Friends of the South End Library

Submitted by Marlene Niemius

The South End Branch Library, a Major Facilit that Closed it in October, Will Reopen its Doors to the Public on Tuesday, February 18 at Noon.

Since October 2019, Southsiders have torn their hair out about not knowing where to go for neighborhood meetings, yoga classes, children's stories, computer

Black History Boston

Mel King

Submitted by the Diversity Office of the City of Boston

Melvin "Mel" H. King was born on October 20, 1928, in the South End. Mel graduated from Boston Technical High School (renamed to John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science) and received his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from the Historically Black College and University (HBCU), Claflin University, located in South Carolina in 1958. He received a Masters in Education from Boston State College and then started teaching math at his Alma Mater, Boston Technical High School.

In 1963, Mel left Boston Technical High School to become the Director of Boy's Work at Lincoln House, which was a settlement house in the South End. He also worked with the United South End Settlements (USES) focusing on providing resources for street gangs. He then founded the Community Assembly for a United South End (C.A.U.S.E.) to give tenants and community residents a voice in their communities. In 1967, Mel became the director of the Urban League of Greater Boston. He worked on providing job training for the community and organized the community around public school, employment, and human services delivery issues. One year later, Mel organized a sit-in at the office of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (renamed the Boston Planning and Development Agency) to protest a planned parking garage that was going to be built on a site where housing would have to be leveled on the corner of Dartmouth and Columbus Streets.

Mel then organized a occupation of the lot to protest the parking lot. The next day, between 100 and 400 people occupied the lot. They built tents and wooden shanties and put large signs welcoming onlookers to "Tent City." The Celtics legend, Bill Russell, who owned a South End restaurant, provided food for the protesters. When a housing complex was being dedicated in the same space on April 30, 1988, it was named "Tent City" in honor of the Black History Boston

Blackstone School, St. Stephen's and others honor MLK's legacy

by Tyler Cavanagh

and Gabriel Hunter

St. Stephen's Youth Program

Continuing a ten year tradition, St. Stephen’s Youth Programs (SSYP) and the Blackstone Elementary School, along with 34 partner organizations, honored the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, January 20, 2020 with a day of service projects and leadership training. This year, leaders shaped the day’s program so that it more closely followed King’s prophetic vision of the ways societal challenges—such as institutional racism, economic disparity, and immigration policy—intersect. The day was designed to build the resources needed to tackle these seemingly intractable issues.

One of those resources is relationships, since social capital and connections across difference are critical for addressing community concerns. Organizations who joined SSYP and the Blackstone School for the day included the Jewish Community Relations Council, suburban Episcopal churches, Mass Mentoring, Quest Adventures, National Grid, and Company One Theatre.

Working together to paint Blackstone classrooms and inspirational murals or to sort and organize hundreds of items of clothing in the parent center offered some of the 250 volunteers who were part of the morning’s projects a chance to have conversations, share stories, and learn about each other. Refreshing classroom spaces with a fresh coat of paint may seem very basic, the impact on the students and staff is huge. Volunteers also revitalized the walls of the main office space, re...
The scramble for black votes

REV. IRENE MONROE

Every Democratic presidential hopeful wants my vote. As an African American woman voter, I’m part of the powerful voting bloc the DNC chair, Tom Perez, calls the "backbone" of the party. However, they’ll need to earn it.

During the N.D. Democratic Presidential debate, the subject of race and racism was front and center, and there were no winners. Instead, the debate highlighted the work all the white candidates need to do to win over black voters.

"Whether it’s the Republican Party or the Democratic Party they need to understand from here on out the black vote isn’t free," Marcus Williams wrote after watching the debate in the comment section of the New York Times.

In July 2018, DNC Chair Tom Perez issued an apology statement to black voters for the party taking too long to grant their request. "I am sorry," Perez stated, "we took too many people for granted." He went on, "African Americans—our most loyal constituency—were too often neglected for granted. This is a shame on us, folks, and for that, I apologize. And for that, I say, it will never happen again!"

I, like so many African Americans, was hoping for a fresh start.

In sharing his thoughts about the lack of people of color in the race, House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-S.C.) stated the following on C-SPAN on the night of the N.H. primary:

I wanted Cory and Kamala to remain on that stage. It’s always difficult for candidates of color to raise the kind of money other candidates raise. We have to take that into account. We ought not make all our decisions based upon the deepest pockets. I do not believe that is fair to candidates of color, black and brown, to make decisions based solely on money. We bring so much else to the ticket.

