

## Festival Betances This Saturday

### IBA To Virtually Celebrate

SUBMITTED BY IBA

Keeping alive a tradition that drew an astounding 50,000 attendees virtually last year, on Saturday, July 17, 2021 at 7:00pm, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA) will be holding Festival Betances, New England's longest-running Latino cultural celebration, virtually on Facebook and YouTube.

Festival Betances is the longest-running Latino cultural celebration in New England.

Each year, Festival Betances is an opportunity for individuals and families to come together and immerse themselves in the vibrancy and diversity of Latin culture. While the Festival will remain virtual again this year, the tradition carries on as IBA's community unites to celebrate Puerto Rican arts and culture.

This year's Festival, themed "Latinos Siempre Unidos" (Latinos



Yuba Iré

Always Together), will continue to reach a wide audience, as people from across the Puerto Rican dias-

*Continued on page 5*

## South End Summer Arts Update

BY MICHELE D. MANISCALCO

In this exceptional year when the city is still in the process of re-opening and reawakening from the pandemic, our local outdoor arts and entertainment presenters have had to proceed more gradually in scheduling the customary concerts, festivals and arts events we all have come to love.

Here are some additional

listings that were not ready for publication in time for the South End News's Summer Arts Preview in June. All events are free, open to the public and all ages except where noted. Let's hope we get enough of a respite from the rain to enjoy them!

The Friends of Titus Sparrow Park are bringing back their popular Wednesday night Summer Concert Series beginning this week at 6:30 PM, and continuing through

Wednesday, September 1. The first concert on July 14 features the Fifth Season Quartet, who deliver jazz influenced by the traditional sounds of their native Bulgaria. Please visit [titussparrowpark.org](http://titussparrowpark.org) for the full schedule, as some of the concerts start at an alternate time.

What would Tuesday nights be without Jazz and Blues with

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## Arthur Leon sues his insurers

### Decade-long legal battle over neighboring condos

COURTESY ADAM GAFFIN  
[WWW.UNIVERSALHUB.COM](http://WWW.UNIVERSALHUB.COM)

Arthur Leon, who has been battling construction of an 18-unit condo building on Harrison Avenue since it was first proposed in 2011, is now suing several insurance companies for not helping to pay for his legal struggles over the building, which

is on land entirely surrounded by a large industrial building he owns.

Despite his efforts to block construction of the Jordan Lofts, the project opened years ago.

In his suit, Leon says the four insurance companies have abrogated their responsibilities under the policies he had purchased to help shield him from "malicious prosecution" and "vexatious litigation," in his case, the still open 2015 suit by developer John Holland and his 477 Harrison Ave, LLC against him over his repeated attempts to kill the project.

Leon, a Westwood resident, claims he and his company, JACE Boston, LLC, are on the hook for potentially millions of dollars in that lawsuit despite the fact he will be exonerated, even though he keeps losing in court.

After both sides in the building dispute charged each other with filing "strategic lawsuits against public participation," the Supreme Judicial Court ruled in 2019 that it was Leon—who once called 911 to

*Continued on page 5*

## Summer Eats Program Launched

**Meals are available to youth 18 years and younger at no cost, without registration or ID**

SUBMITTED BY  
MAYOR JANEY'S OFFICE

Mayor Kim Janey and the Mayor's Office of Food Access (OFA) announced that 53 Boston Summer Eats Program meal sites will open on June 21, 2021, with an additional 14 sites opening later in the summer. The Boston Summer Eats program is an innovative effort to lessen the summer food gap by increasing the availability of non-traditional meal sites.

The program launched in 2017 with the goal to expand access to free and healthy meals for youth

and teens in Boston.

"Ensuring continued food access to our children and youth throughout the summer after school closes is vital to their wellbeing," said Mayor Janey. "Thank you to all of the community-based organizations for their partnership with the City of Boston in creating access across our city for all our children."

