

VACCINE OF THE PAST



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What strides Everett has made. Dr. Frank Mirabello administered the new polio vaccine to a child during the Everett Board of Health’s 1954 Field Trial Vaccines. Beginning Tuesday, Everett began officially administering the new COVID vaccine. “I am proud of how our community is constantly a stepping stone for success,” said Mayor Carlo DeMaria. “Thank you to all of our hardworking healthcare workers, emergency personnel and essential workers for stepping up the plate and receiving the vaccine.”

Mayoral Charter Change to School Committee passes Legislature

By Seth Daniel

The Charter Change Home Rule Petition that would make the mayor a voting member of the School Committee passed both the state House and Senate on Jan. 5, and as of Tuesday was still waiting for Gov. Charlie Baker’s signature – though it was seen as something he would not object to.

Mayor Carlo DeMaria said he was happy to see that the matter had passed the Legislature and he awaited action from the governor.

“After carefully reviewing the petition, the Massachusetts Legislature passed the home rule petition and found that the City did not make any errors in the process used

to submit the petition for consideration,” he said. “The Legislature also found that the proposal did not set any new precedent in the Commonwealth. I’m awaiting the Governor’s action on the bill that is now on his desk for signature.”

The matter was quite controversial in Everett with many on the School Committee opposing the change, and Supt. Priya Tahiliani ardently opposing the change. The mayor had been a member of the Committee already, but without a vote.

Tahiliani this week said she looks forward to collaborating with City Hall on getting the schools reopened and getting the COVID-19 vaccine available to teachers and edu-

cators in Everett. She said it was a new year and she looks forward to working anew, but did not want to comment on the Charter Change.

School Committee Chair Frank Parker didn’t wish to comment either.

The matter was filed by State Rep. Joe McGonagle on Dec. 14 and spent much of the month in the House. On Jan. 4, a substitute bill was filed and some housekeeping amendments were made to the language. It passed and was enacted in the House and Senate on Jan. 5 – which was the last day of the session and the last day to act on it.

The governor has until Thursday night to sign the Home Rule.

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for his entire life, and her aunt worked at the State House.

“Everett has always been a good city to live in,” she said. “Living on Broadway, it was always easy to get the bus out of here and get to work in Boston.”

The joy of her life, she said, has been music.

Since a very young age, Harris has sang in the Glendale Methodist Church choir, and still continues to do that to this day. She always has enjoyed going to Symphony Hall in Boston and taking in the many concerts performed there as well.

“I just sang a solo of ‘Silent Night’ for Christ-

mas at another church,” she said. “I started into music just on my own. I started out in the choir when I was very young. I still love music a lot and I like classical and jazz.”

Harris said she also has traveled extensively to England, Spain and Italy. One place she never got to go, though, was France. She hopes that maybe she can make it there in the next few years.

“I always wanted to go to France, but never made it there,” she said. “In Italy, I remember riding the gondola and they played guitar and sang. In England, I went up the Thames to Windsor Castle.”

Her caregiver, Linda Gaffney, said she is a “saint” and loved by many in Everett at her church and within her circle of friends.

City Councilor Gerly Adrien also said she has been blessed to know Harris, and wished her a Happy Birthday this week as well.

“Happy Birthday, Grace, who has been blessed to be on this earth,” she said. “May God continue to bless her and give her great strength. I know she is loved by so many, including Everett resident Linda Gaffney. Thank you everyone for making her feel very special for her birthday.”

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Holiday COVID-19 surge hits Everett with more than 600 cases last week

The numbers of COVID-19 cases in Everett hit a surge last week, hitting what City officials said was the post-holiday surge of cases. For the first time, Everett had more than 600 cases in a week – logging 688 over the last week.

Mayor Carlo DeMaria said the Public Health Department has looked into the surge, and in fact, they believe it is largely due to gatherings during and after the holiday week.

“Another day over 100 cases,” he said last week. “Our Director of Public Health has looked into the

cause of this and studied the data. Sixteen days after Christmas, and nine days after New Year’s Eve- we are hitting the surge that we tried so hard to discourage. These cases are coming from private gatherings inside of homes as well as family to family transmission. Please don’t lose faith. We are hopeful that once this holiday surge passes we will get to a ‘reasonable’ number of cases.”

There had been more than 400 cases per week reported for most of December.

The most recent num-

bers are as follows:

- Tuesday, Jan. 12 – 36
- Monday, Jan. 11 – 60
- Sunday, Jan. 10 – 108
- Saturday, Jan. 9 – 115
- Friday, Jan. 8 – 123
- Thursday, Jan. 7 – 119
- Wednesday, Jan. 6 – 88
- Tuesday, Jan. 5 – 39

On Monday, Jan. 4, Everett moved its testing full-time indoors at the Samuel Gentile Recreation Center on Elm Street. Testing is done Monday to Thursday 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., and then 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. On Friday and Saturdays, testing is done noon to 6 p.m.

Vaccine / CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

off the list,” he said. “I made some calls and the mayor did well and since then we were able to get the vaccine. It’s credit where credit is due, the mayor, State Sen. Sal DiDomenico, State Rep. Joe McGonagle, Councilors Stephanie Martins and Michael McLaughlin helped in this...I’m not sure what happened with our paperwork, but at the end of the day, we got the vaccine and those who want it will be able to get it.”

McLaughlin said he and Martins were very surprised to see Everett not on the list, and they also alerted everyone they knew as well.

“It was very surprising and alarming that one of the top communities in the Commonwealth that has not been out of the Red category since the beginning of this pandemic somehow would not have been included in the rollout of the state vaccine plan,” said McLaughlin. “Councilor Martins and I started to work with state and local officials to see what could be done to assist our first responders. Thankfully for the quick actions of Senator DiDomenico and Mayor DeMaria we were able to address this matter head on and come to a quick resolution. It is shocking how this could have happened in the first place but we’re pleased with the outcome for our first responders and their safety in responding to this pandemic.”

Hardy said to get the vaccine, a community had to have a minimum of 200 people signed up. Many communities have collaborated with neighbors to host vaccine clinics. Chelsea, Revere and Winthrop have done just that, and were on the list at first take. They will be vaccinated on Friday in Revere.

Hardy said Everett probably wasn’t on the list because of not having the minimum of 200 people. He said it was good to see the City included School Nurses and civilian public safety employees to get the numbers up, and that the governor approved the plan.

That said, there hasn’t

been a huge response from first responders to sign up, Hardy said. He said he would be surprised if 50 percent from the Fire Department signed up, and reports from the Police Department were that even fewer wanted the vaccine now. A similar story played out in Chelsea, where they had low interest at first, but upon some education were able to get it up to 70 percent participation in police and fire.

“At the end of the day it’s everyone’s personal preference,” said Hardy. “I don’t want to get it, but I am going to get it for my mother so she can be more at ease around me...It is a mixed bag. Some people want to wait and think it’s too soon. Others are all for it and are sick of COVID-19 and want to do whatever to get it over with.”

Beginning on Tuesday, January 12, Public Health Nurse Sabrina Firicano and the Everett Health Department in City Hall began providing COVID vaccinations in their offices on the second floor of City Hall to first responders. Vaccines will be provided by the Health Department to first responders Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vaccinations will not be provided on Monday holidays when City Hall is closed. The goal is to offer 50 vaccines a day.

Vaccinations will be made available to the City’s first responders only at this time. This includes the City’s firefighters and civilian personnel; the members of the Everett Police Department and its civilian personnel; the dispatchers at E-911; and school nurses.

“While we value all our employees and residents, the vaccine is being offered to these employees first in accordance with the state’s COVID-19 Vaccine Plan,” read a statement from the City. “We are not able to offer vaccinations to members of the general public at this time. It is important to note that first responders who have had COVID-19 are eligible and encouraged to be vaccinated. There is no waiting period after having COVID-19 to get

Teachers, educators looking to get in line for COVID-19 vaccine

By the state priority list, teachers and educators are in line to begin getting the COVID-19 vaccine in February, and City and School District officials are working together to get that process ready, both said.

Mayoral Chief of Staff Erin Deveney said teachers are eligible as a profession to get the vaccine in February some time, and the City is working through that process right now.

Supt. Priya Tahiliani said the availability of the vaccine makes returning children to school a “different conversation.”

She said the City and Schools are working closely using the first responders experiences as a way to learn how to ramp up to complete vaccines clinics for teachers next month.

“I think the more communication and collaboration we can have between the City and schools will only benefit us in a full city-wide effort to get students back in school,” she said.

your vaccine.”

