

Ellis Early Learning Receives Support from Partners to Strengthen its STEM Program

SUBMITTED BY
ELLIS EARLY LEARNING

Ellis Early Learning has enhanced its STEM education program with the addition of a dedicated STEM exploration educator and a large donation of educational toys, thanks to corporate partners who support Ellis's efforts to engage children in science, technology, engineering and math learning activities.

Ellis received a donation in December of 375 educational toys from Amazon for use in its STEM Exploration Labs, engaging environments where young children can test their ideas, solve problems and develop their understanding of

Continued on page 2



Ellis Early Learning students pose with a large donation of educational toys from Amazon for use in Ellis's STEM Exploration Labs. Photo courtesy of Ellis Early Learning.

BCA Partners with BU to Support "Multiple Fairs Art Book Fair" at BU

SUBMITTED BY BCA

Boston Center for the Arts (BCA) is pleased to announce that the Boston Art Book Fair is collaborating with Boston University College of Fine Arts School of Visual Arts in a co-branded "Multiple Fairs Art Book Fair" on March 20-22, 2025 held at Boston University. BCA will develop and present a variety of topical panel discussions and hands-on workshops on Saturday at the fair. These public programs will further the common goals of BCA and BU to attract wide and diverse audiences to the fair, and to grow the

community who love art and books.

Multiple Formats is sponsored by BU School of Visual Arts at Boston University, and organized by Christopher Sleboda, Associate Professor of Art, Graphic Design at Boston University. This year's "Multiple Fairs Art Book Fair" is also sponsored in part by Wagner Foundation. BCA is thrilled to reconnect with the wide array of artists, art book lovers, and members of dynamic creative communities that the Boston Art Book Fair has served in its five iterations over seven years as we are looking

Continued on page 4

Tony-Nominated 'Ain't No Mo' Tackles Race, Immigration Through Biting Satire

BY JULES BECKER
Contributing Writer

'Ain't No Mo', SpeakEasy Stage Company and Front Porch Arts Collective, Roberts Studio Theatre, Calderwood Pavillion, Boston Center for the Arts, through February 9. bostontheatrescene.com or 617-933-8600.



Dru Sky Berrian, MaConnia Chesser, Kiera Prusmack, and Schanaya Barrows in Front Porch Arts Collective and SpeakEasy Stage Company's production of "Ain't No Mo" in the Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts. Photo by Nile Scott Studios.

At a time when a dictatorial president is targeting millions of Hispanic-Americans—undocumented and even native-born—for deportation, a 2022 dramedy by now 30 year old black playwright Jordan Cooper is taking off at the Calderwood Pavilion. Cooper's blistering satire—a Roberts Studio Theatre 100 minute non-stop flight—revs to timely resonance about racism and hate. The 2023 Tony-nominated "Ain't No Mo"—in a riveting SpeakEasy Stage-Front Porch Arts Collective area premiere—provocatively imagines a U.S. government arrangement for all people of African descent to return to the mother continent.

Continued on page 6

South End Murder Suspect Pleads Not Guilty

Court Documents Reveal History of Violence

BY SOUTH END NEWS STAFF

A Boston man accused of killing the mother of his three children in a South End luxury apartment entered a not guilty plea Wednesday in connection with the December death of Shantel Gillespie, 30.

Eric McPhail, 37, was ordered held without bail. Court documents show Gillespie died from suffocation and head trauma, with her body discovered December 12 at her Harrison Avenue residence.

The criminal complaint details surveillance footage showing



Eric McPhail in Boston Municipal Court on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025, to face a murder charge in the death of Shantel Gillespie.

NEWS FROM...

The Pilot Block Neighborhood Association

The Pilot Block Neighborhood Association will host a trivia night featuring questions about local history on Tuesday, February 25 at JJ Foleys Cafe. The event, cre-

ated in partnership with the South End Historical Society, begins at 7:00 PM, with doors opening at 6:30 PM.

Participants can compete indi-

vidually for \$15 or form teams of four for \$40. Solo players will be matched with teams. Winners will receive prizes. JJ Foleys is located at 177 E Berkeley Street.



