

Walloped!

South End residents, businesses support each other through the storms

By MICHELE D. MANISCALCO

Just as it seemed that a relatively uneventful winter, marked by a brief deep freeze but modest snowfall, was on its way out, March came in with a proverbial roar in the form of three storms in less than two weeks.

The punishing winds, high tides and floodwaters of the Friday, March 2 nor'easter left hundreds of thousands with water, wind and tree damage and massive power outages, and the ensuing storms on Thursday, March 8 and Tuesday, March 13

slowed recovery efforts and brought widespread school, work and road closures.

The South End News informally surveyed neighborhood residents and businesses to learn how they dealt with the wild weather and found that the stereotype of the hardy New Englander, whether native-born or newcomer, is alive and well in these parts.

Quite a few local businesses opened during the storms to provide a haven for weather-weary neighbors. Petit Robert Bistro, Anoush'ella, Tremont 647 and Sister Sorel were among the eateries that welcomed diners during Tuesday's storm, while Foodie's, Casa Cuong, Don Quijote Market and Muscarella's stood ready to supply provisions during the nor'easters.

Foodie's opened until 5:00 PM on Tuesday, March 13, while Muscarella's at 570 Tremont Street kept its regular, 7:00 AM-9:30 PM schedule with the full menu of prepared foods available. Employee Angel, whose duties include food preparation and management, said, "Things are great. The weather's horrible, but at the same time it's beautiful. It's a weird mix."

He said business during Tuesday's blizzard was "average, about the same as usual." Angel was sanguine about opening in the inclement weather. "We have the reputation in this area of being renegades of weather; rain storms or whatever, we're here."

At the South End Buttery on

Continued on page 4



Photo by Michele Maniscalco

Steve Celebrates Love Old Money Resonates

Steve, Zeitgeist Stage Company, Black Box Theatre, Boston Center for the Arts, through March 24. 617-933-8600 or bostontheatrescene.com

Old Money, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Carling-Sorenson Theater, Babson College, Wellesley, through March 18. 866-811-4111 or commshakes.org

By JULES BECKER

Are gay relationships and gay parenting really very different from straight ones? Mark Gerrard's incisive

Off-Broadway hit "Steve"—now in a wonderfully affecting Hub premiere by Zeitgeist Stage Company—makes the answer a resounding "no." The title character is a past chorus boy and now stay-at-home Manhattan partner and parent, who early on alludes to Jewish trader Shylock's famous speech about his humanity in "The Merchant of Venice" with the rhetorical variation "Hath not a half-Jew eyes?" Steve may not indicate from which parent he derives Jewish ancestry, and the remark may seem to apply only to his sighting of Argentinian-American waiter Esteban. Even so, this ostensibly minor point sets a sub-textual tone for respect.

As Gerrard's play proceeds



Alex Jacobs, Jenny Reagan, and Mike Nilsson in Zeitgeist Stage Company's production of "Steve". Photo credit: David J. Miller

(mostly in New York City but also on Fire Island), Steven sometimes rages about the possibility that his lawyer partner Stephen has been unfaithful to him. Eventually Stephen actually admits to sexting after the recovery of his cellphone—found in the possession of the partners' unseen child

Continued on page 4

Remembering Harriet Tubman

Friends of the Harriet Tubman Square Statues marked the anniversary of Tubman's death on March

10 with bouquets. Tubman died in Auburn, NY, in 1913.



Photo courtesy Freida Garcia

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Taste of the South End

On Tuesday, March 20, foodies will gather to support Massachusetts AIDS Action Committee at the 23rd annual Taste of the South End (TOSE).

TOSE will be held from 7pm-9:30pm at the Cyclorama at the Boston Center for the Arts, 539

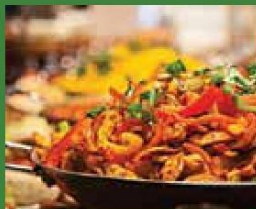
Tremont Street, Boston. Admission is 21+.