Residents who wish to access free meals for youth aged 18 and under can find sites at [www.boston.gov/summer-eats](http://www.boston.gov/summer-eats) or find additional locations across the state by texting "Food" or "Comida" to 877-877. Hours of operation vary depending on the site, and most meal sites are currently offering breakfast and lunch. Parents can pick up meals for youth who are not present. No

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## ParkARTS Neighborhood Concerts, Golf Course Concerts Begin July 21

SUBMITTED BY CITY OF BOSTON

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department's 2021 ParkARTS Citywide Neighborhood Concert Series offers musical entertainment in local parks from July 21 through August 12, as well as a series of summer evening concerts on the patios at the City of Boston's two golf course clubhouses from July 21 through September 1.

The ParkARTS outdoor neighborhood summer concerts and golf course concerts are made possible by

presenting sponsor Bank of America. Concerts at William J. Devine clubhouse are offered with support from the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, reflecting Franklin Park's location within Boston's historic Emerald Necklace system of parks.

The ParkARTS Citywide Neighborhood Concert Series begins on Wednesday, July 21, with The Woo Factor at Almont Park, 40 Almont Street, Mattapan, and continues Thursday, July 22 with Northeast Groove at Billings Field, 369 LaGrange Street, West Rox-

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## The Joys and Challenges of the "Sandwich Generation"

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## Summer Eats

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registration or identification is required. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meals will be taken off-site, rather than eaten in a congregate meal setting at the site.

The Boston Summer Eats program is led by the Mayor's Office of Food Access (OFA) in partnership with Project Bread, the Greater Boston YMCA, and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and is sponsored by the Boston Children's Hospital. Other partners involved in the 2021 Boston Summer Eats program include: Boston Public Library (BPL), Boston Housing Authority (BHA), and Boston Public Schools (BPS).

Last summer, the program served 1,894,748 meals across 91 sites in 16 neighborhoods. Among the 97 sites, there were 23 non-traditional sites, including certain Boston Housing Authority properties, farmers markets, community and faith-based organizations, and Boston City Hall. This year meal sites include six Boston Housing Authority properties, 14 Boston Public Schools, eight Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) sites, eight YMCA sites, four farmers markets, 30 community- and faith-based organizations, and three Boston Public Library locations throughout 17 neighborhoods.

"I am grateful for all the support we have had from all of our Boston Summer Eats program partners," said Catalina López-Ospina, Mayor's Office of Food Access Director. "Together, we are reducing food insecurity one child at a time and making healthy summer meals accessible to all."

Additionally, this summer, the Pandemic EBT will be available for families when schools are closed. All K-12 students who received P-EBT this school year will receive a total of \$375 in P-EBT benefits in two equal payments of \$187.50 this summer. The first payment will be issued on July 1 and the second payment will be issued on August 1. Also, families who receive SNAP and received P-EBT this year for their children ages 0 through 6 will also receive two summer P-EBT payments of \$187.50, totaling \$375 for the summer. P-EBT payments for these children will be made on July 25 and August 25. For more information residents can visit [www.map-ebt.org](http://www.map-ebt.org).

These funds will go directly to residents' P-EBT card or SNAP/EBT card if they are enrolled in SNAP. Residents are encouraged to keep their P-EBT cards even when they have used all the funds, in case benefits are added in the future. These funds can be used to purchase groceries anywhere EBT or SNAP is accepted. Residents can download the Fresh EBT app to find nearby stores and farmer's markets that accept EBT.

## ParkARTS

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bury; Wednesday, July 28 with the Soul City Band at Dorchester Park, 2180 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester; and Thursday, July 29 with Tom Petty tribute band The Rebels at Medal of Honor Park, 775 East First Street, South Boston.

