South End News

November 19, 2020 [Vol. 41, No. 4]

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Local news for and about Boston's best neighborhood

Boston Community Pediatric Opens

Dr. Robyn Riseberg was joined by City Councilor Ed Flynn, Dr. Gloria White Hammond, Rep Joe Kennedy and a number of patients and supporters as she opened Boston Community Pediatrics (BCP), a nonprofit, pediatric private practice which is the first of its kind in Massachusetts. BCP's mission is to bring equity to pediatric healthcare by giving all patients - including those on MassHealth - direct access to their primary care provider as well as comprehensive, prevention-oriented medical care, care navigation services, and integrated behavioral health services.

BCP leverages an asset-based, relationship-driven approach to improve health outcomes and lower health care costs for all pediatric patients, regardless of socioeconomic status or background.

For more information, visit www.bostoncommunitypediatrics.org

(L.To R) BCP Chief Innovation Officer Molly Zuker, Founder Dr. Robyn Riseberg and Dr. Gerald Hass

ASK DOG LADY

Advice on Pets, Life, Love

By Monica Collins

Dear Dog Lady,

I, and probably most of my fellow pit bull owners, take exception you did not scold the woman who described her small Havanese as taking on "traits of a pit bull" and acting aggressive. Had my son not fostered a pit bull puppy out of a Virginia kill shelter and brought the dog home during college break, my wife and I would not have fallen in love with him and adopted him. This is how I began to pick up on generalizations about pit bulls. From her description of her seven pound dog, he is far more aggressive than my socialized sixty-pound lap dog, as well as the vast majority of local pit bulls and other dogs for that matter. Please set the record straight.

—Henry

Dear Henry,

OK, with dogs and with people, we should never stereotype or profile. But Ask Dog Lady admits that if a pit bull was walking down the street at the end of a chain leash carried by a shady-looking character, she would cross to the other side to avoid both the dog and the shady-looking character.

You're entirely accurate about pit bulls. Loyal owners praise pits to the heavens as the most loving, smart, dear dogs. Still, with their lantern jaw and fighter's mien, these dogs do not look warm and cuddly. Occasional stories in the press and lectures from the bench by Judge Judy (not keen about pit bulls nor the people who keep them) have cemented bad perceptions of the animals.

Dear Dog Lady,

My friend and I enjoy taking the dogs out for long on the trails in conservation land near our homes. The dogs get their exercise and we get to chat and complain about anything and everything. However, there's one thing I cannot chat or complain about to my friend because it's about

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Mass & Cass 2.0 Task Force shares plans, achievements

By Michele D. Maniscalco

On Monday, November 9, Mayor Martin J. Walsh and cabinet officials met with members of the Mass Cass 2.0 Task Force; city councilors Kim Janey (president), Frank Baker and Ed Flynn; neighborhood activists and residents to introduce themselves and their efforts to address drug activity, services to the homeless, mentally ill and drug-dependent, and quality of life issues for denizens of the Massachusetts Avenue/Melnea Cass Boulevard nexus and for South End and Roxbury neighbors.

Kim Thai, Walsh's special assistant for the Mass Cass 2.0 program, moderated the meeting, which began with speakers Marty Martinez, chief of health and human services (HHS); Gerry Thomas, deputy director of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC); Sheila Dillon, director of the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) and chief of Housing; assistant commissioner of Inspectional Services (ISD) Aisha Miller; Boston Public Works Department (BPWD) deputy director Michael Brohel; Jen Tracey, director of the Office of Recovery Services. Thai also introduced the city's web site for Mass Cass 2.0 at https://www.boston.gov/departments/recovery-services/melnea-cass-mass-ave-20, which explains and tracks interagency partnerships, activities and results.

Martinez said COVID-19 has had an impact on the Mass and Cass situation and the city's response. Martinez said that the need to decrease density among clients at drug and homeless programs has limited services, and the pandemic-related closure of some programs for poor and homeless people redirected clients to Mass and Cass. Still, Martinez maintained, the city's street outreach, treatment referrals, and overdose prevention continue at Mass and Cass.

Next, Thai gave an overview of the Coordinated Response Team (CRT), comprising members from BPHC, ISD, BPWD, Boston Police Department (BPD), Boston Public Schools (BPS), Boston Fire Department, and the Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS), respond in concert to conditions at Mass and Cass. Thai gave examples of CRT's activities such as post-overdose response and monitoring cleanliness and safety of encampments. Thomas noted that BPHC's emergency shelter beds dropped from over 1,600 to 1,083, with about 90 per cent nightly occupancy, but with help from Dillon and DND, BPHC has been able to add 200 beds outside the Mass and Cass area, bringing the total to 1,283.

