

News from...

Friends of the South End Library

SUBMITTED BY MARLEEN NIENHUIS

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

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

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Photo courtesy Friends of the South End Library

Black History Boston

Mel King

SUBMITTED BY THE DIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

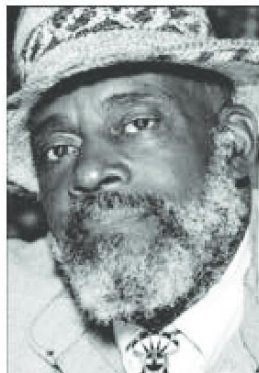
Melvin "Mel" H. King was born on October 20, 1928, in the South End. Mel graduated from Boston Technical High School (renamed to John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science) and received his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from the Historically Black College and University (HBCU), Claflin University, located in South Carolina in 1950. He received a Masters in Education from Boston State College and then started teaching math at his Alma Mater, Boston Technical High School.

In 1953, 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 an occupation of the lot to protest the parking lot. The next day, between 100 and 400 people occupied the lot. They



Mel King. Photo credit: Don West, fotografiks

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

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Local news
for and about Boston's
best neighborhood

A Day of Action



Painting at the Blackstone

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

BY TYLER CAVANAGH
AND GABRIEL FONTES
ST. STEPHEN'S YOUTH PROGRAMS

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 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-

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Online

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Online

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.H. 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 Wilkins 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 us for granted over the years.

"I am sorry," Perez stated, "We took too many people for granted." He went on, "and African Americans—our most loyal constituency—we all too frequently took for granted. That 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-SC) 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 is 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 it 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 it's telling that the only presidential hopeful of color left standing is Andrew Yang. Although African Americans amass in large numbers as Democrats, our disaffection from the GOP lead us to FDR's Democratic party once Republicans reneged on its once strong civil rights plank. It's a cautionary tale to Democrats.

Trump's SOTU address was a call for black votes.

Trump's address should be "a big wake-up call for Democrats, according to CNN analyst Van Jones. "He knows he's got to give a lot of red meat to his base. Religious liberty, abortion etc., Jones stated. "At the same time, warning 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 SOTU address with its reality show theatrics made good T.V. The production may have won over a few more black voters, especially with his re-election initiative "Black Votes for Trump." It has spent \$1 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-run 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 then-Republican presidential hopefuls 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 SOTU address. Rankins is a tradesman in an opportunity zone where wealthy Americans can invest in poor communities in exchange for tax benefits. Thirteen percent of black men voted for him last time whereas only 4 percent of black women. Black men are the most disenfranchised group among us black

voters. However, the Trump team sees this demographic group as untapped possibilities, especially with the 2018 passage of the First Step Act, a prison reform bill that aims to revise the federal prison system and some federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws. With the unemployment rate at 6 percent for both Blacks and Latinx, 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 rally's stated that the Democratic Party takes black voters for granted. In stumping for black votes in Dimondale, Mich, where the population is 2.8 percent black, Trump asked, referring all to black voters in general "What do you have to lose by trying something new, like Trump? ... What the hell do you have to lose?"

Al Sharpton at the 2004 DNC in Boston answered why we do:

"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.



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King

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protest. Mel told reporters that the success of the project was centered in convincing ordinary Bostonians that they had a major role in the development of their neighborhood.

In 1973, Mel was elected as a State Representative for the 9th Suffolk District, where he served till 1982. In 1983, when the incumbent Mayor of Boston, Kevin White, withdrew from contention, Mel ran for Mayor, becoming the first Black person to run for

Mayor of Boston. Ultimately, Raymond Flynn would win, but Mel's leadership and example would encourage future generations of Black people to pursue higher offices.

Mel is a legendary figure within Boston and beyond. His work has spanned decades and his person transcended politics. Mel King is truly an amazing example for the next generation of organizers and leaders of Boston's Black community. Let's use his heroic journey and example to foster those budding, young leaders.

Letters Policy

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.

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SUBMITTED BY BOSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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 District A-15, 20 Vine Street, Charlestown, 02129
 District B-2, 2400 Washington Street, Roxbury, 02119
 District B-3, 1165 Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan, 02124
 District C-6, 101 W Broadway, South Boston, 02127
 District C-11, 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, 3347 Washington Street, Jamaica Plain, 02130
 District E-18, 1249 Hyde Park Avenue, Hyde Park, 02136



Community Meeting

PLAN: Nubian Square

Workshop

Monday, February 24
 6:00 PM - 7:45 PM

Boston Water & Sewer Commission
 980 Harrison Avenue, 2nd Floor Training Room
 Roxbury, MA 02119

Event Description

The February PLAN: Nubian Square workshop will build upon previous PLAN: Nubian workshops and will focus on reviewing draft RFPs for Crescent Parcel and Malcolm X and Putnam Parcels. We will review comments from previous meetings and how they are incorporated into the RFPs. Throughout the evening there will be opportunity for attendees to engage in productive dialogue with City/BPDA team members and each other on evaluation criteria and development objectives detailed in the Draft RFPs.