The August schedule kicks off with Veronica Robles on Wednesday, August 4, at LoPresti Park, 33 Sumner Street, East Boston; Thursday, August 5, with the Soul City Band at Smith Playground, 235 Western Avenue, Allston; and Wednesday, August 11, with Jah Spirit Reggae at Horatio Harris Park, 58 Beech Glen Street, Roxbury. The series ends on Thursday, August 12, with Joaquin Santos at Blackstone Square, 1530 Washington Street, South End. Shows in neighborhood parks begin at 7 p.m.

ParkARTS golf course performances are offered on alternating Wednesdays on the clubhouse patios of the William J. Devine

Golf Course (1 Circuit Dr, Dorchester) and George Wright Golf Course (420 West St, Hyde Park) throughout July and August and into September: the Jamaica Plain Saxophone Quartet will perform on July 21 at Franklin Park; It's a J Thing on Wednesday, July 28 at George Wright; Shane Wood Jazz Trio on August 4 at Franklin Park; Mike Tarara on August 11 at George Wright; Andres Guerra on August 18 at Franklin Park; Woundikin on August 25 at George Wright; and wrapping up with The Pat Gaulin Trio on September 1 at Franklin Park. All golf course performances begin at 6:00 pm.

All ParkARTS performances are free of charge. For more information, please call (617) 635-4505 or visit [boston.gov/ParkARTS](http://boston.gov/ParkARTS). Stay up to date with news, events, and design and construction work in Boston parks by signing up for our email list at [bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails](mailto:bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails) and follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

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# The topic the Black Church dares not speak of honestly

REV. IRENE MONROE

Every once in a while a reader will ask me to please respond to their question in my column. This reader asked, "What should be the mandate for today's Black Churches?" The question suggests someone wants a comprehensive response. I am hoping maybe a church, a homophobe having second thoughts, or a LGBTQ+ Christian struggling to come out.

One of the mandates for today's Black Churches is to address its ongoing struggle with the spectrum of human sexuality.

In 2021, I am still asking these three questions: Why can't we as an African American community tell the truth about our sexuality? What price do we pay in telling the truth? And what role does the church play in perpetuating not only unsafe sexual behavior but also demonizing its members of the LGBTQ community?

The Black Church purported to preach and practice a prophetic social gospel. However, in truth, it preaches and practices a heteronormative conservative gospel tethered to a model no longer relevant to a younger generation that embraces LGBTQ+ social justice issues.

The Black Church played a part in the death of African Americans with AIDS. While its silence on the issue was appalling and unconscionable, so too, was its various forms of homophobic pronouncements that denigrate both LGBTQ+ people and women.

Sexuality has never been a comfortable topic of discussion in the African American community. This is due primarily to slavery, and what we appropriated from the dominant culture about sexual behavior to deem ourselves human beings in our oppressors' eyes. First bred as cattle during slavery, and later either touted as sex sirens or taunted as sex predators, black sexuality has never had

a chance to evolve in a milieu free of abuse, violence, and stereotypes. The raping of black women and the lynching of black men in this country by white men have always kept the control of black bodies away from us. In carving out a racial identity, African Americans have done it at the expense of leaving our bodies and sexualities behind. However, with the embrace of fundamentalist Christianity embedded in its tenets and an asexual theology, African American bodies, and sexualities that were once systematically usurped by white slave masters are now ritualistically harnessed by the black church with a "politic of silence." Sadly, this was viewed as a revolutionary act against the oppressive white gaze. But what happens in churches, communities, and families where people lose touch with their bodies and sexualities?

One answer is that the Black Church

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## South End Honor Roll

### Lehigh University

**Alexander Tumminello** of Boston graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Economics from Lehigh University in Spring 2021.

For more than 150 years, Lehigh University (lehigh.edu) has combined outstanding academic and learning opportunities with leadership in fostering innovative research. The institution is among the nation's most selective, highly ranked private research universities. Lehigh's five colleges - College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, College of Health, and the P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science - provides opportunities to 7,000+ students to discover and grow in an academically rigorous environment along with a supportive, engaged campus community.