Dillon said that since 2015, her agency has housed over 1,000 chronically homeless persons and 1,300 homeless veterans as well as 132 young adults. Dilllon stressed the need to build more housing with supportive services for formerly homeless persons. Sergeant Peter Messina of BPD's Street Outreach Unit said that his team works with CRT members to prevent crime, overdoses and other crises by referring individuals to mental health and recovery services, including as a last resort involuntary commitment.

BPWD's Brohel said his staff responds to hot spots including Nu-

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New State-Wide COVID19 Restrictions
Effective Now

Masks: Effective now, everyone over 5 years old is required to wear a mask in public regardless of their distance from others. Businesses: Restaurants will have to stop serving diners by 9:30 pm, although they can keep offering take-out past 9:30. Gyms, theaters, and casinos also close at 9:30 pm.

Indoor Gatherings: Private indoor gatherings restricted to 10 people.

Stay At Home: The Department of Public Health is urging people to be at home between 10 pm and 5 am. Necessary or essential activities—work, school, grocery store, etc.—are allowed.

Mass & Cass

Continued from page 1

bian and Worcester Square around the clock with mechanical and hand sweeping. Rob Consalvo, senior advisor to the superintendent of BPS, said that fences, cameras and lighting have been added to Orchard Gardens, Trotter, Josiah Quincy, Mason and other schools near Mass and Cass, and custodians, faculty and other staff have been trained in sharps safety.

Walsh said he has spoken to the district attorney to urge that drug dealers be arrested, held and prosecuted. "We aren't arresting the people struggling with substance abuse disorder, but with the dealers who are preying on them," Walsh said.

Walsh also mentioned that the city hired a contractor to remove feces from private property as well as from public areas. The mayor said that BPHC has been working with the state Department of Public Health on decentralization of services in Boston and development of resources around the state to avoid having so many people from other towns referred to Boston's mental health, drug and homeless programs.

"These programs need to be spread around the state. We can't take every person in need in the Commonwealth," Walsh said. Walsh touched on sheltering the homeless during COVID-19, saying that for the winter, the city has shelters in locations around Boston to provide more social distance and keep people closer to home while the city works with the Commonwealth on more shelters across the state.

"Everyone who is struggling with mental health, addiction and homelessness deserves support and we are going to continue to do that. At the same time, every child and family deserve to walk to school without being afraid; everyone deserves to walk the streets without seeing needles and everyone's voice deserves to be heard," Walsh said.

In conclusion, Walsh announced an $8 billion settlement in a class action lawsuit against opioid manufacturer Purdue Pharma for its role in the addiction crisis, and said that when the money comes to the states, it should fund the battle against substance abuse.

After Walsh's remarks, task force members fielded questions. Longtime South Ender Helaine Simmonds asked what is being done to reduce inappropriate discharges to Mass and Cass, and whether the discharges come from within or outside Boston.

Thomas responded that most but not all inappropriate referrals are from outside Boston, coming from hospitals with mental health programs, houses of corrections and departments of corrections. She added the state has a "rigorous" procedure for communities to place people in programs in their own hometowns, but that applies to those who become newly homeless after release, not to long-term homeless persons. WSANA member Bob Minnocci spoke of Pine Street Inn's (PSI) one-year rental of the Best Western Roundhouse to house people awaiting transitional or permanent housing without any community engagement and asking whether PSI will adhere to the one-year time limit.

PSI's Lyndia Downie said that about 30 people have been placed in housing and 130-140 people remain there and announced a PSI-owned property in Jamaica Plain that will provide 200 units of permanent housing.

Asked about the backup plan if Boston loses the lawsuit over Long Island, Walsh said if the city loses the lawsuit, it will appeal immediately and meanwhile, is moving ahead on designing Long Island facilities and a bridge. Osgood said that the bridge is fully designed, and the permitting process is underway.

South Ender Sunil Bhatia asked why state property cannot be used to build emergency housing, why ferries cannot be used to access Long Island and what is the governor's involvement in addressing Mass and Cass's problems. Dillon said that the state has promised two acres at the Shattuck campus to create a "large number" of permanent supportive housing units.

The mayor chimed in, saying it is "not realistic" to depend on ferries to serve Long Island because people in recovery programs there will want to go to work daily, and it is also not feasible to depend on ferries for daily deliveries. In meetings directly following the closure of the Long Island Bridge in 2014, city officials cited the weather as one reason why ferries are not a reliable, daily, round-the-clock option for Long Island.