The City will be receiving the vaccine made by Moderna. The vaccine will be included in vials that contain 10 doses. Once a vial is pierced, all vaccinations from that vial must be given within six hours.

“Our thanks in advance goes to Sabrina, Caitlin, Rana Wehbe, and Joanne Agnes in the Health Department for all their hard-work and assistance to make this process possible,” read the City’s statement. “Thank you also to all our first responders for your service over this past year. The Mayor hopes this vaccine helps to keep you safe in your service to our City.”

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Everett

Independent

President: Stephen Quigley

Editor in Chief: Cary Shuman

WE MUST NEVER FORGET THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

As we were watching on TV the dramatic events unfold in Washington last week when the Trump Mob stormed the Capitol, threatening the lives of the Vice President, members of Congress, and the police who tried to hold them back (and actually murdering one of the members of the Capitol Police), the image of a gathering 58 years earlier in August, 1963, illuminated our mind’s eye.

We are referring to the March on Washington, when more than 250,000 Americans from all across the country gathered at the Lincoln Memorial on a steamy summer day to demand “jobs and freedom,” an event that was climaxed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s immortal “I Have a Dream” speech.

The March on Washington was famous not only for Dr. King’s iconic words, but also because the unprecedented mass gathering of Americans was completely peaceful. Pundits and others had predicted rioting, but there were no arrests, no incidents, no violence -- a stark contrast to the events of last Wednesday perpetrated by Trump’s Mob.

The March on Washington and Dr. King’s subsequent peaceful protests galvanized support for the goals of “jobs and freedom,” eventually resulting in laws such as the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act that ended segregation in the South and discrimination in the North.

We would note that even the best efforts of a revered figure such as Dr. King could not stem the tide of violent rioting that marked the 1960s, most notably Watts in 1965, Detroit in 1967, and Chicago in 1968.

Yet Dr. King’s legacy of peaceful protest is what endures today.

For those of us old enough to remember the 1960s, it’s hard to believe that it has been almost 53 years since Dr. King was assassinated while he was standing on a balcony in a motel room in Memphis. Dr. King was in Memphis to show his solidarity with striking city trash collection workers.

Every school child for the past generation knows well the story of Dr. Martin Luther King. But an elementary school textbook cannot truly convey the extent to which he brought about real change in our country. To anyone under the age of 50, Dr. King is just another historical figure.

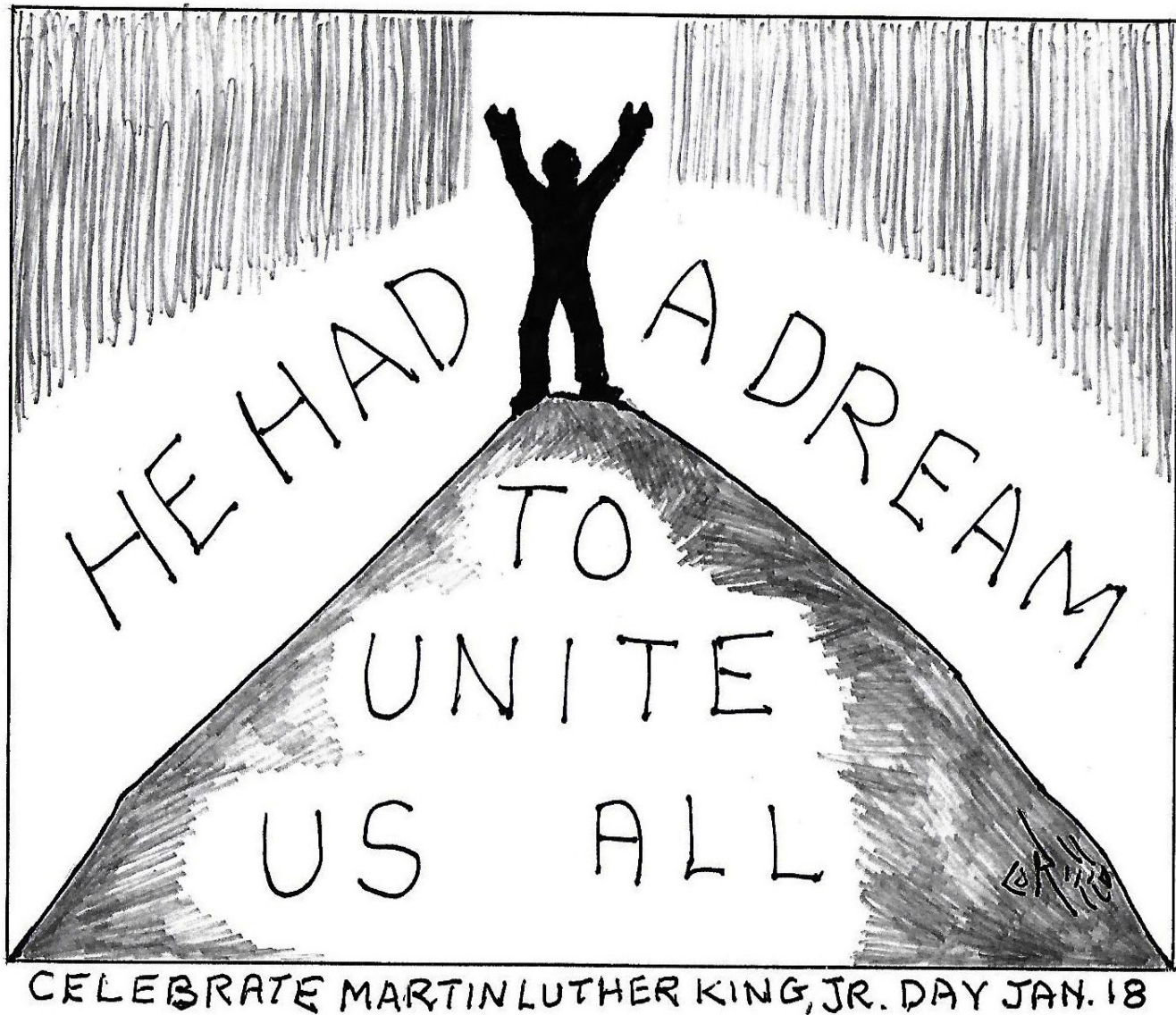
But for those of us who can recall the 1960s, a time when racial segregation was lawful throughout half of our country and a stealthy racism prevailed throughout the other half, Martin Luther King stands out as one of the great leaders in American history, a man whose stirring words and perseverance to his cause changed forever the historical trajectory of race relations in America, a subject that some historians refer to as the Original Sin of the American experience.

However, as much as things have changed for the better in the past 53 years in terms of racial equality in our society, the events of last Wednesday also made it clear that we still have a long way to go before it can be said, as Dr. King put it in his speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963: “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

“What would Dr. Martin Luther King do if he were alive today?” we often ask ourselves. We can’t say for sure, but we do know that although King accomplished much in his lifetime, he would be the first to understand that the work for which he gave his life still is far from done.

Dr. King advocated for non-violent protest and he practiced what he preached. That’s a lesson that must be re-learned by each succeeding generation. We can only hope that his spirit and courage can continue to inspire this and future generations to bring about a world in which all persons are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

Independent Forum



GUEST OP-ED

Please, stop the violence

Dr. Glenn Mollette

Acts of violence against a marriage partner have never saved a marriage. Violent acts toward family members have never made a family happier. Typically, they create emotional and sometimes physical wounds that are never forgotten. Too many families have suffered because someone in the family became violent.

Violence in our communities and towns always results in pain, division and sometimes even loss of life. Violence typically brings the wrong people together to do bad things. No community, city or state needs this.

In times of war or enemy aggression against our United States, violence has been necessary. Acts of war have never been pleasant. They result in the loss of life and horrific debilitation of so many people physically and mentally. Most Americans do not want to be at war with anyone.

In years past, we have had to protect our country against those who sought

to harm us. The Second Amendment gives Americans the right to bear arms and protect ourselves. We are grateful for our military but we pray for peace. None of us want our family members actively involved in combat if it can be avoided.

Violence like we saw last week at the United States Capitol was criminal. It helped no one. It solved nothing. Everyone who traveled to hear President Trump speak should have bought a nice dinner in D.C. and then traveled back to their families. Unlawfully entering the Capitol was wrong and was carried out in a violent criminal way. People were killed. Offices were torn apart and doors broken down. Staffers were terrified for their lives. This should never have happened. Many of these criminals will eventually be arrested and spend time in jail.