Register here:
tinyurl.com/4n65ppub

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**BOSTON
REDEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**

**PUBLIC
NOTICE**

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

**D/B/A BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
PROPOSED MINOR MODIFICATION TO CERTAIN URBAN
RENEWAL PLANS OF THE CITY OF BOSTON**

Public Notice is hereby given that the Boston Redevelopment Authority d/b/a Boston Planning & Development Agency (“BRA”) will consider at its scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 13, 2024, starting at 3:30 P.M. in the Board Room – Room 900, 9th Floor, Boston City Hall, One City Hall Square, a proposed minor modification to twelve (12) Urban Renewal Plans in the City of Boston, specifically: the Brunswick-King, Campus High School, Washington Park, Fenway, South Cove, Park Plaza, CBD: South Station, Charlestown, Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall, Kittredge Square, and South End Urban Renewal Plan Areas. Said modification(s) will change the expiration date of said Plans to no later than March 31, 2027. This Public Notice is being provided in accordance with a certain “Conciliation Agreement” by and among the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the BRA, and others, dated as of January 16, 2001.

Teresa Polhemus, Secretary



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NEWS FROM...

Friends of the South End Library

**5th Community Meeting
for the new South End Branch**

Join us for a community meeting to discuss plans for the South End Library.

When: Monday, February 10, 2025, 6:30pm to 8:00pm

Where: Virtual - tinyurl.com/4d68eda3

**South End Library
Author Series resumes**

Starting on February 26th we will host Nicole Treska, Boston native and author of a memoir, *Wonderland*, about being raised in a mob family in the days of Whitey Bolger.

The second in the series on March 26th

features Abbott Kahler, author of *Eden Undone*, a remarkable and true story involving murder and an attempt at utopia in the Galapagos.

Our final author event for Spring on April 23rd will be author Dr. Saumya Dave, NY psychiatrist whose most recent novel is titled *The Guilt Pill*, a book which explores women's challenges to “do it all” without guilt and the unintended consequences.

These will be fun, stimulating events enhanced by refreshments, book signings, and book sales by Parkside Booksellers, our own South End, independent book store. More info tinyurl.com/kb9navt.

Ellis

Continued from page 1

complex concepts.

Ellis also recently hired an educator Ana Davis who leads the STEM exploration program, which resulted from funding from National Grid and PwC.

“We are tremendously grateful for Amazon, National Grid and PwC’s support of our STEM program as we strive to set students up for success in school and throughout their lives,” said Ellis Early Learning CEO Lauren Cook. “These additional resources, particularly an educator dedicated to STEM-related learning, will enable our initiative to flourish for the benefit of our young learners.”

Ellis opened a pair of STEM Exploration Labs for toddlers and preschoolers, respectively, at its South End centers in September 2023. The STEM labs are separate classrooms designed to look like children’s playhouses and outfitted with engaging, age-appropriate equipment, supplies and materials to encourage children’s natural curiosity. They were funded by the Boston Public Schools in addition to individual and family foundation donors.

One objective of the STEM lab initiative is to teach preschoolers the basics of (screen-free) coding to enhance their problem-solving and logical thinking skills. The Ellis STEM program offers targeted equipment like a magnet wall where children can explore gravity and the many ways a path can be created and redirected, and a multi-directional wind tunnel demonstrating the relationship that wind and direction share.

Studies show that STEM in early education can lead to later success in school and in the workplace; however, children who live in poverty and children who are members of linguistic and ethnic minority groups, have fewer opportunities to engage in STEM learning than their fellow learners. Additionally, many early childhood teachers are not prepared to engage children in high-quality STEM education.

Ellis is committed to helping all children develop the social, emotional and academic skills they need to be successful in school and in life. The nonprofit stands out for being among the most socio-economically, racially and culturally diverse organizations serving the children of Boston. Over 60% of Ellis families receive child care subsidies from the government and 65% of participants are people of color.



Ellis Early Learning students utilize equipment in Ellis’s STEM Exploration Labs, testing their ideas, solving problems and developing understanding of complex concepts. Photo courtesy of Ellis Early Learning.