#### Bucknell University

**Caroline Saef** Named to Dean's List

Bucknell University has released the dean's list for outstanding academic achievement during the spring semester of the 2020-21 academic year. A student must earn a grade

point average of 3.5 or higher on a scale of 4.0 to receive dean's list recognition.

**Caroline Saef**, class of 2021, from Boston, MA has achieved dean's list status for spring 2021.

Located in Lewisburg, Pa., Bucknell University is a highly selective private liberal arts university that offers majors in the arts, engineering, humanities, management, and social and natural sciences, along with broad opportunities outside of class, to its 3,600 undergraduates. Graduate programs are available in select disciplines. Students benefit from a small student-faculty ratio of 9:1, personal attention from faculty, leadership opportunities, and excellent graduation rates and career outcomes.

### Emerson College

Local Students Named to Emerson College Dean's List for Spring 2021 Semester

The requirement to make Dean's List is a grade point average of 3.7 or higher for that semester. The following students have been named to Emerson College's

Dean's List for the Spring 2021 semester:

**Trevor McLean** of Boston, Communication Studies, Class of 2022

**Luke Roehm** of Boston, Marketing Communication, Class of 2024

**Jiatong Zou** of Boston, Media Arts Production, Class of 2022

Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,700 undergraduates and 1,400 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups.

Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, the Netherlands, London, China, and the Czech Republic as well as its new Global Portals. The College has an active network of 51,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communication and the arts. For more information, visit [emerson.edu](http://emerson.edu).

### Summer Arts

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Pat Loomis and Friends at the South End Branch Library Park, 685 Tremont Street? The series returns this summer with two shows on Tuesday nights, August 3 and 17, at 6:30 PM. For further information, see [www.friendsofsouthendlibrary.org](http://www.friendsofsouthendlibrary.org).

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) will reprise its children's Arts and Crafts Workshops with two sessions on Thursday mornings in Ringgold Park. The ses-

sions will take place on August 5 and 12 from 10:00 AM-12:00 noon. The workshops are free and open to Boston residents, but registration is required. Please see [www.boston.gov](http://www.boston.gov) for further details and registration information.

BPRD's Neighborhood Concert Series comes to Blackstone Square with a concert by New Bedford-based drummer Joaquin Santos on Thursday, August 12 at 7:00 PM. Santos, who is the son of Tavares's Jackie Santos, plays funk, jazz, R & B and Latin rhythms with Joaquin Santos and Friends and with Doppelotus. For more details on the

Neighborhood Concert Series, please see [www.boston.gov](http://www.boston.gov)

The Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association is still at work planning the return of its Music in the Square concert series but did not have confirmed details to release at press time. Music in the Square organizer Craig Hughes said via e-mail that details will be posted on WSANA's website, [worcestersquare.org](http://worcestersquare.org) and Facebook page, Worcester Square, when they become available.

See you in the parks!

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South End News is published every other Thursday.

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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](mailto:letters@southendnews.com)



## Betances

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pora can tune in virtually to build community and celebrate to the music of Yuba Iré and Oscarito.

Festival Betances has become a staple in New England's Latinx community. Its stage has featured world-renowned musical and dance performances, ranging from local and regional acts to international Latin music icons, including Larry Harlow from Fania All Stars, Tony Vega, and Tito Rojas.

Things are getting back on track, so let's celebrate together with one voice. With the theme "Latinos Siempre Unidos" (Latinos Always Together), Festival Betances 2021 "en Casa" will light up your house on July 17th at 7pm with performances by Yuba Iré and Oscarito. These amazing artists, representing Latinx talent, will make everyone stand up and dance to the rhythms of bomba, plena

and merengue.

Surrender to the party vibes of Yuba Iré, who will kick off the Festival. With the sounds and percussions of their "rumba criollizada," they will get you going like "ya tú sabes"!