This act of criminal stupidity did nothing to advance or help President Trump. If they had stopped in front of the Capitol and given speeches, yelled,

screamed, waved their signs throughout the day and then gone home the results would have been better. Terrorism never produces positive results. Destruction of the property of others and the terrorism of people are savage and criminal.

This same kind of unnecessary violence was seen in many of our cities last summer. I traveled to Cleveland, Ohio after a march had taken place and saw the results of acts of violence. I saw almost all of downtown Cleveland boarded up. Businesses were closed. Hotels were closed. Very few restaurants were open. For weeks my family was afraid to stop in downtown Louisville because of the protests and disruption occurring in the city.

In the United States of America, individuals, groups and organizations have the absolute right to march, protest and exercise their free speech. However, the destruction of buildings and businesses are acts of violence and are criminal. The people who shut down sections

of cities throughout our country should be arrested for their behavior. An acquaintance, who lived outside Seattle for many years, was terrified to travel back to that city last year.

Violence against Democrats or Republicans will not bring this country back together. Invasion and violence against the Capitol solved nothing but ruined some lives. Violence will not change the results of the election. Joe Biden will be the President of the United States for the next four years.

March, protest, yell, scream and financially support organizations who promote your point of view. But please, put your guns, pipe bombs and hatred away.

Glenn Mollette is the publisher of Newburgh Press, Liberty Torch and various other publishing imprints; a national columnist – American Issues and Common Sense opinions, analysis, stories and features appear each week In over 500 newspapers, websites and blogs across the United States.

LETTERS to the Editor

SURPRISED AND CONCERNED

To the Editor,

I am surprised and concerned as a resident and member of the City Council that the schools are considering a hybrid education model for February. In September when numbers of positive cases for Covid-19 were significantly lower, the decision was made to keep the schools closed. Now that we see numbers increase to all-time highs it

shouldn’t be a time to talk about how to roll out the hybrid model of learning in our city. I spoke at a School Committee meeting recently asking that the members not send children back until science shows us it is safe to do so. I once again put that same request out to the members of the School Committee. We are only a few short weeks away from February vacation which should be a real concern for all.

I spoke with nearly 200 individuals over the weekend about this matter, many of them are strongly against talks of hybrid learning until numbers decrease and the vaccine is made able for teachers and staff. I think as the Superintendent stated herself several times we need to go by science and see the numbers significantly down for several weeks before moving forward. However, we should be talking about how else

we can support children and families over remote learning during this winter.

In closing, the number one thing I heard from families this weekend was they would greatly appreciate being a part of the discussion, of when they feel it is safe for their child to return to in person learning. We must return to the new normal as a community of one.

Michael McLaughlin
Ward 6 City Councilor

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Your opinions, please

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HISTORIC FIGURES

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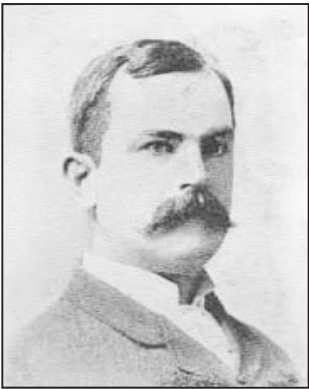
Albert Parlin was Everett’s greatest benefactor

By Matt Lattanzi

Albert Parlin was born on September 16, 1848 in Everett, Massachusetts to Ezra Parlin and Nancy Pickering-Parlin. His father, Ezra, was a native of Weld, Maine who met Nancy while he was teaching. Unfortunately, tragedy struck in the young life of Albert, losing both his parents at a very young age – his mother passed in 1853 at the age of 26 and his father passed in 1858 at the age of 37, both succumbing to “consumption” (tuberculosis). At the age of nine, young Albert had become an orphan, raised by his grandmother, Sarah Howe Edmester Pickering, in the Pickering House where he was born.

Never deterred, Albert pushed forward with his life, graduating from the Schools of Malden and Malden High School in 1864. He found his first job as a floor-sweep and errand boy in a retail cloak store, serving the store for eight months. Come July, 1865, the 17-year-old Albert Parlin began working with Magee Furnace Company, a Boston-based company where Mr. Parlin spent 28 years of his professional career. Ten years into his tenure, Mr. Parlin rose through the ranks, taking charge of the company in 1875 and becoming the company’s Treasurer in 1876. While working at Magee, Parlin connected himself to many prominent business enterprises: He served as the President of the Chicago and Ohio River Railroad, Director of the Connotton Valley Railroad, Director of the Hamilton National Bank, and Director of the New England Mortgage Security Company.

In 1892, Albert Parlin donated to the City of Everett the Pickering Estate, his birthplace and familial



Albert Parlin is known as Everett’s greater benefactor. His gifts made nearly 100 years ago are still in place and used to help modern Everett residents.

home, to be torn down and a Library erected on the parcel in memory of his son, Frederick E. Parlin, who died in 1890 at the age of 18.

Albert Parlin gave to the City an additional \$5,000 to aid in the building of the Frederick E. Parlin Memorial Library. Through the years, Mr. Parlin continued to exemplify charitable giving, donating \$6,000 in 1911 for an addition to the Library, purchasing the land between the Library and Central Fire Station to serve as an outdoor relaxation area for the residents of Everett, and donating first-edition books and portraits he had amassed over the years. His greatest gift given to the Library came in the form of the Frederick E. Parlin Memorial Fund. Between 1924 and 1927, Albert Parlin donated \$100,000 to this fund, the interest from which the Library could use to purchase items not provided to the Library by the City. This fund is still used by the Library Board of Trustees today.

Albert Parlin did not stop his generosity with the Library; it takes more than that to be known as “Everett’s Greatest Benefactor”!

In 1914, Mr. Parlin donated the land on which the Parlin Junior High School currently resides, noting in his donation that he wished for a school and playground to be maintained on the parcel. In Mr. Parlin’s will, Albert Parlin left \$300,000 “to purchase or erect and maintain in or near the City of Boston a lodging house...where, at a small expense, poor and worthy young men and boys, who are earning their living, may be offered a healthy, attractive home in good surroundings to enable them to start right in the world, and to afford them a congenial place to spend their evenings...”

The Parlin House, as it is now known, stands directly behind Everett City Hall. When it first opened, the Parlin House, which had both a full gymnasium and a swimming pool in addition to its living quarters, charged occupants \$4.00 per week (which translates to roughly \$60.00/week in today’s currency – not too bad for Everett rent!)

Albert Parlin truly embodied the word “generous” in every sense, creating a legacy that has lasted over a century and will continue to provide for the residents of Everett well into the future. Mr. Parlin passed away on March 15, 1927 at the age of 78 and is buried alongside his wife, Sarah Battelle Emmons Parlin, in Everett’s Woodlawn Cemetery.

To read more about Everett history, peruse the Everett Libraries’ collections, engage in various programs for all ages, or utilize one of the free online databases, be sure to check out the Libraries’ new website (<https://www.noblenet.org/everett/>) and follow their Facebook page (@EverettPublicLibrary) for updates.

Baker administration announces more than \$100K for Mystic Valley transportation program

The Baker-Polito Administration announced today a total of \$8.6 million for cities, towns, and nonprofit organizations to use under the Community Transit Grant Program administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

The annual competitive grant program awards money to be used for transit operating costs, mobility management, or new capital investments. One grant goes for transportation services at Mystic Valley Elder Services.

“Community Transit Grants provide critical funding to local organizations to purchase equipment to help people get where they need to go efficiently and safely,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “Our Administration will continue to make

efforts to work with local leaders, community stakeholders, and the private sector to make transit accessible to everyone.”

Mystic Valley Elder Services got \$106,200 to operate The Connect a Ride Alliance Program. The program provides transportation services to 11 communities north of Boston. MVES employs two full time transportation coordinators who are responsible for administering a mobility network and rider program for older adults and individuals living with disabilities.

The funding being announced is for applications made to the program during 2020. Awards include funding to 30 organizations for 113 vans and minibuses and money to 21 entities for 28 operating and mobility management projects. Award recipients

include some of the state’s 15 Regional Transit Authorities, municipalities, Councils on Aging, and eligible nonprofit organizations in Massachusetts.

The Community Transit Grant Program is the Commonwealth’s annual competitive grant program to distribute both Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities funds and State Mobility Assistance Program funds. The FTA Section 5310 grant program provides funding to assist with the purchase of capital equipment, mobility management, and operational costs in order to meet the mobility needs of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities of any age. State Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) funds are used to assist in the provision of transportation services to seniors and persons with disabilities exclusively through the purchase of eligible vehicles.