Draft RFPs will be made available on the website for review.

As with all previous workshops, feedback provided will be taken into consideration for incorporation into the RFP documents.

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

Contact:

Muge Undemir
 Boston Planning & Development Agency
 One City Hall Square, 9th Floor Boston, MA 02201
 617.918.4488 | mugzy.undemir@boston.gov

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Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

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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 bit.ly/theRSMPOC.

Please come join your neighbors to help shape the future of the neighborhood!

Contact:

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 Boston Planning & Development Agency
 One City Hall Square, 9th Floor Boston, MA 02201
 617.918.4488 | mugzy.undemir@boston.gov

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Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

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 time and place that is best for you.

Los votantes registrados de Boston pueden votar en cualquier lugar para votar por adelantado en la Ciudad, incluyendo la Sede Municipal. Elija la hora y el lugar que sea mejor para usted.

MONDAY, FEB. 24, 9AM - 5PM

Lunes 24 de Febrero

Boston City Hall

One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

TUESDAY, FEB. 25, 12PM - 8PM

Martes 25 de Febrero

Boston City Hall (9a.m. - 8p.m.)

One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

Copley Square Library

700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

East Boston High School

86 White Street, East Boston, MA 02128

Jackson Mann School

500 Cambridge St. Allston, MA 02134

James F. Condon Elementary School

200 D St. South Boston, MA 02127

The Dewitt Center

122 Dewitt Drive, Roxbury Crossing, MA 02120

ABCD Thelma D. Burns Building

575 Warren St. Boston, MA 02121

WED. FEB. 26, 9A.M. - 8P.M.

Miércoles 26 de Febrero

Boston City Hall

One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

THURSDAY, FEB. 27, 12PM - 8PM

Jueves 27 de Febrero

Boston City Hall (9a.m. - 8p.m.)

One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

All Saints' Church

209 Ashmont St., Dorchester, MA 02124

Another Course to College

612 E Metropolitan Ave, Hyde Park, MA 02136

Margarita Muniz Academy

20 Child St. Boston, MA 02130

First Parish Church of Dorchester

10 Parish St. Dorchester, MA 02122

Mildred Ave. Community Center

1-5 Mildred Ave. Mattapan, MA 02126

Roche Community Center

1716 Centre St. West Roxbury, MA 02132

FRIDAY, FEB. 28, 9AM - 5PM

Viernes 28 de Febrero

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 12. Check your voter status at boston.gov/elections

Learn more at boston.gov/early-voting

#VoteEarlyBoston • Call 311 • election@boston.gov

Más información en boston.gov/early-voting

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If you miss the early voting period, you can still vote on Election Day, Tuesday, March 3rd.

Si pierdes el periodo para votar por adelantado, todavía puedes votar el Día de la Elección, que es el martes 3 de marzo.



City of Boston
 Mayor Martin J. Walsh

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 a 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 stays open till 8:00 PM.

The library now offers a variety of seating arrangements in the adult room, including high tables and reading tables wired for laptops and other electronic devices. A new teen space underneath the stairs is separated from the adult computer area with colorful panels wired with outlets; the panels also can be used as a white board. The refurbished Children's Room has new tables and computer screens for both teens and tweens.

BPL president, David Leonard, will be on hand to welcome the community back to the branch and officially declare the building "refreshed." The library now features light-blue and easy-to-clean new floors; an attractive palette of blues on its diagonal walls; a fresh coat of paint throughout the first and second floors, new upholstery; a reconfigured space to allow for a variety of seating arrangements; electrically wiring inside high and reading tables; an attractive seating area for teens underneath the stairs; new upholstery and rugs in the Children's Room; new electrical outlets throughout the space; a ceiling-mounted projector and slide-down screen in the Community Room; and much-improved signage. The space reconfiguration and furniture choices were recommended by FOSEL board member, architect Michelle Laboy, during a multi-year planning process that was combined with a quick and successful fundraising effort by FOSEL in 2017/18.

The contributions by you, our generous donors, allowed us to write a check for \$50,000 for the new furnishings that will benefit all South End library users.