Black voters make up approximately two-thirds of South Carolina’s Democratic voters. Its primary is February 29.

A party that needs African Americans and other people of color to get them to the finish line is telling that the only presidential hopeful of color left standing is Andrew Yang. Although African Americans make up a large number of Democrats, our disaffection from the GOP led to FDR’s Democratic Party once Republicans reneged on its once strong civil rights plank. It’s a cautionary tale to Democrats.

Trump’s campaign has not been a call for black voters.

Trump’s speech should be a "big wake-up call for Democrats," according to CNN analyst Van Jones. "He knows he’s got to get a lot of red meat to his base. Religious liberty, abortion, etc. Jones stated. "At the same time, waning the Democrats. What he was saying to African Americans can be effective. You may not like it, but he mentioned HBCUs. Black colleges have been struggling for a long time, a bunch of them have gone under. He threw a lifeline to them in real life in his budget."

However, the Republican Party is no friend to black folks either. Trump is trying to get just enough of our votes to win re-election. His cutting edge with its reality show theatrics made good TV. The production may have won over a few more black voters, especially with his re-election initiative “Black Votes for Trump.” It spent $5 million making inroads into black communities with multiple strategies along gender and generational lines. For example, “Black Votes for Trump” is running ads in black-owned newspapers and on radio stations across the country.

Trump needs only 14 percent of the black vote to win. He received 8 percent of the total black vote in 2016, more than twice the Republican presidential hopeful, John McCain and Mitt Romney received. His focus, however, is predominately to woo more black men like Tony Rankins, a recovering addict Trump asked to stand up during his 2016 campaign. Rankins is a tradesman in an opportunity zone where wealthy Americans can invest in poor communities in exchange for tax breaks. Thirteen percent of black men voted for him last time whereas only 9 percent of black women. Black men are the most disenfranchised group among us black voters. However, the Trump team sees this demographic as untapped possibilities, especially with the 2018 passage of the First Step Act, a prison reform bill that aims to revamp the federal prison system and some federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws. With the unemployment rate at 6 percent for both blacks and Latins, Trump hopes to woo this group that the last time they may have voted was in 2008 for Obama.

In August 2016, then-presidential hopeful Donald Trump at one of his rallies stated that the Democratic Party takes black votes for granted. In stumping for black votes in Dimondale, Mich, where the population is 25 percent black, Trump asked, referring all in black voters in general “What do you have to lose by trying something news, like Trump? … What is the hell do you have to lose?”

Al Sharpton at the 2004 DNC in Boston answered why we did.

"The Republican Party was the party of Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. It is true that Mr. Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, after which there was a commitment to give 40 acres and a mule. We didn’t get the mule. So we decided we’d ride this donkey as far as it would take us.”

The Democratic Party must do more than court African American voters. The party must address our issues, too.

Where will you live until you can call this ‘Home’ again? Your association policy won’t cover your additional living expenses. Condo owners NEED Personal Condominium Insurance for that. Aside from replacing your personal property, it will help you with rent, while you’re still paying your mortgage. Contact us.

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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.

e-mail: letters@southendnews.com
Safe Exchange Zones for E-Commerce Transactions

Located at All District Stations Across the City

Safe Exchange Zones: As the number of residents buying and selling goods online continues to increase and grow, so too do the potential risks associated with these types of transactions which can sometimes involve meeting strangers in unfamiliar surroundings. In an effort to keep these arranged dealings as safe as possible, the BPD has implemented designated “Safe Exchange Zones” at every Boston Police District Station across the city, as well as BPD Headquarters. These areas are monitored via security video and available 24 hours a day.

Please see the complete list of addresses below to find the Safe Exchange Zone nearest you:

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- District A-7, 69 Paris Street, East Boston, 02128
- District A-15, 20 Vine Street, Charlestown, 02129
- District B-2, 2400 Washington Street, Roxbury, 02119
- District B-3, 1165 Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan, 02126
- District C-6, 101 W Broadway, South Boston, 02127
- District C-12, 40 Gibson Street, Dorchester, 02122
- District D-4, 650 Harrison Avenue, South End, 02116
- District D-14, 301 Washington Street, Brighton, 02135
- District E-5, 1708 Centre Street, West Roxbury, 02132
- District E-13, 3747 Washington Street, Jamaica Plain, 02130
- District E-18, 1249 Hyde Park Avenue, Hyde Park, 02136

Community Meeting

PLAN: Nubian Square

Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting

Monday, March 2
6:00 PM - 7:45 PM
Boston Water and Sewer
2nd Floor Training Room
980 Harrison Avenue
Roxbury, MA 02119

Event Description
The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee (RSMPOC) was developed to oversee projects that fall under the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. Since the launch of PLAN: Nubian Square the RSMPOC meetings also include progress reports on the initiative. These meetings provide updates on PLAN: Nubian Square, the Master Plan Parcels, and the PLAN: Nubian Square Parcels.