In total, MassDOT plans to distribute \$8,616,708 of federal and state funds for vehicles, operating projects, and mobility management projects in this round of the program.

Schools looking to keep positives of remote life as return plans start

By Seth Daniel

As plans begin for a return to in-person schooling potentially this spring in some form, the temptation is to leave all that happened under remote learning behind and plow into normal life and in-person education once again.

However, Supt. Priya Tahiliani said this week that the COVID vaccine – which she said has provided a “light at the end of the tunnel” – won’t be a shot back to March 2020 normalcy, but rather a moon-shot into a new kind of 21st Century education that combines all that is good about remote learning with an enhanced in-person model.

Education after COVID-19 looks to be more flexible, and more individualized, she said, with all sorts of combinations of learning happening.

“We have to take the lessons we’ve learned from this and make sure we don’t forget them,” she said. “It should become a new and improved way of doing things. School Committee viewership is up online and there are so many benefits...We have to maximize opportunities for everyone. The places we’re seeing some students flourish, how do we maintain that? There are so many possibilities for alternative education, credit recovery and advanced opportunities. This will be huge for us and moving forward education can be more individualized...This has plunged us into uncomfortable spaces where we weren’t ready to (go). It’s forced us into it and we are forced into 21st Century education.”

That has been no more apparent than in the “one-to-one” rollout of computer devices and internet for every students. That was

not available in Everett just in 2019, and was a long-term plan for Tahiliani when she took the job in December 2019. Now, it’s nearly old news as every student in Everett that wants a computer device has one to access remote learning. That, she said, is here to stay and only a small example of what’s to come.

She said they have learned there are many learners who have flourished during the pandemic with remote learning, and that might be a better style for them going into the future.

“I know we’re seeing both sides of the coin with students,” she said. “That’s expected given different learning styles. We’re seeing some students flourish now that didn’t do so in the past. We’ve seen English Learners...you can encourage student dialog and writing a lot more than with students in front of you. So we see some students flourish during this time, and other students where the model doesn’t work for them at all.”

The trick will be to move forward into in-person learning in the near future, and not lose some of the unexpected magic that was discovered. It wouldn’t be fair, she said, to tell students who have benefitted that the schools are going back to the old way where they struggled. So, a new frontier merging the old world and the new world of education will be essential.

However, Tahiliani said while there are pluses, there are a whole lot of minuses. Many students that were very good scholars with in-person learning have not responded well to the remote learning. A number of students have caved under the social-emotional pressure and isolation that

COVID-19 has brought. Still others have had life circumstances that made it nearly impossible to consider succeeding in school.

She said next year is going to be about investing a lot in the kids and making sure they are supported and that healing takes place.

“What we’re doing going forward is figuring out how do we support the students that did benefit,” she said. “We want to make sure we don’t go backwards to old ways for them. Then, what do we also do for students whose grades have dropped? A lot of times it’s social-emotional support. I know it’s on everyone’s mind and we are providing targeted support. It’s a real concern.”

Already, she said, next year’s plans are much different when it comes to supporting the students coming back and those looking to merge new technology into their educational program. All, she said, are going to need healing from the effects of the pandemic. She said they are looking to invest in robust after-school and in-school programming, as well as more interventionists.

“Next year, it’s not going to be the same model,” she said.

That brings up another question that is being talked about on the horizon, and that is what to do with letter grades from this year. Many educators and students and families have advocated for dropping letter grades this year as so many students have struggled to keep up with their normal performance. However, others have done better. It’s a question Tahiliani said maybe they’re not yet ready to answer.

“It’s a great question,” she said.

Schools // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

idea until there are widespread, successful vaccinations.

“Anyone can opt out and go full remote if they choose,” she said. “We want to get an idea of how many families will choose remote. We know our positivity rates are really going up. The vaccination availability now is a game-changer, but we need to hear from the community.”

Councilor Michael McLaughlin spoke at a recent School Committee meeting about not returning the kids to a hybrid model, and said this week he thinks it is too hasty.

“I spoke with nearly 200 individuals over the weekend about this matter, many of them are strongly against talks of hybrid learning until numbers decrease and the vaccine is made able for teachers and staff,” he said. “I think as the Superintendent stated herself several times we need to go by science and see the num-

bers significantly down for several weeks before moving forward. However, we should be talking about how else we can support children and families over remote learning during this winter.”

The biggest challenge at the moment, said Tahiliani, is finding out just how families feel about it. The COVID pandemic has been so personal in Everett that no single group of people or ethnicity has a unified opinion. In fact, it seems to hover around personal experience, and Tahiliani said that can change by the day.

“I think that’s very true,” she said. “I think that’s what makes this even more difficult because we can’t plan on one central challenge that a similar group of families is dealing with. It really is about everyone’s own experience with COVID-19 and how it touched their family and friends lives. How can we blame them? Sometimes it’s not even

changing family by family, but opinions seem to change day by day and week to week.”

A key challenge to implementing a hybrid model will be stops and starts. She said many similar districts that were in the yellow and moved to the red risk level like Everett kept kids in school. There were many times they were in the clear, and other times they had to shut down for a time.

“I honestly worry about the return and how sustainable it is because we see other districts that have gone back and had to stop and roll back their plans,” she said. “On the other hand, we have to try...I think right now the vaccine becoming available and educators being priorities in stage 2 – that makes all of this a different conversation.”

More details are expected at the next School Committee meeting later this month.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

The Everett Independent encourages residents to submit birth and engagement announcements, news releases, business briefs, honor rolls, social news, sports stories, and photographs for publication. Items should be forwarded to our offices at 385 Broadway, Citizens Bank Building, Revere, MA 02151. Items can also be faxed to 781-485-1403. The Independent also encourages readers to e-mail news releases to editor@everettindependent.com.

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HAPPY RETIREMENT, XANDO



Congrats to Sgt. Panzini and K-9 Xando for their commitment to duty over the last decade. Xando retired after approximately 10 years of service as a narcotics detection K-9. The Everett Police wish him luck in his retirement where hopefully he gets lots of belly rubs. On his last day he was treated to a blueberry muffin and a batch of all natural treats.

New report focuses on landfill long-term management issues

The Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) Applied Research Foundation (ARF) recently conducted important research on the long-term management (LTM) that will be needed for closed landfills following the 30-year post-closure care period required under current regulations. The resulting report addresses key issues such as the expected service life of the landfill’s final cover system and the tasks that will need to be performed to ensure the long-term protection of public health and the environment. The report also addresses the issue of how long-term management activities can be financed.

“SWANA continues to be at the forefront of identifying solutions to challenging solid waste issues, and this important new report provides useful information and data for solid waste managers and their communities,” stated David Biderman, SWANA Executive Director and CEO. “We need to assure the public that today’s landfills will not only provide communities with needed solid waste disposal services but that they will continue to protect public health and the

environmental for hundreds of years following their closure,” he added.

The report provides reassuring evidence regarding the efficacy of the federal design standards that have been established for these facilities. For example, the research study concluded that it is unlikely that the geomembrane in the landfill’s final cover system would need to be replaced for 2,000 years following its installation.

“We appreciate the support and involvement of our Disposal Group subscribers who submitted and voted for this important research topic and provided funding support for the research effort,” said Jeremy O’Brien, SWANA’s Director of Applied Research.

It is SWANA’s intention that this report will serve as a useful reference for solid waste managers who are responsible for the provision of landfill disposal services for their communities.

The full report, The Long-Term Management of Closed MSW Landfills Following the Post-Closure Care Period, is currently available only to SWANA ARF subscribers. SWANA members receive free access to ARF industry reports one year after publication.

Everett Crimson Tide announce Spring football

The Everett Crimson Tide would like to announce the opening of the 2021 Spring Unlimited Tackle Football Season. Ages 5-15 boys and girls welcome. Online Registrations will begin soon after January 15.

Registration fees will be \$150 for spring Football, but if you play both Spring and Fall Football your registration in the Fall will also be \$150, which is a savings of \$75 in the Fall. If you do not play Spring Football then your regis-

tration in the Fall will be the usual \$225. More info to follow on our Web site and our Facebook page.

Looking forward to seeing you all in the spring. Stay safe and healthy.

Rentals // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that, \$200,000 was paid to ABCD for administration costs and the organization was charged with distributing \$1.3 million to Everett residents that qualified.

However, nearly one month after the opening of applications, some \$1.1 million remains to be distributed.

Deveney said the application period closed on Dec. 22 and there were 316 applications received. Of those, 291 were deemed viable and were advanced to the next phase of review.