Walsh said that Governor Baker is "part of the conversation" about Mass and Cass, and the city received state funding for treatment services in last year's budget.

South End Forum chairman Steve Fox asked for assurance that PSI does not purchase the Best Western for ongoing shelter use, to which Downie said PSI does not intend to buy Best Western, and more than 50 per cent of PSI's current focus is on permanent supportive housing.

Fox added, "We need a commitment from the state whether it be in Worcester, Springfield or elsewhere, so that Boston doesn't become the sole source of a recovery campus. We need the support of the governor and state legislative leadership to begin a planning process for a statewide approach."

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Service Guide Ads Get Results. For more information please call: 617.464.7280

Food Pantries

Information from the City of Boston

Haley House Food Pantry, 23 Dartmouth Street, Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 617-236-8132

Rosie's Place/Pantry, 889 Harrison Ave.,Mondays: 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Tuesdays and Fridays: 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., 617-442-9322

Salvation Army/South End Food Pantry, 1500 Washington Street, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays: 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 617-536-5260.

Catholic Charities/El Centro del Cardena, Monsignor Reynolds Way, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays: 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., 617-522-4040

Boston Medical Center Food Pantry, 1 Boston Medical Center Yawkey B, Monday through Friday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., 617-414-3834

Grant A.M.E./Self-Help, 1906 Washington St., First and third Thursday of the month: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., 617-427-0670

American Red Cross/Mobile Market, 1033 Massachusetts Ave., Times vary, call ahead: 617-375-0735.

Islamic Multi Service Organization, 722 Shawmut Avenue, Second Sunday of the month: 1:30 - 4 p.m., 617-442-2805

Union United Methodist Church Food Pantry, 485 Columbus Ave., Second Tuesday of the month: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., 617-287-1020

Locations and times are subject to change. Please check back to confirm information before you head to a meal pickup site or food pantry.

Visit https://www.boston.gov/departments/food-access/map-covid19-food-resources for a full list of pantries.

Dog Lady

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her not picking up after her dogs.

I have tried to lead by example and always pick up after my dogs, I have voiced my disapproval of people who do not pick up after their dogs, I have stated every reason I could think of why people should pick up after their dogs and I have even offered to hold her dogs' poo bags until we reach a refuse container, but nothing has convinced her that picking up after her dog is the right thing to do. I hate seeing the trails we enjoy being littered with dog feces, but I don't even say anything anymore because she gets angry when I tell her she should pick up after her dogs. What else can I say or do to let her know this really bothers me? Sometimes, I don't even want to walk the dogs with her.

—Grace

Dear Peter,

Dog Lady doesn't dance around this issue. Neither should you. Tell your walking buddy straight on: "It really bothers me when you don't pick up after your dogs. Please do." Simple. The environment is too precious to waste with dog waste. Blame your environmental sensibility. In this day and age, nobody walking dogs gets away with leaving the scene of the grime because it's irresponsible and harmful to the planet – and to dogs everywhere. Also, if enough people leave dog doo on public walking trails, people and dogs will be banned from public walking trails. There's too much at stake. If you're friendly, smiling and non-confrontational, she'll understand that in your presence, at least, she must do the right thing.

Write: askdoglady@gmail.com

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Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee

Monday, December 7
6:00 PM - 7:45PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/3jZ22xs
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 161 689 4331

Event Description
The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee was developed to oversee projects that fall under the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. The committee meets monthly to discuss development and planning in Nubian Square. All meetings are held on zoom and open to the public. For more information, on how to Join, Engage, and Take Action, please visit the website.

Upcoming meetings/Próximas reuniones/ Dat pwochen rankont yo se:
December/ Deciembre/ Desanm 7
January/ Enero/ Janvye 4
February/ Febrero/ Fevriye 1

For interpretation services, contact the planner listed below one week before each meeting.

Para los servicios de interpretación, comuníquese con el planificador que se indica a continuación una semana antes de cada reunión.

Si w bezwen sèvis entèpretasyon, kontakte moun kap planifye a pi ba a, yon semèn anvan chak reyinyon.

Contact:
Kelly Sherman
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor Boston, MA 02201
617.918.4593 | kelly.sherman@boston.gov

bostonplans.org | @bostonplans

Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

COVID-19 RESOURCES

Greater Boston Basic Needs Supports

Catholic Charities Greater Boston Basic Needs Department

Serving Suffolk and Middlesex County. Services include: food pantry assistance (Dorchester, South End, Somerville); emergency financial assistance; emergency essential assistance; SNAP outreach; HIV support services; resource & referral assistance

More Info: Please call (617) 506-6628 or email Basic_Needs@ccab.org

Resources for Immigrant Communities: What's available?

Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign (NILC & CLASP)

The PIF Campaign has developed a quick reference guide on immigrant eligibility that provides a general overview of some of the federal public programs available to support individuals and families during the COVID-19 crisis. In light of implementation of public charge regulations, we have also included clarification about whether certain public programs are taken into account for public charge purposes. The guide includes links to deeper dive resources on eligibility from our partners. https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/

Suffolk County Resource Guide

Suffolk County District Attorney, Rachel Rollins

This is a collection of resources currently available in Suffolk County, Ma, compiled by the staff of the Juvenile Alternative Resolution Program of the Juvenile Unit at the Office of Suffolk County District Attorney Rachael Rollins. It is not a complete list, and you should continue to consult relevant experts and your care providers when appropriate. This guide is intended to be a starting point for residents and service providers for finding resources to assist during the COVID-19 National Emergency. Our current circumstances are fluid and evolving; information, services, and recommendations may change over time. We advise you to contact any of the included services outlined here ahead of time to ensure up-to-date accuracy. https://www.suffolkdistrictattorney.com/

DTA SNAP and Cash Benefits During COVID-19

Massachusetts Legal Services

To view a general overview of DTA policies and how to ensure folks can access benefits, please visit MLRI's COVID-19 page: https://www.masslegalservices.org/DTA-COVID-19

Hunger and Food Resources for Households

Project Bread's Hunger and Food Resources page offers information for families and households on school meal sites and locations; the Food Resource Hotline (to get connected to food, and for SNAP application assistance); and policy updates (state and federal level). http://www.projectbread.org/

Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB)

GBFB partners with 500+ hunger-relief agencies, including food pantries, community meal programs and other food assistance providers throughout the nine counties and 190 towns and cities across Eastern Massachusetts. These efforts have doubled in the wake of COVID and increased food needs. This page offers information on food pantries across the state, as well as additional resources for food assistance, including school meal sites. https://www.gbfb.org/

Massachusetts State Updates & Resources

State of Massachusetts (Governor's Office) and MA DPH is working closely with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide updated information about the novel coronavirus outbreak. https://www.mass.gov/ offers:

Prevention and treatment
Cases, quarantine and monitoring
State of emergency
Printable fact sheets and FAQ
Emotional health and well-being resources
Press release
MA 2-1-1

SIREN COVID-19 Resource Page

Social Interventions Research & Evaluation Network (SIREN) sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/covid-19-resources includes resources on a national level such as:

Social needs surveillance
Recent news articles about COVID and health equity
Resources for clinicians and patients
Insurance coverage and codes for COVID-related healthcare services
Pharmacy delivery services
Vaccination scams/exploitation
Housing
Employment/income concerns
Utility concerns
Social isolation
Advocacy opportunities

The City of Boston

The City of Boston has a free texting service to provide daily updates and information about the coronavirus. Text BOSCOVID to 99411 to opt-in for English. Language and communications access remains a priority for Mayor Walsh, so this text service is also available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, French, Cabo Verdean Creole, and Portuguese.

Text BOSEspanol for Spanish
Text BOSKreyol for Haitian Kreyol
Text BOSFrancais for French
Text BOSKriolu for Cabo Verdean Creole
Text BOSPortugues for Portuguese

Updates in 10 total languages can additionally be accessed through boston.gov/coronavirus#multilingual-help. Each language has its own page and hosts multilingual print materials distributed citywide.

HOMELESS SERVICES AND HOSPITAL CAPACITY

On April 2nd, Mayor Walsh announced that construction begins at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center to add 500 beds for treating homeless adults who have tested positive for COVID-19 and need care, but do not require full hospitalization.

The City has released a Request for Proposals to secure a partner organization to operate the facility. If necessary, the Convention Center beds will be opened up for hospitals to use for sub-acute COVID patients in the general population.

These 500 beds will bring Boston's total number of new beds for homeless individuals to over 1,000. This includes Boston Medical Center's Newton Pavilion facility, which the City and State are working to re-purpose as a medical facility for homeless residents affected by the coronavirus.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

On April 2nd, Mayor Walsh announced two new resources that will help small businesses during the public health crisis.