All meetings are open to the public and community input is desired. For more information on the upcoming meeting, including the draft agenda and all materials from previous RSMPOC meetings, please visit: bpl.rythermsmopc.

Contact:
Image Undemir
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 5th Floor Boston, MA 02101
617/918-4488 | image.undemir@boston.gov

VOTE EARLY BOSTON 2020

Monday, February 24 – Friday, February 28

Registered Boston voters can vote at any early voting location in the City, including City Hall. Pick a site and time that is best for you.

Monday, February 24, 9:30 AM - 8 PM
Boston City Hall
One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

Tuesday, February 25, 9:30 AM - 8 PM
Boston City Hall
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor, Boston, MA 02201

Copley Square Library
700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02199

Election Day
Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Theatre District
Boston City Hall
One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

In order to vote early or on Election Day, you must register to vote by February 15. Check your voter status at boston.gov/voterstatus

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FOSEL
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access, income tax assistance, movies, books, DVDs, museum passes, reserved book pickups, newspapers, magazines, a trip to the public restroom, or simply chat with their friendly librarian. After decades of neglect, the South End Library finally has completed its long-overdue refresh; its doors will reopen to the public on Tuesday, February 18 at noon.

That is the day when the library opens after a renovation, a process that started in 2017.

The library now features light blue and white walls; an attractive palette of blue and green hues; white ceiling tiles; and a coffee bar, as well as new bookshelves, a new computer area, and a new children's area.

The renovation, which was carried out by the Boston Public Library, includes new lighting, new furniture, and new paint colors.

The library also features a new children's area, with new tables and chairs, and a new computer area, with new computers and new seating.

The library is open on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm.

The library is closed on Sunday and Monday.

For more information, please call 617.464.7280.

40/36

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To be considered for publication, letters must be no longer than 300 words, and include a name and daytime telephone number. Writers should refrain from making incorrect statements since they may be fact-checked. Deadline is noon Tuesday for Thursday's paper. To send us letters or mail us a letter to PO BOX 1047, Boston, MA 02127; FAX (617) 464-7280. Email: letters@southernnewsonline.com

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printed stairway railings, and SSYP parent volunteers cleaned and painted the Blackstone Parent Center.

On the walls of the school, a series of murals were created with colorful paint. They were designed by teachers and students with an intention of beautifying spaces, encouraging student growth, and entertaining families. With an underwater theme, tying into the school's mascot, Shamu the Shark, they also created a sense of school spirit.

Juan Henriquez, a fifth grader at the Blackstone, saw the new murals, near the technology classroom and the indoor recess space, when he came back to school on Tuesday. Henriquez said, "The paintings look good because they have colors and [the volunteers] took their time to do them. It looks nice now." He added, "There are a lot of kids who like the murals because it makes the school look better. It gives the school a lot of positive vibes."

Sonia Ramirez-Cruz, a Boston resident and community arts educator, said, "As an arts facilitator, the objective is to move us all mindfully forward through our human experience using the arts as a glue. The MLK Day call for action was this mission in practice." She continued, "During the day, I connected with individuals who were both new to the community and those who were embedded in it. Together not only are we stronger but also we see our capacity to give."

Family projects that engaged people of all ages, such as painting kindness rocks and weaving cloth into large installations, was another way the program helped volunteers build relationships and reflect on the meaning of the day. It was also a way to keep young bodies and minds entertained. Families painted kindness rocks to affirm teachers at the school, thanking them for their dedication to the youth in our community. The tapestry, woven with written dreams for the world ranging from "a spaceship" to "a world without war or hate", will be a living piece, with young people in SSYP's BRIDGE after school program adding their dreams, and will be displayed at 419 Shawmut Avenue after completion. Projects of painting classroom space and refreshing up bulletin boards also happened at the St. Stephen's space during the morning.

Blackstone teacher Collier summarized the impact of the day, saying, "The teachers were overwhelmed with the collaboration and love we receive from our community. The MLK Day of Action was Dr. King's dream coming to fruition."