The "refresh" was originally part of an effort by the Friends of the South End Library to jumpstart a major renovation of the dilapidated branch which, at the time, was not scheduled for expansion until 2025, due to an enormous backlog of many other sub-standard library buildings in the 24-branch BPL system. The FOSEL proposal called for a multi-phased expansion that would combine public and private funds for a new South End facility. The Friends raised \$100,000, of which \$50,000 was added to a City Budget allocation of \$132,000 for the First Phase. But happily, the Walsh Administration decided two years ago to completely renovate and expand the size of the South End library after all, beginning with a Programming Study in FY 2020. As a result, the First Phase face lift



Photo courtesy Friends of the South End Library

became a "refresh" to last for the next three to five years, while the multi-million-dollar 'Big Reno' is being planned in an upcoming process of community meetings, demographic fact-finding, and design studies that will start sometime this year.

Mayor Walsh's Administration investment in the Boston Public Library system is enormous and, according to his South End spokesperson, Faiza Sharif, a reflection of his dedication to preserving and improving neighborhood public spaces accessible to all. Since he took office six years ago, more than \$82 million was spent on the Central Library's Johnson Building, now an attractive bustling hub that features a WGBH studio, the popular Newsfeed cafe, and a BPL Gift Shop. The almost \$16 million renovation of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department, to open to the public next year, will make it into an internationally recognized state-of-the-art facility of historical and art treasures. In addition, the BPL is in the process of looking for an architect to renovate the stately McKim building which adjoins the Johnson Building on Copley Plaza.

For the branches, Jamaica Plain got a

\$10 million new facility a few years ago. The Adams Street branch, at \$19 million, will be ready by 2021 and the \$15 million Dudley Library renovation (perhaps Nubia library in the future?) is scheduled to reopen this spring. For the next five years, another \$127 million is budgeted for other library renovations, including the South End branch.

The current South end library improvements include a charming mural near the Children's Room depicting a number of South End landmarks and cultural icons which FOSEL suggested the artist, Tony Capozzi, consider in his design, and he did. They include the BCAkiosk; Back Bay station; a row of bow-front brownstones; the Union United Methodist Church; a same-sex couple embracing; musical venues; planes flying over; and a number of cats, among other features. No dogs, regrettably. A similar mural is on the wall in the Chinatown branch, with its own iconic images.

More information at www.friendsofsouthendlibrary.org. The South End Branch of the Boston Public Library is located at 685 Tremont Street.

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Action

Continued from page 1

painted stairway railings, and SSYP parent mentors 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, Shawmut the Shark, they also created a sense of school spirit.

Juan Herasme, 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. Herasme 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."

SiouxSanna 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 the 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 a large installation, 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 hands 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 B-READY after school program adding their dreams, and will be displayed at 419 Shawmut Avenue after completion. Projects of painting classroom space and freshening up bulletin boards also happened at the St. Stephen's space during the morning.

Blackstone teacher Crystal Collier said about the day, "Teachers are overwhelmed with the consistent support 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 Edu-

cators 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 they 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 politic nor popular, but you must do it because it is right."

Eliza Daniel-Hodges, 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, trainers 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.ssyphoston.org or drop by 419 Shawmut Avenue or email volunteer@ssyphoston.org



(Top Left and Right) Painting Murals at the Blackstone. (Bottom Left) SSYP Teen Organizers with City Councilor Ed Flynn (Bottom Right) Parent Organizers reporting back to the group during the afternoon workshop

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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 these. 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 bust 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 penchant is often to stash it anywhere.

Dog Lady implores everyone who walks a dog to pick up after. Make sure you have a strategy for disposing the bag—a public receptacle, a trash can at home. Yes, picking up and disposing of dog waste is a yucky downside of keeping a dog. But if you do it successfully, you’re 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 Polka Dog Bakery and online at chewy.com and amazon.com).

Dear Dog Lady,

My little Gizmo was an abandoned terrier mix. She came into the shelter with ticks, tapeworm, whipworm and a bum.

She also had a sore on her leg and was underweight. As I looked 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 whimpers as she tries to “bury” them in her bed or the couch. She even pushes imaginary dirt over them. She is five years old. Do you know why she does this?

—Michele

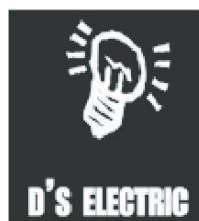
Dear Michele,

Over years writing this column and delving 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 fears 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 couch. Gizmo 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.

Write: askdoglady@gmail.com

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