Already, 71 checks have gone out using a total of \$216,279 of the allotted money. That left 220 applications still pending or stalled out.

“The reason this has taken some time to roll out is ABCD has had to reach out many times for documentation,” said Deveney.

The process includes filling out incomplete forms, providing required documents, verifying Everett residency and getting household size. That has been cumbersome, but she said they are working fast to try to fill in the gaps and get people contacted and applications complete. They are still accepting applications for a so-called waiting list.

That is because Everett was the beneficiary of an additional, unexpected \$3.1 million in CARES Act funding from the state on Dec. 24. The state had told the City they weren’t eligible, but a hard lobbying effort by Mayor Carlo DeMaria reversed that decision. The current Assistance program is not using that \$3.1 million, but will likely use a portion of it in the coming months to help those facing housing instability, Deveney said.

Councilors Stephanie Martins and Michael McLaughlin said they were pleased with the initial rollout of the program, as they had made the original call to organize a City program and not rely on the state’s slower RAFT program.

“This is crucial help and I’m happy to see the City came up with a simplified application that was easy to navigate,” she said.

Said McLaughlin, “We

just met with you a short time ago in November, and you guys went from 0 to 100 to get this going really quickly.”

Deveney said there are some ABCD e-mails that reportedly went into applicant Spam folders, so everyone expecting return contact should check that. She also said to call 3-1-1 with any questions.

•LOOKING AT THE MONEY

City Councilor Fred Capone called for two checks on spending Monday night, finally getting information about the costs of the new and somewhat new Christmas lights and the City’s use of Regan Communications for public relations.

For the Christmas lights, Capone reported that they came at a total cost over two years of \$268,000 – which he said was questionable given the times. The lights were part of the new historic light pole replacement, and in the first year there were 255 wreaths put up at a cost of \$883 per unit. There were 90 put up this year. The information indicated that some sort of warranty plan reduced the cost to \$147 per unit. Meanwhile, Capone reported the City spent \$7,100 on the Everett Square Christmas tree this year as the donated one ran into troubles when being taken down. There were also kissing balls at a cost of \$12,700, he said. That was also compounded by a \$23,000 installation cost from Daigle Electric.

The Council voted 10-1 to send the matter to the City Solicitor as Capone said he was concerned if the state law was followed in regards to the bidding process. Councilor Michael McLaughlin voted against it and said he would have supported more decorations during this depressing year.

Meanwhile, a request for information from Capone that went back to July finally came through and showed the City had spent some \$332,000 on public relations services with powerhouse Boston firm Regan Communications since 2017. That included \$105,000 for

COVID-19 communications work.

“That’s a very large amount of money, especially when the City has a Communications Department,” he said.

“I think it’s probably something we could have done in-house,” he concluded.

•NO VIOLATIONS IN NAPOLITANO DEPARTURE

City Solicitor Keith Slattery reported that the City and the State Ethics Commission did an investigation into the departure of former Councilor Peter Napolitano and his desire to get the vacant Assistant City Clerk job.

That investigation revealed there was no wrongdoing, something that Councilor Gerly Adrien had requested be looked into last month.

“There is no conflict on this – that’s the long and short of it,” he said.

Last Saturday, Jan. 9, the Council’s Legislative Affairs Committee met all day to interview the 31 candidates that had applied for the position.

Only 19 showed up, reportedly, and not all were qualified according to the interviews. Napolitano seemingly had a good interview and some think he has the best shot of getting the votes when it goes before the Council in a Special Meeting Wednesday, Jan. 13.

•STATE UPDATE

Councilor Michael McLaughlin requested an update on ear marks passed in the State House of Representatives and Senate, and how many of those ear marks actually were delivered in real funding.

McLaughlin called for State Rep. Joe McGonagle and State Sen. Sal DiDomenico to come before the Council to address the matter. He said ear marks are simply a wish list, and what is actually funded is often a different story that what is requested and reported. He also said often some people in the legislature take credit for the ear marks of another member, and he wanted to make sure that wasn’t happening in Everett.

Postal employees will celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Post Offices across the commonwealth will be closed on Monday, Jan. 18, as our employees pause to celebrate Martin

Luther King Jr. Day. Street delivery on Monday will be limited to guaranteed overnight parcels and there will be no collection of mail.

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on Tuesday, Jan. 19.

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Encore Boston Harbor announces changes to culinary team

Staff Report

Encore Boston Harbor is raising its culinary bar with the addition of a new Red 8 Executive Chef and a new Executive Director of Food & Beverage and Culinary Operations.

Award-winning chef Richard Chen has joined the team as the Executive Chef of Red 8 and Encore Boston Harbor’s Executive Chef, Joseph Leibowitz, has been promoted to Executive Director of Food & Beverage and Culinary Operations.

Chef Chen, a seasoned culinary veteran with an area of expertise in Cantonese cooking, has received numerous awards and accolades. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Chef Chen has opened more than a half dozen new concepts across the country, including luxury hotels, casino resorts, cruise ships and standalone restaurants.

He launched his career in Chicago at the Ritz Carlton of Chicago,

earning Mobil Five Star and AAA Five Diamond awards during his tenure. He then moved onto the Peninsula of Chicago, a five-star hotel, where he earned two AAA diamond awards, two Mobil star awards, and the title of “Best Chinese Restaurant” in Chicago.

From there, Chef Chen went on to open Wing Lei at Wynn Las Vegas. It was at Wing Lei that he earned a Michelin star in both 2008 and 2009, along with a collection of Mobil and AAA Diamonds five and four-star awards. Wing Lei remains the only Chinese restaurant in North America to have ever earned a Michelin star. He also spent time at Michi in Texas, consulting for Princess Cruises and Parq Vancouver’s fine dining Chinese restaurant, 1886. Most recently, Chef Chen held the title of the Hard Rock Fire Mountain’s property Executive Sous Chef before returning to the East Coast to join Encore Boston Harbor as the

Executive Chef at Red 8.

Joining Chef Chen in elevating the Encore Boston Harbor culinary team is Joseph Leibowitz. Holding the title most recently as Executive Chef of Encore Boston Harbor, Chef Leibowitz has been promoted to Executive Director of Food & Beverage and Culinary Operations for the property. Chef Leibowitz will now oversee all back-of-house operations for 18 dining and lounge venues. He is responsible for concept and menu development, purchasing, food costing, kitchen design, stewarding, as well as staffing and training all employees.

Prior to relocating to Boston, Chef Leibowitz spent 13 years at Wynn and Encore Las Vegas in a variety of culinary positions. He began his career with Wynn Resorts under the helm of Chef Alex Stratta, at Alex restaurant where he was quickly promoted to Executive Sous Chef for the Michelin-rated two-star and Forbes

five-star establishment before becoming the Chef de Cuisine of the restaurant. He later became Executive Chef of Tableau, the resort’s premier Tower Suites dining venue before being asked to join the corporate side of operations as Executive Sous chef for Wynn and Encore Las Vegas.

For the next three years, Chef Leibowitz helped develop and lead a team of over 1,200 chefs, cooks and stewards. He then went on to assist in designing all of the back-of-house spaces for Encore Boston Harbor, before developing the culinary team for the resort’s grand opening in June 2019.

Since arriving in Boston, Chef Leibowitz has been appointed to multiple advisory boards to help cultivate the future of culinary arts as a profession in Massachusetts. Chef Leibowitz and Encore Boston Harbor quickly formed a partnership with a local non-profit culinary program, the New England

Center for Arts and Technology, and spearheaded the fundraising of over \$300,000 to fuel the development of the program and its students.

A New York native, Chef Leibowitz lived most of his life on Long Island and graduated at the top of his class from the New York Institute of Technology’s culinary program. Chef Leibowitz spends his free time with his three children and his wife, whose support and love drives him to be the chef and father he is today.

According to Encore Boston Harbor President Brian Gullbrants, “We are thrilled to welcome Richard Chen as the new Executive Chef of Red 8. He is one of the most talented Cantonese chefs in the world, and we are honored to have him as part of our team.” He continued, “The addition of Chef Chen paired with the promotion of our own Chef Joseph Leibowitz will continue to elevate the caliber of our food and



Award-winning chef Richard Chen has joined the team as the Executive Chef of Red 8.

beverage program at Encore Boston Harbor.”

Red 8 is open Thursday through Sunday from noon-9 p.m. Red 8 is located inside Encore Boston Harbor at 1 Broadway in Everett. There is complimentary self-parking available. Reservations can be made online or by calling 857-770-7000. For information on all other Encore Boston Harbor dining experiences, please log onto <https://www.encorebostonharbor.com/dining-and-nightlife>.