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For more information visit tasteofthesouthend.org

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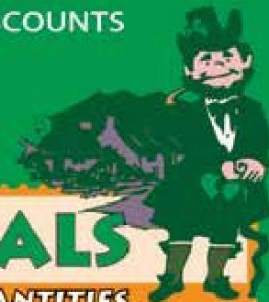

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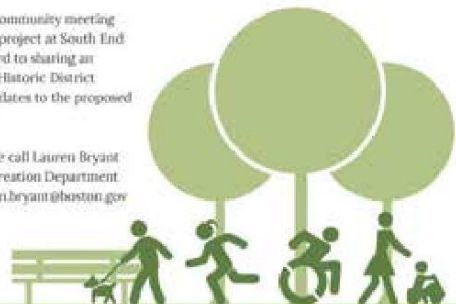
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6:30 PM**

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685 Tremont Street, South End

Please join us for a second community meeting regarding the capital repair project at South End Library Park. We look forward to sharing an update from the South End Historic District Commission hearing and updates to the proposed plan.

For more information, please call Lauren Bryant at the Boston Parks and Recreation Department (617) 961-3019 or email lauren.bryant@boston.gov



VISIT THE PROJECT WEBSITE:
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Walloped!

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Shawmut Avenue, store manager Darrel commented on Tuesday, "We got a lot of great feedback that we were open today. The response from people in the South End was amazing. It's been busy." Darrel said the Buttery has several employees who live locally and didn't mind coming to work in the storms.

"We support [owner Richard Gordon's] decision to be open. I think it was a great decision for the community," Darrel said customers bought "Lots of sweets, lots of hot drinks like cappuccino and lattes and lots of chili." Darrel recalled a couple who came in to eat during the day on Tuesday and were so happy that the Buttery was open that they planned to order dinner there as well. "The Buttery is going to feed us all day!" they said.

Some local restaurants took the opportunity to bolster neighbors' spirits with snow-day specials and amusements, which met with appreciation from hungry, thirsty and stir-crazy customers. Since Bar Mezzana co-owners Colin and Heather live above the restaurant, it was easy for the restaurant to offer hospitality during the storms.

Co-owner Jefferson Macklin explained, "We are in the hospitality business and we feel like people want to get together and beat the cabin fever." Bar Mezzana offered "Burgers and Board Games" on snow days. "We've done this every storm. At the beginning of the season, we bought a whole bunch of board games at Target so people can play and have some fun." While the menu was limited by the delivery cancellations during the storms, Bar Mezzana posted a special menu on Instagram. Diners

were undeterred even by Tuesday's blizzard. Shortly after opening at 5:00 PM, Macklin said, "Reservation-wise, we dropped a little, but we are picking up. There are already a few people at the bar. We are trying to be a harbor in the storm."

Boston Chops offered \$1 wings during the March 8 storm and again during the Tuesday, March 13 blizzard. Assistant general manager Brian Deschere said, "We find the neighborhood is very supportive in general, and when businesses are closed, we want to provide a place for [people] to go and eat. I'll probably have a good bar crowd and it will be like a neighborhood gathering."

The popularity of the first \$1.00 wing special took Deschere by surprise. "[March 8's] nor'easter was the first time we had the chicken wing special. We opened at 5:00 PM and sold out 200 wings by 7:00 PM. We learned a lesson," he mused. At Boston Chops, the menu also was limited by lack of deliveries. Deschere said, "For me, a snow day is an opportunity to be a venue for the neighborhood. It doesn't feel like work, it feels like hosting a dinner party."

Residents endured the storms by working at home, catching up on personal business and clearing snow from their walks and cars. Ink Block-area resident Nancy Wall Farrington, a South Carolina native who prefers all things summer: warm weather, sunshine and the Red Sox, returned from a vacation in Santa Monica only to be greeted by March 2's destructive winds and rain. Prior to this week's storm, Farrington stocked up at Whole Foods, using the snow day to do household organizing and catch up on current events.

During the March 13 storm, resident Lisa Jenks enjoyed having the opportunity to

dine at one of Washington Street's perennially packed hotspots. She wrote, "We went to Toro for dinner tonight and the place was packed." Stergios also visited the popular tapas spot, where hopeful diners often crowd the sidewalk waiting to get a table.

"I stopped at Toro on my way back, since the only time we in the neighborhood can squeeze into Toro is when the snow dissuades others from coming, and had a good meal and ran into others from the neighborhood, and outside the neighborhood," Stergios said.

