco

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Theater
Continued from page 1

Moiseyev among others is the product of a Jewish secular home, her staging seems to possess a kind of biblical continuity—starting with ruling lion Mufasa and ending with his son Simba. Mufasa’s scheming, villainous brother Scar clearly resists the latter’s position as king of beasts—calling to mind Zazu’s lingering resentment of Jafar’s better blessing from magic. Simba’s rescue of his fellow lion and the other creatures around them may somewhat suggest Noah’s bravery with the world’s animal kingdom.

Taymor certainly captured the majestic tone and celebratory feel common to the Bible. All of these elements are richly on display in the visually exquisite touring of “The Lion King” at the Citizens Bank Opera House.

The Elton John-Tim Rice collaboration’s opening “Circle of Life” procession of animals and birds—both on stage and down the aisles—remains one of the great sequences in modern musical history. As always, give kudos to Taymor for the kaleidoscopic beauty of the costumes here and throughout the show.

Under James D Johnston’s taut musical direction, drama and other percussion instruments—perching at all times in the upper box seats areas on both sides of the house—fire up the ritual-like movement of the performers’ evoking such striking animals from elephant and rhinoceros to zebra, giraffe and of course the title ruling creatures.

As fans of the fine Disney animated film and the long-running musical know, Simba will undergo a rite of passage during which he learns about the joys and the sorrows of life’s circle, particularly his growing love for childhood friend and also maturing lioness Mala as well as the great loss of Mufasa. If the Roger Allers-Bruno Maccelli book proved as simply plotted as always, do not worry. Young and grown-up theatregoers alike will continue to be blown away by the musical’s stunning visuals and Steve Cavan’s Kennedy’s often properly explosive sound design.

They will also give themselves up to the persuasive ensemble and individual performances. At the performance this critic saw (some cast members change from performance to performance), Mukwimbo Goba displayed an impressive belt as herald-like Rafiki. Gerald Ramsey demonstrated the right paternal caring and majesty as Mufasa, while William John Austin was commandingly menacing as his brother Scar with rich vocal resonance.

Jared Dixon moved convincingly from an insecure heir to a forceful new leader, and Nia Holloway captured his betrothed Mala’s inner strength. Tony Freeman caught Timon’s amusing delivery and Ben Lipitz captured Pumbaa’s quirkiness—especially on the now iconic duet “Hakuna Matata.”

Greg Jackson evoked advising Zazu’s wisdom and good intentions. Ensemble performers danced Garth Fagan’s snappy choreography in sync with occasional flips and complicated high kicks and leaps.

“The Circle of Life” is a lavish celebration of nature and an ode to an animal family. As climate change increases, it also provides a subtextual lesson about respect, love and the preciousness of life. At the same time the stellar tour will leave you virtually dancing out of the Opera House.
Advice on Pets, Life, Love

BY MONICA COLLINS

Dear Dog Lady,

Walking my dog Baxter one day, I ran into a woman with some sort of adorable spaniel. Baxter and this woman’s dog were in a safe area away from a main road and he started to approach the spaniel when its owner called out: “I’d put your dog on a leash because my dog is passive-aggressive.” I couldn’t help but laugh because Baxter and she were clearly friendly. I asked the spaniel’s owner, “What does ‘passive-aggressive’ mean in a dog?”

She told me she didn’t know but a dog trainer had used the term. She said she had been taking her dog to the trainer for a few months. I knew I was helping but couldn’t help commenting: “I think that dog trainer is stealing your money because this dog seems nice and friendly.” Actually, the woman agreed with me. “Yeah, I wondered what passive-aggressive meant but the trainer seemed to think it was a serious problem in dogs.”

So we walked away, I heard the woman command the spaniel to go potty by using a word supposed to trigger the poop. The word was “bicycle.” I have no idea if it worked or not but I wondered if the dog trainer planted that one too. Can dogs be passive-aggressive? And can dogs go on demand?