The City of Boston has created a Small Business Relief Fund. Drawing on a combination of City, federal, and private industry contributions, it establishes $2 million in grant funding—capable of providing a lifeline to hundreds of local businesses at risk of shutting down permanently due to the crisis. It will be administered as a streamlined version of the City's Small Business Financing program. Small businesses can begin applying on Monday, April 6.

The City of Boston has also created a Financial Relief Handbook and FAQ document for small businesses. It's a resource for navigating

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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; FAX to 617.464.7286; E-mail: letters@southendnews.com

A Decade in a Single Year

By Judah Leblang

I wake up at 2:30, 3:15, 4 am, restless, my mind racing. One night, I had a dream I was on a plane with Trump, hunkered down in my seat, consciously trying to avoid him. This reflection of the nightmare year of 2020 — a lethal combo of a pandemic, a narcissistic "leader," and a group of sycophants (the Republican Party and the "Christians" who support them) has infected my sleep and added to the stress level I carry like a yolk on a daily basis.

I try to monitor my intake of the news, but like rubbernecking at an accident, it's hard to pass it by. Sometimes I feel like I'm viewing reality TV, a mixture of The Apprentice and Groundhog Day, as each new day brings a new outrage, a new threat to LGBT folks, women, POC, and anyone else who isn't white, Christian, straight — and who doesn't fit their idealized vision of 1950s America.

The clusterfuck of 2020 and Trump's presidency isn't really new; the inequality has been building for decades, for centuries. And the weakening of our checks and balances and the Federal Courts goes back to HW Bush's nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court in the early '90s, and the Court's Bush v. Gore ruling in 2000, when the justices ruled 5-4 to stop the vote count in Florida and hand the election to George W. Bush, who "won" Florida by 537 votes.

Most of the judges on the Supreme Court today have been nominated by two Republican presidents who lost the popular vote, and who got into office through a combination of voter suppression, foreign interference and questionable judicial decisions. The coup de grace is Amy Coney Barrett's appointment to the Court in the middle of an election, after the Republicans blocked Obama's appointment of Merrick Garland almost a year before the 2016 election — arguing that the voters should decide in an election year.

Hopefully, Biden will win the Presidency and the Democrats will shift the Senate, with margins of victory large enough to overcome the GOP's voter suppression, legal challenges and array of dirty tricks. In the meantime, most of my friends and I

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Kamala Harris Stands On Shoulders Of Giants

By Rev. Irene Monroe

The struggle to get President-elect Joe Biden over the finish line with at least 270 electoral college votes was an unquestionably epic battle.

However, Biden's battle wasn't the century-long one it was for women, who earned the right to vote in 1920 with the 19th Amendment — hoping a female would one day be elected to one of the highest offices in government. The fact that Vice President-elect Kamala Harris broke through the "18 million cracks" in the glass ceiling in 2020 is both exciting and inexcusable.

The news announcing Harris as the country's next V.P. had some of my sister-friends verklempt, struggling to contain their tears, as many of us saw with CNN commentator Van Jones. Some of us gathered to celebrate and shout "Mamala in the house!" and" Madame Vice President!" as we drank too much Jamaican rum punch and danced socially distanced to the Reggae sounds of Jimmy Cliff and Bob Marley and the Wailers, honoring the Jamaican part of Harris' heritage.

Harris' ascension to the vice presidency, sadly, represents several underrepresented demographic groups in U.S. politics. She represents many firsts: woman, Black, Indian American, child of immigrants, HBCU graduate. And if there are more, forgive me.

The first time a woman was nominated by a major national party to run for one of our government's top spots was the vice president's office. In 1984, Queens Rep. Geraldine Ferraro was then-Democratic presidential hopeful Water Mondale's running mate. The daughter of Italian immigrants, Ferraro, like Harris, represented many firsts: woman, Italian American, and feminist. "We've come too far on the path to equality, we can't let them turn us around now," is one of Ferraro's famous quotes.

Reflecting on Harris' win and her mother's struggles with blatant sexism during her run for the vice president spot,

Continued on page 6

SERVICE GUIDE

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617-227-0153

South Bay Veterinary Group
587 Tremont Street
617-266-6619

Monroe

Continued from page 5

Donna Zaccaro, Ferraro's daughter, who in 2013 produced the documentary "Geraldine Ferraro: Paving The Way," shared her thoughts with NY1:

"I do see it as a continuation of my mother's legacy. Even though in that campaign she lost, and in a landslide … how she conducted herself during that campaign proved that a woman could be VP of the U.S. or even president.... This time around, Kamala Harris — her credentials weren't even questioned," Zaccaro is quoted as saying in the interview.