While the storms halted travel all over the state, the city's snow removal efforts seemed to impress South End denizens interviewed for this article. Jenks observed, "The city seems to be keeping up well with the snow clearing."

A dog owner and longtime Shawmut Avenue resident was similarly pleased with the city's snow grooming, commenting, "Blackstone Square was nicely plowed and not over-salted for tiny, tender paws." Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association president George Stergios said, "I took a long walk around 5:00 PM and the city has done a good job getting out ahead of the storm."

Mass. Ave. resident Andrew Brand reported, "I did shovel a few times, but the snow was light and fluffy, so it was easy to shovel. All in all, it was not nearly as unpleasant as it could have been, or I was fearing. That said, I'm not happy I will not be able to ride my bike..." Jenks witnessed camaraderie during Tuesday's storm. "Our neighbors on Cumston Street have all been out and about checking on each other. The dogs are all a little confused, but the people seem to be managing well."

Theater

Continued from page 1

Zack—reveals his indiscretion. Could Steven be retaliating with charming Esteban? Will Steven and Stephen reach an understanding? Will Steven's confidant Carrie, vulnerable in both relationship and health, help the realization of such an understanding? Ultimately Cerrard's play not only deals with the complexities of this gay 'extended family' but also convincingly suggests that the characters' relationships are universally compelling.

As the relationships evolve, Zeitgeist artistic director David J. Miller keeps the pacing tight and the cast members' characterizations vivid. Victor Shopov's Steven may sound a bit too volatile in the early going, but he soon modulates his tone so that his character's insecurities become as noticeable as his anger. Jenny Reagan brings both strong feeling and growing fragility to her portrayal of cancer-ridden Carrie. Alex Jacobs perfectly captures Stephen's ambivalence and internal conflict—especially during a singular iPhone exchange with Mike Nilsson, properly overly sensual as Brian, the partner of Steven's best friend Matt. Mikey Di Loreto catches Matt's reflective nature—particularly in a scene-stealing moment of candid advice with Steven. Adam

Boiselle makes the most of ubiquitous dancer Esteban's combination of grace and geniality. Michael Clark Wonson's nuanced lighting smartly underscores characters' moments of tension and understanding.

"Steve" is as much a celebration of friendship and love that withstand mistrust as a sharp examination of gay relationships. Zeitgeist Stage makes that examination a vital experience for all theatergoers.

Wendy Wasserstein explored women's rights in her Pulitzer Prize-winner "The Heidi Chronicles." Sibling solidarity and Jewish pride are significant themes in her affectionate comedy "The Sisters Rosenzweig." By contrast, the late playwright's centuries—comparing effort "Old Money" brings together women's concerns, Jewish nouveau niche characters battling anti-Semitism and a variety of family generations. Wasserstein's interesting play may seem too thematically busy at times, but Commonwealth Shakespeare Company gives it lively currency at Babson College's Carling-Sorenson Theater. Director Karen MacDonald, a premier actress herself (numerous IRNE and Norton awards), demonstrates impressive facility guiding the first-rate cast that brings to vivid contrasting life the distinct characters attending the 2000 and early 1900's

get-togethers at the play's Fifth Avenue, New York City mansion setting.

A playbill director's note speaks of the playwright's observations about the opulence and "A list" guests at a late 1990's dinner party that sparked her idea for the play. Quite fittingly, the CSC cast itself is a combination of "A" list actors like Will Lyman, Jeremiah Kissel and Veronica Anastasio Wiseman and soon-to-be "A" list performers like Elliott Purcell and Amanda Collins. Lyman captures the talented, mercurial mansion architect Schuyler Lynch—spoken of as caught in a scandal with a schoolboy—as well as the ailing, vulnerable old money scion Tobias Vivian Pfeiffer III. Kissel catches the adventurousness of Jewish entrepreneur Arnold Strauss and emotionally conflicted though successful 2000 mansion owner Jeffrey Bernstein. There are equally strong double performances from Wiseman, Purcell, Collins and the rest of this very talented ensemble. Credit goes as well to Charles Schoonmaker for sharp period costumes and Jon Savage for an elegant, well-detailed scenic design.