Closing with a bang comes Oscar Serano – "Oscarito El Más Loco" (the craziest one) – one of our most beloved merengue stars. After being in Grupo Manía, now, as a solo artist, nobody can stop him. Oscarito will deliver what will surely be a great time for all.

The Festival is named after Ramón Emeterio Betances, a Puerto Rican patriot whose medical contributions benefited Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States. He also became a leader in awakening national consciousness in Puerto Rico, and is considered one of the foremost intellectuals of the 19th century.

More information at [www.ibaboston.org](http://www.ibaboston.org), Facebook @festivalbetances.

## Leon

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complain about construction workers on the Holland project—who was trying to keep Holland from his right to petition government, in this case, for permission to create the condos and then, three years later, add three new units to the top of the building.

Despite the SJC ruling, which came in Holland's still open 2015 suit against Leon, Leon continues his fight.

Leon initially filed his suit against the insurance companies in May in Suffolk Superior Court. This week, the companies—Landmark American Insurance Co., American Safety Indemnity Co., First Mercury Insurance Co. and Navigators Specialty Insurance Co. —all based out of state, moved to have the case transferred to federal court in Boston because they are not Massachusetts companies and because Leon and JACE are seeking more than the \$75,000 minimum required for a federal lawsuit.



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## Monroe

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continues to stay on the "down low." The most significant factor that keeps the Black Church on the down-low are closeted, homophobic ministers. Pastor Donnie McClurkin—a three-time Gospel Grammy winner and the former poster boy for African American ex-gay ministries—is one example.

McClurkin's sexuality has been an open secret, but now, at 61 years old, McClurkin is lamenting about growing old and being alone. While the Black LGBTQ+ community would applaud someone of McClurkin's status telling the truth about his sexual past, many of us can't care because of decades of damning and damaging messages he hurled at us.

However, there might be some light at the end of this tunnel. This month, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest black denomination church, dating back to 1787, will convene a committee to study LGBTQ+ issues by examining Scripture and doctrine hearing testimonies of LGBTQ+ individuals. Some of us in the LGBTQ+ community feel the effort is more than "a day late and a dollar short" because a younger generation has left. However, I am hopeful.

Our bodies are our temples, and as our temples, they house the most sacred and scariest truth about us: our sexuality. Sexuality is an essential part of being human. It is an expression of who we are; it is a language, and a means to communicate our spiritual need for intimate communion—

human and divine. However, our silence, shame, and stigma around issues of sexual identity, gender expressions, and sexual practices have allowed for behaviors of denial, neglect, and abuse. Also, the lack of pastoral care contributes to high-risk sexual behaviors and the transmission of HIV/AIDS in the African American community.

Right now, Black Churches are in a crisis. The AME Church is now the first to admit openly. The church has contributed to the culture of the "politic of silence" because it not only lacks the language to talk about sex, but it also sees sex as a private and personal matter and not part of the business of the black Christian community as a way of loving God and ourselves.

However, the black church is also uniquely positioned to significantly affect knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within congregations and, by extension, the entire African American community. The black church can help its congregants live their sexual lives by devising an African American faith-based sex education curriculum where churches embrace the concept that sexuality is God-given, an integral part of being human, and at the core of how we interact with one another.

Research has shown that sexuality education programs in black churches would delay the onset of sexual activity among teens, reduced the number of partners among teens and adults, significantly decrease the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies, and gay-bashing.

## Letters Policy

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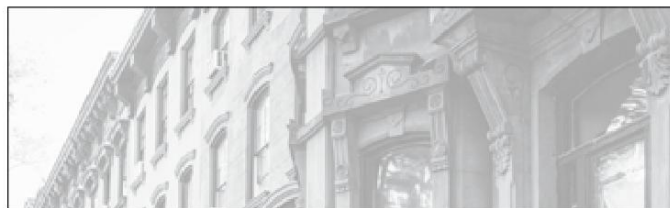
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