Legislature passes racial justice and maternal health equity resolve

Rep. Joe McGonagle and his colleagues in the Massachusetts Legislature on Tuesday passed legislation aimed at eliminating racial inequities in maternal health.

A Resolve reducing racial inequities in maternal health creates a special legislative commission to make recommendations to address barriers that result in racial inequities, including women of color dying of pregnancy-related causes. The Commission is charged with gathering statewide data

on maternal mortality and making recommendations to reduce and eliminate racial barriers to accessing equitable maternal care.

“The Legislature took an important step toward reducing racial inequities in maternal health with this legislation, and I’m proud of the House’s work on how to ensure maternal health equity,” said House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy). “I am grateful to Chair Khan, Representative Miranda and Chair Mahoney for their hard work, and

I thank Senate President Spilka for her partnership on this critical issue.”

“Coming from the diverse city of Everett, I understand how important and impactful this bill is for expectant mothers in our community,” said McGonagle. “I’m very proud of the Legislature for committing to protecting these mothers in such an important part of their lives. I’m grateful to Speaker Mariano and Rep. Liz Miranda for pushing this legislation through.”

The commission mem-

bers include public health experts, physicians, midwives, a doula, and individuals with first-hand experience with health disparities, including a survivor of maternal morbidity. The bill requires that a majority of commission members be from Massachusetts communities most impacted by maternal health inequity, which statistically are Black and brown communities.

The 25-member commission will investigate and report on:

- Best-practices by other states or grass-roots organizations to reduce or eliminate racial inequities in maternal health or severe maternal morbidity, including, among other approaches, culturally competent and affordable doula services;
- Accessibility and affordability of birthing centers, maternal medical homes, and doula care and the diversity and cultural competency of maternal health care providers;
- Barriers to accessing prenatal and postpartum

care;

- How historical and current structural, institutional and individual forms of racism affect maternal mortality as well as potential solutions, such as bias training in hospital facilities and birthing centers; and
- Availability of statewide data relating to maternal mortality and morbidity and additional data deemed necessary.

The bill is now with the governor.

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Block Properties among the first to see future of the Commercial Triangle

By Seth Daniel

To the initiated, the Commercial Triangle remains a conglomeration of somewhat blighted legacy industrial properties, but more and more developers from outside of the city are catching the vision for the area that Mayor Carlo DeMaria and late Building Inspector Jim Soper had when they brought in new zoning and a new plan for the area.

The latest is Block

Properties, headed up by Jonathan Block of Chestnut Hill, which has spent just more than \$10 million acquiring property at Second and Vine Streets for a pioneering residential development.

“It’s a very interesting area,” he said. “We had obviously seen some of the other projects constructed or proposed in the area. That, in conjunction with what seemed to be a very friendly City environment for development

with zoning changes and a pro-development atmosphere, it really appealed to us for our next project. It’s a place to be for a long time.”

Block Properties has been constructing and managing residential projects all over Greater Boston, noting Somerville as an area they have concentrated on.

Block said it might be hard for those in Everett or long-time residents to see the potential value right

now, but he said the area is a gem and has a lot of momentum with numerous projects on the Everett and Chelsea sides – as well as the potential extension of the Silver Line running right along Second Street in the near-future.

“It’s hard to see the future when you walk through there now,” he said. “It’s not without risk to us and other developers. But you have the Pioneer and the proposal at the Stop & Shop. You also have the project on Garvey up from us and the Greystone project (at the old Wood Waste site). On the other side of the border in Chelsea there is also the

Fairfield project. There’s a lot started and a lot coming in. There’s a combination of availability of land and parcels along with a pro-development atmosphere.”

Block also said there’s a lot more difficulty developing in some other places, particularly as developers scour the region for good residential sites.

“Other developers in Cambridge or Somerville or other submarkets are looking for the next area and I think this checks a lot of boxes,” he said. “It’s not going to be transformed a year or three years from now, but 10 years from now it will

look really different and for the better.”

Right now, Block has his project before the Planning Board, and had a first review of it on Monday night. There will be more reviews, and he said at the moment the project is car-oriented, but he doesn’t expect that to be the case for all the Commercial Triangle in the future.

In all, he said they are excited to continue their journey in the new area and look forward to working with the Planning Board to transform the Triangle with other pioneering developers.

Legislature passes landmark climate change bill

Rep. Joseph McGonagle, along with his colleagues in the Massachusetts Legislature last week passed breakthrough climate legislation that overhauls the state’s climate laws, drives down greenhouse gas emissions, creates clean energy jobs, and protects environmental justice communities.

The bill, An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (S.2995), sets a 2050 net-zero greenhouse gas emissions limit, as well as statewide limits every five years; increases the requirements for offshore wind energy procurement bringing the statewide total to 5,600 megawatts; requires emission reduction goals for MassSave, the state’s energy efficiency program; and, for the first time, establishes the criteria in statute that define environmental justice populations. The legislation also increases support for clean energy workforce development programs including those targeting low-income communities and improves gas pipeline safety.

“This legislation represents a major piece of climate legislation that will set the course of the Commonwealth for the next three decades,” said House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy). “Today we send a message loud and clear that Massachusetts will empower our environmental justice communities, achieve net zero emissions by 2050, continue to lead on offshore wind, increase equitable access to our clean

energy programs, and create pathways to clean energy jobs for underserved and low-income communities.”

“I’m very excited for the commitment and investment made today by the legislature,” said McGonagle. “With this legislation, we are sending a message that the climate and environment will remain priorities in the Commonwealth for the next 30 years. Environmental justice communities such as Everett will reap from the passing of this bill.”

The legislation includes, among other items, the following provisions.

- Sets a statewide net zero limit on greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and mandates emissions limits every five years, as well as limits for specific sectors of the economy, including transportation and buildings.
- Codifies environmental justice provisions into Massachusetts law, defining environmental justice populations and providing new tools and protections for affected neighborhoods.
- Requires an additional 2,400 megawatts of offshore wind, building on previous legislation action and increases the total to 5,600 megawatts in the Commonwealth.
- Directs the Department of Public Utilities (DPU), regulator of the state’s electric and natural gas utilities, to balance priorities going forward: system safety, system security, reliability, affordability, equity, and, significantly, reductions in

greenhouse gas emissions.

- Sets appliance energy efficiency standards for a variety of common appliances including plumbing, faucets, computers, and commercial appliances.
- Adopts several measures aimed at improves gas pipeline safety, including increased fines for safety violations and regulations related to training and certifying utility contractors.
- Increases the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) by 3 percent each year from 2025 – 2029, resulting in 40 percent renewable energy by 2030.
- Establishes an opt-in municipal net zero energy stretch code, including a definition of “net zero building.”
- Prioritizes equitable access to the state’s solar programs by low-income communities
- Establishes \$12 million in annual funding for the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center in order to create a pathway to the clean energy industry for environmental justice populations and minority-owned and women-owned businesses.
- Provides solar incentives for businesses by exempting them from the net metering cap to allow them to install solar systems on their premises to help offset their electricity use and save money.
- Requires utilities to include an explicit value for greenhouse gas reductions when they calculate the cost-effectiveness of an offering of MassSave.
- Creates a first-time greenhouse gas emissions standard for municipal lighting plants that requires them to purchase 50 percent non-emitting electricity by 2030 and “net zero” by 2050.
- Sets benchmarks for the adoption of clean energy technologies including electric vehicles, charging stations, solar technology, energy storage, heat pumps and anaerobic digesters.

The bill is now with the governor.

Sheriff Koutoujian completes term leading Massachusetts Sheriffs’ Association

Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian has officially completed his tenure as President of the Massachusetts Sheriffs’ Association (MSA) after leading the organization for the past three years.

Elected in October 2017, President Koutoujian’s tenure was originally slated to conclude at the end of 2019. MSA Presidents traditionally do not serve longer than a single two-year term, but Sheriff Koutoujian was asked to serve an additional year by his colleagues in order to synchronize the MSA presidential term with the legislature’s session.

“I want to thank my colleagues for the faith they placed in me as President. I especially thank outgoing Vice President Sheriff Chris Donelan for his thoughtful partnership over the past three years,” said Sheriff Koutoujian. “During our tenure we worked closely with the legislature and the Baker Administration on some of the most important legislation impacting the criminal justice system in decades. Sheriffs do this job because we want to help those we serve; I am proud to have helped advance that goal over the last three years.”

Sheriff Koutoujian has been succeeded by Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins as President. Sheriff Donelan has been succeeded by Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocchi as Vice President.