Twenty-four years would elapse before the next woman was nominated to run as a vice presidential candidate: former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin in 2008. Palin ran on the Republican ticket with then-presidential hopeful Arizona Sen. John McCain. Palin was the first female Republican nominee and second woman nominee ever. I surmise there is some consolation to know that the time between Palin and Harris running for vice president took half the time between Ferraro and Palin — 12 years. Elated to see a woman finally win the spot, Palin gave Harris a shout-out on Instagram, conveying her good wishes:

"Congrats to the democrat V.P. pick. ... Climb upon Geraldine Ferraro's and my shoulders, and from the most amazing view in your life consider lessons we learned," Palin wrote. Don't "forget the women who came before you," she added.

But the woman who first paved the way for women and other underrepresented demographic groups in U.S. politics to step into the political arena was Rep. Shirley Chisholm. I grew up knowing Chisholm. We kids call her Mrs. C, as she represented my Brooklyn Congressional District for seven terms from 1969 to 1983. She was known throughout the neighborhood and the halls of power in New York City as a force to be reckoned with who was "unbought" and" unbossed" — also the title of her 1970 memoir.

In 1972, Chisholm was the first woman and person of color to run for president. On the Democratic ticket, she paved the way for others. In her 1973 book, "The Good Fight," Chisholm shared why she ran.

"I ran for the presidency, despite hopeless odds, to demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo," she wrote. "The next time a woman runs, or a black, or a Jew or anyone from a group that the country is 'not ready' to elect to its highest office, I believe that he or she will be taken seriously from the start. ... I ran because somebody had to do it first."

Black women have paved the way for women and other underrepresented demographic groups in U.S. politics, too. As a voting bloc, we are the DNC's strength, and we know the paths we've paved for others. We take pride in our agency and voting-mobilization strategies to help candidates like Barack Obama and now a Biden/Harris team to get to the finish line. And we celebrate these achievements.

This 2020 presidential race has been an epic battle to win back our multicultural democracy. This weekend, my sister-friends and I will gather again to celebrate. This time Diwali, an Indian festival of lights, symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness. It's a timely celebration to embrace the new direction the country will be going in, and to honor the Indian part of Harris' heritage, too.

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Judah

Continued from page 5

are stressed, anxious, wondering what will happen to our remaining rights at LGBT folks if we have to endure four more years of Trump, and/or of a Republican Senate. (The upcoming cases at the Supreme Court, which may lead to a gradual frittering away of our rights and a possible overturning of marriage equality, are worrisome enough).

Last summer, in the time before the pandemic when life felt somewhat normal, I picked up Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" while traveling in Canada. Atwood wrote the book in the early '80s as dystopian sci-fi, a fantasy of a world in which power was concentrated in the hands of a small group of men, where women were property of their male masters, and any type of gay relationships were punishable by death. Reading it in 2019, (and even more today, when Coney Barrett, our new justice is a "handmaid" in a fundamentalist Catholic-splinter group) Atwood's book feels eerily prescient, a reflection of the dark world, the depths to which American society has sunk.

I find the ongoing demagoguery, the lies, the gaslighting coming out of Trump's mouth exhausting. Pile on pandemic fatigue with a steaming side of isolation and loneliness (living alone and single during a time when touch with a stranger can lead to a hospital stay or worse) and I feel like 2020 has lasted a decade, the four years since 2016, a lifetime.

The shift to daylight savings time — a misnomer, as far as I'm concerned — the arrival of cold weather, northerly winds, and increasing darkness seem like the icing on a cake I can't quite stomach, like carob instead of chocolate.

And yet, a Biden-Harris win, and a vaccine on the horizon, promise a shift toward hope and a dream of better things to come. Perhaps 2020 can redeem itself. Perhaps I'll finally be able to sleep through the night. Time will tell.

Judah Leblang is a writer, teacher and storyteller in Boston. Check out his new memoir, Echoes of Jerry at judahleblang.com

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NOTICE OF PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court

In the matter of: William Allen Cameron

To all persons interested in petition described:

A **Petition to Change Name of Adult** has been presented by **William Allen Cameron** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to: **Cameron Michael Kelly**

Docket No. SU20C0237CA

Suffolk Probate and Family Court
24 New Chardon Street
PO Box 9667
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 788-8300

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at **Suffolk Probate and Family Court before 10:00a.m. on the return day of 12/03/2019.** This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 3, 2020

Felix D. Arroyo, Register of Probate

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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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