AVAILABLE PROPERTIES IN SOUTH END, BOSTON

482 COLUMBUS AVENUE, APARTMENT #3

- **AVAILABILITY:** Now
- **FEATURES:** 1,050 SQ FT of living space featuring an extremely sunny floor-through apartment with 2 bedrooms, a new full kitchen with dining area, living room, large tumbled marble bath, high ceilings, and electric heat. The apartment is a must see.
- **RENT:** \$4,400/Month

482 COLUMBUS AVENUE, APARTMENT #4

- **AVAILABILITY:** Now
- **FEATURES:** 2,400 + SQ FT 2- Floor South-End Penthouse Condominium on desirable Columbus Avenue. Featuring 3 bedrooms - 2 of them extra-large- and 2 ½ bathroom. It offers beautiful views of a South End historical church and is near the corridor. The penthouse boasts South End elegance with vaulted ceilings, skylights, a large sunny living room and reading area, generous home office space, exposed brick, stainless appliances with granite countertops and breakfast bar, and it has an extra deep clawfoot soaking tub in the large master bedroom, giving it a European feel. Additionally, it has generous closet space, gas heat and cooking, washer and dryer, central air, and is fully staged. Furniture is possibly available.
- **PARKING:** Available on-site for an additional fee with 90 days notice
- **RENT:** \$7,900/Month

17 HOLYOKE STREET, SOUTH END PENTHOUSE APARTMENT #4

- **AVAILABILITY:** Now
- **FEATURES:** Sun-drenched, extra-large penthouse condominium on Holyoke Street near the corridor and only steps from the Pru. It is in one of the best locations in the South End, on the border of the Back Bay. The penthouse includes a dining room, vaulted ceilings and skylights, a large sunny sunken living room with built-in bookcases, an oversized working fireplace, window seat, exposed brick, central air conditioning, stainless appliances with granite countertops and mahogany cabinets, and a power shower bathroom, and a large master bedroom with a door to the back deck overlooking the garden. It also has private parking and access to the roof deck, a 1st-floor closet, and wine storage at entry. Gas heat and cooking are provided.
- **PARKING:** Available on-site for an additional fee with 90 days notice
- **RENT:** \$4,800/Month

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OPINION

“Ain’t No Mo” is a no-holds-barred tragicomedy about race

REV. IRENE MONROE
Contributing Writer

Numerous Back-to-Africa movements in the U.S. have sought to return enslaved Africans to the Motherland to resolve the problem of racism. Jordan E. Cooper’s tragicomedy “Ain’t No Mo” brilliantly highlights the urgency of the idea, especially in light of this present moment. With the premise that the United States government offers Black Americans who are descended from enslaved people a one-way reparations plane tickets to Africa, Cooper, a young black queer male playwright, unashamedly shows the ongoing struggle with America’s Original Sin.

Cooper grew up during a rash of police killings of black males, which was the impetus for his play, especially the 2016 killings of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling. In a 2023 interview with the Huffington Post, Cooper said he started writing the play “as a cathartic way to deal with the onslaught of police killings of unarmed Black folks.”

As the youngest Black American playwright ever nominated for a Tony Award, Cooper began writing “Ain’t No Mo” while a high schooler. Cooper imagines a place where Blacks live unencumbered from the yoke of racism and police violence. However, before we depart, Cooper’s vignettes of all too familiar scenes in black life highlight why it’s not safe in the U.S.—physically and mentally — to stay. To some, his no-holds-barred approach might appear brash and gratuitous, but *Flight 1619*, taking the entire African diaspora back to her homeland after 400-plus years, is a glaring reminder of how long the struggle has been.

The play begins in 2008, celebrating Obama’s election as the first black president with the hopes of his election ushering in a “post-racial” America. It ends with *Flight 1619* taking off in 2016, with Trump and MAGA America storming into power. Although we’re in 2025, ironically, you’ll feel stuck in a time warp, a continued nightmare that makes the play a profound message about the endurance and persistence of both institutional and individual racism.

There are several vignettes: a funeral inside a Black church with Brother Right-to-complain, the embodiment of protest and injustice, being eulogized; the home of a wealthy “bougie” Black family whose black servants left to catch *Flight 1619*; a woman’s abortion clinic (Sister Girl We Slay All Day Cause Beyonce Say Community Center) showing a black woman’s fear of bringing a black male child into the world; a female incarcerated for 15 years realizing the profound loss of time, and a taping of “Real Baby Mamas of the South Side,” an outrageous “Real Housewives”-style reality TV show with a transracial woman named Rachonda in black drag-white woman passing as black (remember Rachel Dolezal?).

