MLK Day of Action

There are times when you must take a stand

BY LEE STEINHAUSER
St. Stephen’s Youth Program

In a country increasingly divided by race, war, and wealth, people are desperately seeking leadership that speaks of love. This intersection of issues is not only what we are facing in Boston in 2020, it is also what Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was facing when he stepped to the podium in Atlanta to give his 1967 speech often called, "The Three Evils of Society.”

King addressed the challenge of the day:

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BMC Turns TEDx

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TEDxBeaconStreet hosted its first healthcare-focused event on January 7 on the Boston Medical Center and Boston University School of Medicine campus -- a hub of Boston’s medical innovation. With a group of 15 world-class speakers from around the country, the forum highlighted new perspectives and innovative ways to tackle the healthcare crisis, from policy reforms and economic impact to a focus on what it means to be a patient and the social determinants of health.

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Dog Lady
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Dear Clare,

Thank you for your letter, which is a great topic to start the New Year--even if you disagree with “Ask Dog Lady” for the welfare advice Dog Lady dispenses when dealing with a walking friend who does not pick up after her dog. Actually, Dog Lady realizes her initial response should have been stronger and if your “take no prisoners” approach. Dog Lady would only add this: Pick up always and always pick up with a biodegradable bag so we don’t pollute the planet with dog poop wrapped in plastic. Dog Lady uses BioBags, a very good disposable bag brand available through chewy.com.

Dear Dog Lady,

My parents have a Shepoo (cross between a poodle and a Shih Tzu) that has these bumps on her. The vet says these are vesicles that burst. This doesn’t seem right. These bumps are small and circular they break open and bleed. He is prescribed regularly and they have tried watching her food thinking that it is the same as also one of those dogs that are dander-less. My parents do give her human food once in a while. Any thoughts on what this may be?

— Eliza

Dear Eliza,

Shouldn’t the dog called a Shihpoo? Actually, if you have to write “Ask Dog Lady” about blinking bumps on a cute little dog, you are barking up the wrong tree. Dog Lady is not a vet nor does she play one in any medium. You need to steer your parents to new veterinarian in the area. Also, tell them to stop giving human food immediately. Find dog food that is anti-allergic. Dog Lady recommends two brands: Solid Gold and Newman’s Own Organsics. There are others, of course, but these two are dependably good. This little dog needs an intervention. You’ve in a great position to help.

Dear Dog Lady,

The other day, I was sitting at Starbucks and overheard a woman urging her friend to “walk your inner dog.” That got me thinking. Do all of us have inner dogs? If so, what are they telling us?

— Betsy

Dear Betsy,

Naturally, we all have inner dogs. (Can we what she would say?) These inner dogs tell us to finish everything in our bowl, sniff out possibilities, keep at the moment, and leave our mark all over the world. “Walk your inner dog” means to step out into the world confidently and happily, although “unleash your inner dog” sounds a more exultant note. And this reminds Dog Lady to wish “Happy New Year” to all dear readers.

Write: askdoglady@gmail.com.
Blackstone/Franklin Square Neighborhood Association

The Blackstone/Franklin Square Neighborhood Association General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21st, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., at the Police Station, 2nd Floor Community Room, 650 Harrison Avenue.

AGENDA

Join us for our next general business meeting. Bring your friends and neighbors, and participate in the discussion. Our agenda will include the following:

7:00 p.m. Welcome and announcements (BFSNA Board).

7:10 p.m. Record keeping (Matt Macs.) Treasurer’s Report.

Cake

Continued from page 1

Della’s Sweets—well-detailed and visually designed by Matt Whiten—would certainly insist that any novice baker make sure to cut off all of the ingredients as she does and follow the directions.

Much like there are several fine elements in director Courtney O’Connor’s well-dined and Stewed Stage height, the Leisure group’s wedding cake, centered play needing stronger consistency and more to say about the interaction of love and understanding with that baking.

Inspired by a case involving a baker’s unwillingness to create such a wedding cake, Brummetter (“This Is Us”)’s 2015 play rightfully presents its four characters—the couple Jen and Macs. and Della and her plunger husband Tim—as characters rather than types. Della in particular poses a degree of unafflicted charm that sometimes offsets her Christian fundamentalism-based bigotry. Speaking about her showcased Noah’s Ark cake, she points to what she claims are dreams. She also naively believes that her confection could conquer ISIS, where amnesic and governments struggle to do so. Meanwhile is the homely to the Great American Bake Off and assure its (beard but unseen) handmade host (think of his counterpart on the Great British Baking Show).

Ultimately, though, Della’s greatest challenge is to be able to even ask Jen—the daughter of her best friend—would like for her upcoming wedding to African-American Macs. While the gregarious baker claims “I don’t see color,” she unprofessionally does have a serious problem with sexual orientation as does Tim—who admits he “can’t pick and choose all that comes to laws about gys.” At this point, an alliance in the play to Solom and Gornora would have done well to bring in the cities’ clear element of strangers as a factor as striking in the usual homophobia explanation.

Brummetter does provide balance with considerable dialogue about both Jen’s complicated family dynamics and Macs’s back story. The wedding day approaches, though, the plotting and Della’s decision-making seem less convincing. Is Della really open to change? Does Tim’s surprise for Della constitute genuine apid pro quo or a predictable device? Notwithstanding cake, can there be a real understanding between Della and Meg if the later fear that the former hates her? These questions are likely to prove nagging for some theatergoers.