— Carly

Continued on page 5

Methadone Mile

Continued from page 1

The City of Boston is committed to preserving the safety, health, and dignity of its residents and all persons engaged with its services in all its programs and activities, and across all departments and agencies. We also believe that with respect to the opioid epidemic, public safety begins with public health. That means prioritizing the health of both residents and those struggling with substance use disorder, and, where possible, diverting people away from the criminal justice system and into treatment. Decreasing criminal activity in the surrounding neighborhoods remains a high priority. Additionally, the City of Boston acknowledges that substance use has historically been criminalized in communities of color rather than treated as public health issues. We believe that following evidence-based practices, and embedding these practices in all City departments engaged in this work, is necessary to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

The plan starts by discussing details of how to help the drug addicts and homeless people who now congregate in the area.

The plan calls for the city to hire eight additional street workers to try to connect people on the street with the services they need. At the same time, the plan also calls for those workers to try to get people into programs closer to where they live, too, to reduce the number of people congregating in the area. A separate Boston Police outreach unit would be expanded from two to five officers and a sergeant.

Five public buildings in Methadone Mile will be equipped with naloxone kits to revive opioid users who have overdosed. Training of local first responders, treatment programs, businesses and community groups in how to prevent overdoes will be stepped up; a city team targeted at helping people who have overdosed will increase its visits to them.

To help draw people away from the area, the city will create three new stations where addicts can exchange used needles for clean ones outside Methadone Mile. At the same time, the city will begin monthly testing for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases at three existing locations inside the area. And it will step up programs aimed at women.

The heart of the plan is a five-block area of city agencies and the Pine Street Inn will "create a targeted list of 40-60 unserved people to be prioritized for assessment, referral and placement." The Boston Public Health Commission will work more generally on getting homeless people into shelters or home - which will include financial aid to get people into housing - as well as "training and to reconnect with family or social support systems outside of the area."

Among the proposals to "decriminalize" people from the area:

- "In partnership with both community to expand low-threshold day programs that provide welcoming environments, address basic needs (food, clothing, access to bathrooms), and create referral opportunities.
- "Increase referral to low-barrier overnight drop-in programs outside the Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard area, where vulnerable people can be safe and get off the street.
- "Work with City and non-profit partner agencies to explore expansion of additional low-barrier night time drop-in programs in other city neighborhoods."
- "To clean up the area, the plan calls for the city to hire two new fulltime workers to find and remove needles and syringes and add more drop boxes where people can deposit used needles.
- "A recycler truck will flash streets every day at 5 a.m. in Worcester Square, Mass. Cass itself, Harrison Avenue between Melnea Cass and East Newton Street and Dudley and Andrew Square. Also, the city DPW will hire four new workers for a "special operations team" aimed at cleaning up the streets around Mass Ave. and Melnea Cass, and will assign more housekeeping to patrol the area. On Mondays and Tuesdays, police and the city’s Mobile Sharps team will sweep the bus depot below Reed Street every Monday and Thursday.
- "Boston Police will dedicate four officers and a supervisor for 7:30 p.m. and 11:45 p.m. to the area from Worcester Square to Mass Ave. and three officers and a supervisor to Southampton Street and Mass Ave.
- "A 24-hour a day, 365-person cruiser will patrol the area around the Orchard Gardens and Manor schools and Clifton Park 24 hours a day. The BPD Heavy Unit, meanwhile, would focus on Worcester Square, Mass. and Cass and Harrison Avenue, along with Blackstone, Franklin and Rainsford parks. Two bicycle cops would be stationed specifically to the Dudley Square area.

Residents will also be called on to help out. One goal is:

- "Implement a coordinated neighborhood cleanup twice a year through Love Your Block and the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services."

The parks department will do two daily needle sweeps of Clifton Park at 8 a.m. before schools start and at 2 p.m., before they get out. Also:

- "Institute Safe Corridors initiative to help maintain school properties and playgrounds area safe and free of dangerous debris. Safe Corridors would be a formalized volunteer effort to maintain safety around schools in hotspot areas."

The world would be a collaboration between the City, businesses and community members and would aim to provide extra support and welcoming route for students traveling to and from school. Volunteer would be opted to patrol routes around schools at the start and end of the school day or to keep watch from their homes or businesses.

- "311 will get a new entry for homeless encampments, which will mean a special city team responds both to get people living in them to shelters or treatment and will "remove any debris or hazardous materials from encampment site within 48 hours of alert."