The vignettes are disparate but smart, with searing, in-your-face moments that you can’t glance askance at. The undeniable experiences of black life and a drag queen named Peaches tie the disparate vignettes together. Peaches, a flight attendant, is tasked with welcoming and ushering the entire U.S. black population onto *Flight 1619*. Each vignette concludes with Peaches’s announcement on the airport’s PA system to hurry and board the

final flight to Africa. “The powers that be have reassured me there’s room for everyone.” Each character, however, must make their choice to stay or leave.

The humor buffers the blows. The humor keeps you from crying or swelling with anger with its over-the-top satirical dramatizations. “I love finding the humor in those situations because I believe that’s how you get through it,” Cooper told the Boston Globe. “That’s the thing about ‘Ain’t No Mo’. It punches at all sides.”

“Ain’t No Mo” is both “a loathe and a love letter to America,” Cooper reminds his audience. The play’s complexity raises difficult questions for African Americans, especially with the government offering every Black American a one-way free plane ticket to Africa. If we board *Flight 1619*, are we willing to leave behind the 400-plus years of building and contributing to the DNA of what makes this country the U.S.?

“Ain’t No Mo” director Dawn M. Simmons shared her response: “So much of Black culture is so uniquely American, so uniquely about what happened and was created on this soil—the good, the bad, the ugly about our tragedy and our triumph. If we go somewhere else, it can come with us, but it changes and morphs.”

AIN’T NO MO’

Play by Jordan E. Cooper. Directed by Dawn M. Simmons. Co-production by SpeakEasy Stage Company and Front Porch Arts Collective. At Roberts Studio Theatre, Calderwood Pavilion, Boston Center for the Arts. Through Feb. 8. Tickets start at \$25. 617-933-8600, www.bostontheatrescene.com

Murder

Continued from page 1

McPhail entering Gillespie’s apartment shortly before her on December 11. He briefly left after midnight before departing with their children the following morning. He returned at 9 a.m. for approximately 90 minutes, marking his final visit to the apartment. Gillespie was

never seen leaving.

According to investigators, McPhail dropped the children at a Dorchester residence that evening, stating he was “going away for a long time.” He allegedly abandoned Gillespie’s car and debit card at a garage near Boston Children’s Hospital, where she worked.

Court records reveal a history of domestic violence, with restraining orders issued against McPhail in 2021 and 2022.

Gillespie had recently completed nursing coursework at Labouré College of Healthcare. Boston Children’s Hospital remembered her as “a valued and committed member of the team,” expressing “deepest sympathies to her family.”

Police urge anyone with information to call 617-343-4470 or anonymously contact CrimeStoppers at 1-800-494-TIPS or text “TIP” to 27463.

BCA

Continued from page 1

for ways to sustain its continuing presence on the rich Boston cultural scene. Like the Boston Art Book Fair, Multiple Formats serves as a fertile gathering and learning place for Boston’s art book community, and so we are honored to work with them.

This partnership with BU School of Visual Arts will also allow BCA to continue to sup-

port an exciting range of exhibitors as well as artists and Boston residents who attend the fair, connecting art to community and allowing us to collectively continue to grow the Boston Art Book Fair. BCA will bring its strong experience in creating programming that serves audiences well beyond the traditional academic community, further broadening Multiple Formats’ already diverse audience. BCA launched the Boston Art Book Fair in 2017, and after a successful return

post-pandemic in 2022, the 2023 edition of the Boston Art Book Fair was the largest yet. BCA continues to explore ways to ensure its future growth and sustainability.

To support this, BCA has adjusted its programming calendar to give the organization time to redesign the event to maximize impact and optimize resource allocation. BCA looks forward to sharing more details in Spring 2025 about the Boston Art Book Fair’s future as a freestanding annual event.