After lunch, leaders from Unafraid Educators and the Student Immigrant Movement led a teach-in addressing recent developments regarding the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). A few weeks ago, news broke that ICE gained access to more than 130 student incident reports containing students' personal information. This information sharing, in direct violation of previous promises from BPS, led to the deportation of at least one student and much fear and concern for many other students and their families.

Close to 75 volunteers from the morning projects stayed and were joined by another 100 educators, students, parents, organizers, and concerned community members. They came together to get informed and get trained on how to take action.

Juan DeLeon, a 15-year-old youth organizer from SSYP, opened the afternoon teach-in by quoting a line from a 1967 speech by King, "For those who are telling me to keep my mouth shut, I can't do that. There're times when you must take a stand that is neither safe nor popular, but you must do it because it is right."

Eliza Daniel-Hodge, another SSYP youth organizer who is an 11th grader at TechBoston Academy, continued, "Today we will not keep our mouths shut. We will not stay quiet while information of immigrant students, both documented and undocumented, gets shared with ICE."

Then, trailers from Unafraid Educators and the Student Immigrant Movement laid out a proposal to limit the information sharing between Boston Police Department, BPS, and ICE. Small groups debated the best ways to build the power necessary to implement the proposed policy. Everyone committed to the goal of gathering 2,000 petition signatures and delivering those to BPS by mid-February. Signatures can be added to that petition here: https://actionnetwork.org/forms/join-us-in-making-schools-safe-from-ice

Participants from the morning projects and afternoon workshop all found the day meaningful and important. Blackstone teacher Collier summarized the impact of the day, saying, "In the words of Dr. King, 'Life's most persistent and urgent question is what are you doing for others.' This event makes real the world King and we want to build for students and our community."

To learn more about St. Stephen's Youth Programs, visit www.myboston.org or drop by 419 Shawmut Avenue or email volunteer@myboston.org

(Top Left and Right) Painting Murals at the Blackstone. (Bottom Left) SSYP Teen Organizers with City Counselor Ed Flynn. (Bottom Right) Parent Organizers reporting back to the group during the afternoon workshop.
Advice on Pets, Life, Love

BY MONICA COLLINS

Dear Dog Lady,

Maybe you have covered this before but in the past year or so, I see an increasing number of little plastic bags with dog poop in the middle of the South End, roughly Tremont and its side streets. There are so many of these small bags. I assume professional dog walker(s) are leaving them. Abandoning these bags for someone else to pick up seems like an anti-social act intended to give the finger to residents. I wish someone could best the poop leavers by taking a photo of the offender(s).

—Richard

Dear Richard,

Ask Dog Lady hopes you are wrong about professional dog walkers leaving those nasty bags behind because professional dog walkers should know better. Amateur dog walkers, on the other hand, sometimes need some hard lessons in life on the streets and “doing unto others…” When a person first gets a dog and must pick up, there can be a tendency to take short cuts. If a trash can is not handy, the plastic cup is often stuck in the garbage can. Dog Lady implores everyone who walks a dog to pick up after. Make sure you have a strategy for disposing of the bag—a public receptacle, a trash can at home. Yes, picking up and disposing of dog waste is a must. A downside of keeping a dog. But if you do it successfully, you are a hero. Also, please ensure you use environmentally friendly, biodegradable bags to pick up. Ask Dog Lady recommends BioBags, certifiably compostable bags (available in the South End at and on-line at chewy.com and amazon.com).

Dear Dog Lady,

My little Gianna was an abandoned terrier mix. She came into the shelter with ticks, tapeworm, whipworm and a hernia. She also had a pore on her leg and was underweight. As I hooked around the shelter and saw the little shaky dog, I fell in love with her. She is the joy in my life and is the best little dog in the world. She never did any messes in the house nor tore up anything. She enjoys carrying one or two or even three socks or slippers in her mouth and her whimpers as she tries to “burr” them in her bed or with her. She just pushes imaginary dirt over them. She is five years old. Do you know why she does this?

—Michele

Dear Michele,

Over years writing this column and diving into the magical thinking of dogs, Dog Lady has concluded that when they do quirky things such as carrying nightgowns, dancing around food, or letting out a happy yowl when you enter the room, they celebrate life. They’re not worrying about predators, sickness, ill health, hunger or any of the immediate foams inherent in their species. They are merely going to their happy place. In dogs, this comes out as primitive behavior that brings them joy—such as pushing imaginary dirt over a couple of socks buried in the corner. Gianna acts out the rituals of his ancestors because he’s completely comfortable to be a dog. You have made him secure. He does not feel abandoned, unloved or unwanted.

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