Under director O’Connor’s careful guidance, there should be no question that the pacing is sharp and the cast fantastic. Karen MacDonald—always one of the Hall’s premier actresses—is a true standout. In body language and accent as well as a blend of family caring and chauvinism, she proves commanding and watchable as a kind of flawed Everywoman. Fred Silverman, Jr. has all of Tim’s judgmental past and courtesies. As master performers, they improve upon the couple’s otherwise somewhat conventional bedroom scenes. Chelsea Diahl captures Jen’s heart as well as her frustrations. Kris Siddhure finds all of Macs’s fury and feeling. Diahl and Siddhure have all the naturalness of soapbox newcomers. Near the end of the play, Della quotes the First Corinthians observation that “Love is always kind.” In that light, “The Cake” needs stronger texture and more satisfying attention to the love the title confers on it.

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South End News is published every Thursday.

NENPA

Letters policy:
To be considered for publication, letters must be no longer than 300 words, address issues clearly, and include a daytime telephone number. Writers should refrain from making incorrect statements since they may be harmed from false issues. Deadline is two weeks before Thursday’s paper. To send us below: Mail to PO BOX 414, Boston, MA 02127, FAX (617) 464-7286. Email: letters@southernend.com
MLK
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Legacies of racism, poverty and militarism, saying, “And there are times when you must take a stand that is neither safe nor legal nor popular, but you must do it because it is right.”

On Monday, January 20, members of the St. Stephen’s community along with dozens of partner organizations will be following King’s example by taking a stand during their tenth annual MLK Day of Action. Close to 200 volunteers from the South End neighborhood, suburban churches and synagogues, professionals groups and non-profit organizations will come together with Blackstone School faculty for a morning of work projects to shower love (and some paint) on the school. There will also be projects to improve St. Stephen’s after-school program space.

Following a lunch of tasty food, stimulating conversations about King’s legacy, and inspirational words from City Councilor Ed Flynn, there will be a teach-in focused on the issues faced by immigrant students in the Boston Public Schools. Trainers from Usahafri Educators and the Student Immigrant Movement, along with teens from St. Stephen’s, will be equipping participants to work together to ensure immigrant BPS students both feel safe and are safe.

The Blackstone Elementary School is just this sort of loving community, a place where all students feel safe and can focus on learning and academic achievement. This is largely thanks to the dedicated work of the school’s administrators, teachers, and staff, many of whom will be coming to the MLK Day of Action on what would otherwise be a day off from work. Teachers and volunteers will be beautifying classrooms. Parents of students will be sorting through donations for the school’s compassion closet of clothes, food, and hygiene products. College students will be painting murals with inspirational messages on walls and carousels. By the end of the day, there will be many more images of the school’s mascot, Shamuwnt the Shark, around the hallways of the school.

The Blackstone’s Family and Community Engagement Coordinator, Lauren Blonde, sees how the day builds up a community of love. “MLK Day is an opportunity for volunteers and participants to bring to life our school’s guiding principle of Ubuntu, which means I am because you are. We are all connected because we value equality and we want our students to succeed,” said Blonde. “We are honoring King’s legacy with what we will do on this day,” she added.

Recently, it became public that BPS has shared the information of more than 130 students with Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE), jeopardizing these young people’s safety and futures. To help our schools be safe havens for students, trainers will be asking participants to sign and spread a petition that will ask BPS to have clear communication with families before their information is shared with the Boston Police Department, which often leads to reports to ICE. The petition also requests more training for administrators and Boston School Police, among other demands. The petition can be found at bit.ly/NoICEinBPS.

St. Stephen’s Youth Programs Teen Organizer Nikki Jean-Charles is among those excited to be part of the MLK Day of Action. She believes caring for students by making their classrooms sparkle is one of the right things to do. So is taking a stand to protect immigrant students.

“I want to surround myself with a community that is ready to learn and spread peace the way King taught,” said Jean-Charles. “I want to be part of the new generation of leaders, educating others to build a better future and continuing the fight for civil rights.”

To join this community of leaders at the MLK Day of Action, which starts at 9:30 am at the Blackstone Elementary School, 580 Shamuwnt Avenue, sign up at tinyurl.com/ssypmlk2020. For more information, contact hsampson@boston.org.

To learn more about St. Stephen’s Youth Programs, visit www.ssy.boston.org or drop by 419 Shamuwnt Avenue.

We are grateful for the Massachusetts Service Alliance, which is helping to fund and support the MLK Day of Action.
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Community Meeting

PLAN: Nubian Square

Nubian Square Workshop

Monday, January 27
6:00 PM - 7:45 PM
980 Harrison Ave
2nd Floor Training Room
Roxbury, MA 02119

Event Description
The January PLAN: Nubian Square workshop will build upon previous PLAN: Nubian workshops and will focus on the Campus High Urban Renewal Plan, which Crescent, Malcolm X & Putnam, and P3 are all a part of. We will discuss the history of the urban renewal plan, how it impacted the area, and how it is discussed in relation to PLAN: Nubian Square. We will also be discussing the urban design guidelines for Crescent Parcel, and Malcolm X and Putnam Parcels.

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 urban renewal and urban design guidelines.

Contact:
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Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 5th Floor Boston, MA 02201
617.918.4488 | mugey.undermir@boston.gov

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