“As Sheriffs Tompkins and Cocchi begin their

tenure, I look forward to working with them to build upon the foundation of collaboration and professionalism that have been the hallmark of MSA’s approach to enhancing public safety and improving outcomes for those in our custody, their families and our communities,” said Sheriff Koutoujian.

“Over his tenure as MSA President, Sheriff Koutoujian helped us to shepherd through a number of changes that impacted not only our collective organization as a whole, but our individual county operations as well,” said Sheriff Tompkins. “We are all thankful for his service to the MSA and appreciative of his great efforts to advance our mission. And, as I take the baton, I look forward to expanding upon those efforts alongside Sheriff Cocchi and MSA Executive Director Carrie Hill as we continue to elevate the work of the MSA.”

During his term as president, the MSA worked with State Senator William Brownsberger (D – Second Suffolk and Middlesex) and State Representative Claire Cronin (D – 11th Plymouth) on the historic 2018 criminal justice reform bill. The bill included changes to restrictive housing within jails and prisons; created a special commission to study the prevention of suicide among correction officers; expressly authorized the establishment of specialized housing units for individuals ages 18 – 24 (which the

Middlesex Sheriff’s Office had previously opened); and created a mechanism for medical parole, among other key provisions.

Medical parole had been a top priority for Sheriff Koutoujian since 2013 when he began working with State Senator Patricia Jehlen (D – Second Middlesex) on passage.

Under his leadership, the MSA also worked with the Baker Administration, State Senator Cindy Friedman (D – Fourth Middlesex) and State Representative Denise Garlick (D – 13th Norfolk) on the passage and implementation of legislation establishing a landmark medication assisted treatment pilot program involving seven sheriffs’ offices. Under the law, those entering custody in one of those seven counties on an FDA-approved MAT regimen have the ability to continue that regimen unless determined otherwise by a qualified addiction specialist. Sentenced inmates not on a verified MAT regimen at the time of their commitment may also be evaluated for participation 30 days prior to their scheduled release.

For the past year, Sheriff Koutoujian served concurrently as president of both MSA and the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA). As MCSA President, Sheriff Koutoujian leads an association comprised of sheriffs of over 100 of the nation’s most populous counties. He will serve as MCSA President through the end of 2021.

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Congresswoman Pressley Announce Plans to Reintroduce Bill to End Federal Death Penalty

Congresswoman Ayana Pressley and colleagues have announced that they will lead more than 70 of their colleagues in soon reintroducing the Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act of 2021, bicameral legislation to prohibit the use of the death penalty at the federal level, and require re-sentencing of those currently on death row.

The announcement comes with three more people scheduled to be executed in the final days of the Trump administration.

“State-sanctioned murder is not justice, and the death penalty, which kills Black and brown people disproportionately, has absolutely no place in our society,” said Congresswoman Pressley. “Ending the federal death penalty—which is as cruel as it is ineffective in deterring crime—is a racial justice issue and must come to an end. We must finally abolish this inhumane form of punishment and put an end to Donald Trump’s unprec-

edented killing spree. I am grateful for the partnership of incoming Chairman Durbin and my colleagues in this effort.”

Despite overwhelming evidence against the death penalty, the Trump administration has executed 10 Americans since resuming federal executions for the first time in 17 years on July 14, 2020. The United States stands alone among its peers in executing its own citizens, a punishment that denies the dignity and humanity of all people and is disproportionately applied to people who are Black, Latinx, and poor. For example, Black people make up less than 13 percent of the nation’s population while accounting for more than 42 percent of those on death row. A nationwide study found that at least one in 25 people sentenced to death are innocent, while research has shown that capital punishment does not deter crime.

Polling in 2019 demon-

strated that the majority of Americans no longer support the death penalty. Many conservative leaders have called for an end to its use because it is costly, ineffective, and inaccurate. Carrying out these executions during the pandemic has been particularly expensive, with an estimated cost of more than \$900,000 per execution.

The Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act of 2021 would end the use of the death penalty by the federal government. Specifically, the bill would prohibit the imposition of the death penalty as punishment for any violation of federal law and would require the re-sentencing of those previously sentenced to death row. The legislation was originally introduced by Rep. Pressley and Sen. Dick Durbin in July 2019 following the U.S. Department of Justice’s announcement that it would resume the use of the death penalty.

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The Everett Independent encourages residents to submit birth and engagement announcements, news releases, business briefs, honor rolls, social news, sports stories, and photographs for publication. Items should be forwarded to our offices at **385 Broadway, Citizens Bank Building, Revere, MA 02151**. Items can also be faxed to 781-485-1403. The Independent also encourages readers to e-mail news releases to editor@everettindependent.com.

The Everett Independent assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors in advertisements, but will reprint that part of the advertisement in which the error occurs. Advertisers will please notify the management immediately of any errors that may occur.

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Cambridge, MA 02139-1732
617-349-4396

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21 Grand Street, 4th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106-1561
860-541-3400

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51 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
207-624-6050

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One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108-1599
617-994-6000

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180 Westminster Street, 3rd floor
Providence, RI 02903-3768
401-222-2661/62

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Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
802-828-2480

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Concord, NH 03301-9053
603-271-2767

NEW HAVEN COMMISSION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
200 Orange Street, Room 402
New Haven, CT 06510
203-946-8160/8165

CHURCH News

Zion Church - Everett

News and Notes

Senior Pastor Bishop Robert G. Brown will be hosting Virtual Masses to bring the people together, spiritually while they can't physically. Their virtual sanctuaries can be accessed via their face-

book page, "Zion Church Ministries."

For more information, they can be reached online at zionchurchministries.com or via email at office@zionchurchministries.com

Mystic Side Congregational Church

News and Notes

Mystic Side Congregational Church is located in Everett, on Malden-Everett border, at 422 Main Street. We offer a warm, inviting atmosphere, and all are welcome. Our Sunday Church service starts at 10:30 a.m. and Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month. A very pleasant coffee hour

and socializing follow our services. Parking is available in our lot next to the church on Wyllis Ave. (one way off Main Street). We look forward to welcoming you this Sunday.

**Mystic Side
Congregational Church
422 Main Street
Everett, MA**

Grace Anglican Episcopal Church

News and Notes

Grace Anglican Episcopal Church is open and welcoming to all.

There are 3 services on Sundays: 10am English, 1pm South Sudanese (Dinka) and 3pm Haitian Creole.

Come all and let us walk together in this season of

hope, renewal and new beginnings.

**Grace Anglican
Episcopal Church
67 Norwood Street,
Everett, MA
Church Phone
617-387-7526 or
617-389-5765**

Immaculate Conception Parish

News and Notes

Our Parish Staff: Father Joseph Chacha Marwa, S.M.A. Administrator; Father Ernest Egbedike, S.M.A. Parochial Vicar; Secretary Barbara Cannon

Weekly Mass Schedule at Immaculate Conception is as follows:

Saturday (Sunday Vigil) 4:00 p.m., Sunday 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m. (Family Mass), 11:00 a.m., and 5:30 p.m.

12:15 p.m. Spanish Community

4:00 p.m. Haitian Community

Masses are being held in the Chapel.

Eucharistic Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held every Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel.

Each Thursdays' adoration will conclude the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament at 6:30 p.m. All are invited to spend a few moments with Our Blessed Lord

Bring a Book-Buy a Book - We have a new Fundraiser Program in the back of the Church. It's called Bring a Book-Buy a Book. All books are a dollar and any money collected will go towards our Stain Glass Fund. Brink a Book and Buy a Book and make a donation. Our selections are great and varied. Please stop by the table and see what we have. Thank you

**Immaculate Conception
Parish
489 Broadway
Everett, Mass 02149
Phone 617-389-5660**

Glendale Christian Lighthouse Church

News and Notes

Sunday 10:30 AM Worship service.

Wednesday hour of Power, worship, prayer and Bible Study, via Zoom.

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Rev. Larry Russi, Sr.
Pastor
pastorlarry@thelighthousechurch701.net**

Church at the Well Everett

News and Notes

Church at the Well Everett is a new church for Everett that will begin meeting in 2021. Check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/churchforeverett to view weekly devotions and updates, visit us at [\[www.everettcan.com\]\(http://www.everettcan.com\) to request any additional help.](http://www.for-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Glendale United Methodist Church

News and Notes

Glendale United Methodist Church is open to all and we welcome people of all faiths, race, nationalities and sexual preference. No one is ever turned away. If you are looking for a new home church, we would like you to check us out and let us know what we can do to make church a better fit in your life.