"Old Money" resonates tellingly in wealth-dominated early 21st century America. Wasserstein may not quite make a major statement here, but CSC's engaging production is "A" list lovely.

39/10

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The Theater Offensive (TTO) presents ClimACTS! GLOW, a come-as-you-are, bold party that invites attendees to explore their naughty sides in an evening of boisterous celebration and interactive performances.

ClimACTS!, The Theater Offensive's annual gala, celebrates the rich diversity of LGBTQ lives through an evening that challenges norms, explores sexuality, and uplifts the various identities and icons within queer culture. All proceeds benefit TTO's arts programs that bring LGBTQ art and artists to the stage, front and center.

Find yourself among Boston's brightest and hottest LGBTQ scene, as Kennedy Davenport of RuPaul's Drag Race (and this year's TTO OUT'hood Award recipient) drops, twirls, and works as the event's emcee. Guests will also mingle with Rebecca Taichman the 2017 Tony Award Winner for Best Director of Broadway's *Indecent*. Taichman will be the recipient of the TTO's 2018 Out on The Edge Award, recognizing her accomplishments and contributions to bold, status quo-defying LGBTQ art.

"This event offers LGBTQ people a place to gather, play, and truly be themselves – to celebrate their sexuality in a space that is hard to find (yet so

needed) in Boston. ClimACTS! truly is a fundraiser like no other. At ClimACTS!, we honor the Queer and Trans contributions to our society as many have pushed the status quo to get where we are today. This event also will highlight the critical work that The Theater Offensive does to support queer artists and LGBTQ youth of Boston," offered TTO Acting Executive Director Harold Steward. In these times, it's so important that we support LGBTQ art and artists – and at ClimACTS! we're going to show people what that looks like."

Past recipients of the TTO OUT on the Edge Award have included playwrights and performers Tony Award-Winning Fun Home playwright Lisa Kron, Transparent's Alexandra Billings, Tony Award-winner Billy Porter, Big Freedia, and actor Alan Cumming. Kennedy Davenport is the inaugural recipient of the OUT'hood Award.

The Theater Offensive (TTO) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to present the diversity of LGBTQ lives in art so bold that it breaks through personal isolation, challenges the status quo, and build thriving communities.

Proceeds from ClimACTS! GLOW will support the programs of TTO, including:

TRUE COLORS: OUT YOUTH THEATER: a creative arts program for LGBTQ youth and their straight allies

ages 14-29. True Colors is oldest LGBTQ youth theater troupe in the nation and in November 2016 was honored with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Programs Award, the nation's highest honor in creative youth development, presented by First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House. True Colors is the first-ever LGBTQ youth group to be recognized with this award!

OUT In Your Neighborhood: TTO works within Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain and the South End to create original, groundbreaking works by, for and about the LGBTQ community. TTO believes in the importance of producing bold, local theater right where residents live, increasing access to art and inspiring deeper dialogue among neighbors and residents that lead to understanding.

THE PRIDE YOUTH THEATER ALLIANCE (PYTA): founded in 2012, PYTA began as a cohort of directors, educators, and activists representing Queer Youth Theater (QYT) programs from across the U.S. and Canada. PYTA raises awareness and fosters institutional unity for the work of individual programs and the QYT community and beyond. PYTA operates in 20 states (48% red states) and engages over 15,000 queer youth annually.

More at www.thetheateroffensive.org

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Public Meeting

PLAN: DUDLEY SQUARE

MONDAY, MARCH 19
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

980 HARRISON AVE
Boston Water and Sewer,
2nd Floor Training Room
Roxbury, MA 02119

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The March PLAN: Dudley Square discussion will build on the past Request for Proposal (RFP) workshops to respond to comments, which will include outlining the Project Review Committee (PRC) process. Throughout the evening there will be opportunity for attendees to engage in productive dialogue with City/BPDA team members and each other on elements of the material being shared as part of the workshop.

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. The goals of this study are to provide an inclusive community engagement process, create an updated vision with the community, and establish an implementation plan that will lead to the issuance of RFPs for publicly-owned parcels in Dudley Square.

We look forward to having you join us at the workshop.

For more information please visit: <http://bit.ly/PlanDudley>

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Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

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