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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; E-mail: letters@southendnews.com

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LEGAL NOTICES

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304		Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court
		Docket No. SU25P0112GD
In the matter of: Marion Kloss Of: Boston, MA	RESPONDENT Alleged Incapacitated Person	
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Boston Medical Center, of Boston, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Marion Kloss is in need of a Guardian and requesting that (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve on the bond.	Suffolk Probate and Family Court 24 New Chardon Street Boston, MA 02114	
The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.		
You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of 02/26/2025. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.		
IMPORTANT NOTICE The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.		
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 29, 2025 <i>Stephanie L. Everett, Esq., Register of Probate</i>		

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304		Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court
		Docket No. SU25P0176GD
In the matter of: Sheila A Rolston Of: Boston, MA	RESPONDENT Alleged Incapacitated Person	
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Stephen L. McDonough, of Boston, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Sheila A Rolston is in need of a Guardian and requesting that Stephen L. McDonough, of Boston, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve Without Surety on the bond.	Suffolk Probate and Family Court 24 New Chardon Street Boston, MA 02114	
The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.		
You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of 02/20/2025. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.		
IMPORTANT NOTICE The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.		
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 28, 2025 <i>Stephanie L. Everett, Esq., Register of Probate</i>		

CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION		Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court
		Docket No. SU24P2736EA
Estate of: James Cook Also known as: James T Cook		
Date of Death: 10/07/2024		
To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Leonard Beach of North Oxford, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: Leonard Beach of North Oxford, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve on the bond in unsupervised administration.	Suffolk Probate and Family Court 24 New Chardon Street Boston, MA 02114 (617)788-8300	
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/04/2025.		
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.		
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC) A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.		
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 20, 2025 <i>Stephanie L. Everett, Esq., Register of Probate</i>		

Theater

Continued from page 1

The ‘passengers’ for the African American Airlines one-way travel in question are reporting to the tellingly named gate 1619 (the year when black slaves were brought by British colonists to Virginia). Drag gate attendant Peaches—actually played by Cooper in 2022 and here portrayed with an arresting combination of comic timing and poignancy by Grant Evan—introduces the audience to the mysterious Miss Bag. This metaphorical prop—Cooper submits—“carries all the legacy, history, joy and pain, the triumph and the perseverance of the Black race in America.”


Via very different but vivid vignettes—here under Dawn M. Simmon’s appropriately driving direction, Cooper insightfully examines the impressively heavy Black contribution to America that the Bag contains. One of the most exuberantly presented vignettes involves a church sermon—delivered with wonderful authority by De’Lon Grant—in which the preacher eulogizes the deceased known as Brother Right to Complain. The overly optimistic sermonizer invokes the play’s ironic title in claiming that the election of Black President Obama means that there “ain’t no mo’ discrimination” and “no more waiting on FEMA” in Louisiana.

While Cooper peppers some of the following vignettes with comic exchanges, his timely play never loses sight of the formi-

dable and often demeaning challenges continuing to confront Black Americans. A take-off on reality shows called “Real Baby Mamas of the South-Side” finds black women in eye-catching attire—kudos to designer Rachel Padula Shufelt—initially hyping for the camera at the request of an unseen director only to engage in bickering and wig-tossing. Here Kiera Prusmark sharply captures a self-serving white Rachel masquerading as a ‘transracial’ with the name Rachonda. Schanaya Barrows finds all of the bluntness with which Tracy exposes her. Dru Sky Berrian brings touching vulnerability to a pregnant woman suffering along with other unattended Black patients.

Especially revealing is an alternately amusing and disturbing vignette focused on an affluent Black family shaken up by the emergence of a basement stowaway known as Black. MaConnia Chesser has all of Black’s fury and intensity as she powerfully reminds the smug family members that they must not deny the authenticity and true soulfulness she represents. Cooper also observes—via Grant Evan’s strikingly complex Peaches that black people sometimes hate fellow blacks worse than whites do.

“Ain’t No Mo” proves as much of a theatrically satisfying play as it is a vital cautionary voyage to combat stereotypes and racism. Cooper has insisted cogently that “there’s still so much work to do.” The SpeakEasy Stage-Front Porch Arts Collaborative flight at the Calderwood Pavilion is an important part of that work.



LETTERS POLICY

The South End News welcomes letters to the editor.

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

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