The plan also calls for trying to make the area more attractive through "a more welcoming look at Mass. and Cass that would include "signage demarcating Newmarket Square business district, creating a sense of place and information kiosks for business owners, residents, etc." as well as banners that would hang from utility poles along Melnea Cass Boulevard and "create a sense of placeidentity for this area of the city.”
**Dog Lady**
Continued from page 4

such magic in action.

Dear Dog Lady,

I love your column, “Ask Dog Lady,” but you should advise those who want to give holistic flea and tick preventive to their dogs about not to give them garlic. In large doses, garlic is toxic to cats and dogs. Also, please let your readers know that homeopathic remedies have not shown any effect to preventing mosquito-borne heartworms. I have the same concerns as you about giving my dog a monthly dose of poison to prevent worms of many sorts and fleas, but the threat of heartworms keeps me doing it.

—Kathleen

**Pill Man**
Continued from page 1

addictions they can start again.

"Pill Man" came to Methadone Mile to open eyes and save lives," Huntley, himself a recovering addict, said on a visit there the other day, summarizing his mission as an activist advocating for a drug-free society.

Wearing a black blazer, standing next to Pill Man, Huntley shared his story as a former drug user.

"My daughter was two when I started; she was 17 when I quit — in the autumn of 2013, the Worcester resident said.

For 13 years, Huntley collected containers of opioids such as OxyContin and methadone, and used them to create a figure characterizing himself when he was a man. "I want to share my story and give them hope," he said.

"I was 120 pounds and I'm 180 now," he said.

"Drugs are making us die too young, way too young," he said. "It's a nightmare. We need to make sure these other prescription places, other pharmacies, other hospitals are educating us and we are not going to lose any more people."

His visit to Mass Ave. and Washington Street took him into Methadone Mile, the heart of the Boston area's opioid crisis. "I need to be here where I can talk to people and show them that it's not going to stop unless they want to stop. So now all I want to do is help and if I have to go to every city and every town, I'm going."

The presence of Pill Man in the South End did not go unnoticed. Drivers and pedestrians stopped at least for a few seconds to look at the bottle figure.

Inhabiting Naspi, the manager of a 7-Eleven in the area, said the opioid crisis is a daily struggle for him and his store. "People fight, come to the store and steal items, the police is involved, this is a hot spot," Naspi said.

Pill Man "is a very good thing to do," he said.

Huntley said that recently he went to the White House on the International Opioid Awareness Day. Advocating on behalf of the families of the victims who has been impacted by drug abuse and educating the population. "I am going to put Pill Man on every corner I can and truly try to help families now because I lost my family for a lot of years and now I want to do it, make sure families understand what these drugs are doing to our families," he said.

Huntley ever went to the headquarters of Purdue Pharma, the company that sells OxyContin. "I went to Stonard, Connecticut and I put Pill Man outside their doors, to show them that I wanted help."

Huntley said his goal is to go share his story and show recovery is possible, in as many places as possible. "Please go get your life back. Please go get help. And if you want the help, there is help out there, but you have to want it."
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Community Meeting

PLAN: Dudley Square

Monday, October 21
6:00 PM - 7:45 PM
Boston Water and Sewer Commission
1980 Harrisson Ave., 2nd Floor Training Room
Roxbury, Massachusetts, 02119

Event Description
This open house style meeting will build upon previous PLAN: Dudley workshops and will focus on development objectives and guidelines for the Canton parcel and Malcolm X and Putnam parcels (Parcel A/B). We will spend time looking at original design guidelines for the parcels and will build upon the planning and engagement that has been done up until now.

As with all previous workshops, feedback provided will be taken into consideration for incorporation into the RFP documents. Throughout the evening there will be opportunities for attendees to engage in dialogue with City and BPDA team members, regarding development objectives and design guidelines.

PLAN: Dudley Square is an initiative to think strategically about the types of uses and the scale of development best suited for the future of Dudley Square and Roxbury. PLAN: Dudley Square build on the visions presented in both the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan and Dudley Vision.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

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617-918-4488 | mude.undemir@boston.gov

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