Bible Study: Consider joining us for Bible study on Sunday. We meet in the Church Parlor off the Chapel from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m.

Sponsor the bulletin! For a \$5 donation, you can dedicate the Sunday bulletin to recognize family, friends, or special occasions. There is a sign-up sheet in the Pastor's study. Feel free to choose your particular week and leave a copy of your dedication in the mail in that is on the Pastor's door. Please contact the Pastor if you have any questions.

Boy Scout Troop 814: Meet in Cooper Hall on Tuesday evenings from 6-9 p.m. Cub Pack 11 meets on Saturday mornings.

NA Meetings - Mon.

Bring Your Own Book 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.; Thurs. I Can't But We Can, 8:00 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

AA Meeting - Saturday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Pastor's Office Hours: Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Other times by appointment.

Bread of Life Donations - This outreach is being done to honor the United Methodist Women's Group, who for so many years were our outreach source. Please bring any food item(s) to church and place in the box located on the altar.

**We are on the Internet
<http://www.glen-daleumc-everett.org>
Glendale United
Methodist Church
Pastor David Jackson
392 Ferry Street (across from Glendale Towers)
Please enter the church by the driveway on Walnut Street
617-387-2916
PastorDavidJackson58@gmail.com
Pastor's Office Hours:
Saturdays 10 AM to 2 PM.
Other times by appointment.**

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

ANTHONY SIMBOLI DEAD AT 91

CHELSEA - On Tuesday morning, December 29, 2020, the American flag flying atop the Massachusetts General Hospital Building at 151 Everett Avenue was lowered to half-mast. The first developer to take an outsized risk on the City after the great fire in 1973, Anthony C. Simboli, died early that morning. He was 91.

He is known far and wide in city circles dating back to the 1980's as being driven, focused, fair, intelligent and a risk taker. Thankfully, for the city of Chelsea he chose to take a risk on the city, when almost no one would. To underscore this point, It took almost ten more years before another major risk on the City was taken by the Wyndham Hotel in 1991, now the Hilton Hotel.

He and his children, Anthony and Patricia, developed more than 14 parcels in the city from 1983-2016. The family held company, ACS Development Corporation, may be best known for relocating the Federal Bureau of Investigation from downtown Boston to the corner of Everett Avenue and Maple Street, an architectural gem of more than 275,000 sf, which lights up Route 1 every evening and brings hundreds to the city by day to eat, shop and stay in hotels.

ACS Development Corporation's history of development started at 151 Everett Avenue in 1983, jumped to 160-180 Second Street in 1986, landed for some time, beginning from 1992-2000, at 80, 90 and what later was developed into 70 Everett Avenue, and known as Harbour Pointe Park. Its projects also included the refurbishment of the 105 Everett Avenue, the Fire Station, now known as

Chelsea Station, 99 Fourth Street, the strip along the north side of Second Street, where Chelsea Clock was relocated and where Mass Truck and Tire once stood and 215 William Street, an abandoned poultry processing factory.

They bought properties from banks, the city, quasi-government agencies and other property owners. They did what they had to do to protect investments previously made. It was important in the early days of Chelsea's emergence to control the surrounding properties in order to create an atmosphere of safety, beauty and opportunity. One project was not enough. There were no other developers or projects to create the momentum. They had to create it themselves, taking bigger and bigger risks. It took enormous effort to lure businesses to the city. The environment and the properties had to start to look and feel like other suburban and downtown properties. The City was the envy of other communities. In Anthony C. Simboli and ACS Development Corporation, it had a developer willing to invest and offer high quality, well designed buildings, provide conscientious management and long-term stable ownership.

Beyond its contribution to the built environment, the family has invested in the community in a number of different ways supporting ROCA in negotiating the acquisition of its current home, serving on the School Buildings Committee, creating the Simboli Family College Award for graduating Chelsea High School seniors which has reached more than 150 students, and contributing to the Chamber of Commerce, as well as numerous other

non-profits.

But most of all, it cannot be too boldly stated how valuable it was to have a respected advocate, promotor, believer, loyal, disciplined, and patient investor in our small community of 1.8 square miles. The commercial tax base was built up; an example for what was possible was proven; and the way was paved the way for the hotels, retail modernization, and residential projects. Without a fight, the firm gave up land to make the Silver Line possible for the residents and businesses of Chelsea.

Always willing to participate in the community, ever promoting and bringing Chelsea to the attention of major corporations, and quietly continuing to support the young people and other needs of the residents, the founder of ACS Development Corporation, Anthony C. Simboli, is a true hero and favored son of the city of Chelsea. He will be missed at Chelsea Zoning Board meetings. His passion and drive for the city and for himself to do the right thing always led to positive outcomes for his proposed projects. We look to his children, Patricia and Anthony, to continue to carry on in his standards of excellence. There has not been as bold a champion, who patiently waited and committed to the City for as long and as deeply, as Tony Simboli. An eternal optimist, a lover of people and a believer in location, he turned out to be right over and over again. We are grateful to him for his love of Chelsea, trust in its Government, and respect for the good people who loved the City and encouraged him to take a risk such as Val Kowalski, Leo Robinson and others. A piece of Chelsea's history is lost but his properties are a lasting legacy.

FIGHTING COVID ONE VACCINE AT A TIME



Revere's Michaela Maguire, RN at Brigham and Women's Hospital, receives the first round of her COVID-19 vaccination.

RESIDENTS RECEIVE VACCINE

CHELSEA - Last week, the first veteran residents at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea received the COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccination was done onsite through a federal Long Term Care pharmacy partnership program with CVS and Walgreens. The onsite vaccinations also began for staff at the Soldiers' Home.

In Chelsea, Dominic Pitella, 94, was the first resident vaccinated at the Soldiers' Home. Pitella has been a resident of the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea since April 2018. Pitella, a U.S. Army Air Corps Corporal, was a cook with the 559th Air Service Group and served in the Pacific Theater during World War II 1945-1946. His awards include the Army of Occupation Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal.

"I'm hopeful this will help everybody," said Pitella.

"Administering vaccines to our frontline health care workers and now some of our most vulnerable residents in the Soldiers' Home provides relief and hope that there are brighter days ahead for

all," said Governor Charlie Baker. "We are pleased to start providing the first dose to the incredible men and women living in the Chelsea facilities to offer more protection from COVID-19, and remain grateful to the dedicated staff who are working tirelessly to keep our veterans safe and healthy during the pandemic."

Said Veterans Services Secretary, and former Chelsea Soldiers' Home superintendent, Cheryl Lussier Poppe, "The Department of Veterans' Services and the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea move forward with hope and perseverance to a bright future for our veteran residents and staff. We look forward to continuing our work to ensure our veterans are cared for, and today's vaccination is another vital step in our mission as we continue this commitment. The ongoing support of the surrounding community is impactful, and deeply appreciated, as we navigate this public health emergency together."

As a Long Term Care facility, the Soldiers' Homes in Chelsea is prioritized in Phase One of the COVID vaccine distribution plan. The Soldiers' Home is enrolled in the CDC's Long-

Term Care Pharmacy Partnership program for the COVID-19 vaccination administration.

In the coming weeks, there will be additional onsite vaccination clinics at the Home to vaccinate veteran residents and staff. The Home is encouraging the vaccine for all Veteran residents and staff, and are working to obtain consent for those interested. COVID vaccination is voluntary for everyone - however all people are encouraged to get vaccinated.

In addition to the COVID-19 vaccination at the Soldiers' Home, the facility will continue weekly testing and daily symptom checking of all residents and staff.

CRIME UP IN EASTIE

EAST BOSTON - The Boston Police Department released the year-end crime report for East Boston that compared the overall crime stats in 2020 with the overall crime stats for 2019.

The report shows larceny from motor vehicles, or car breaks, in Eastie skewed the overall crime stats in the neighborhood and were up 100 percent

See REGION Page 11

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Region // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

from the previous year.

Part One Crimes, the more serious crimes that the Boston Police track, was up 21 percent overall in Eastie when comparing Jan. 1, 2020 through Dec. 31, 2020 with the same time period last year.

According to District A-7 Community Police Officer Dan Simons the main culprit for the uptick in overall crime was larceny from a motor vehicle.

There were only 107 reported car breaks in 2019 but that number increased to 213 for 2020.

“We ended the year with a 100 percent increase in car breaks,” said Simons at a Harbor View Neighborhood Assoc. meeting Monday night. “Unfortunately I have the report that over this past weekend we did have some reports of some more car breaks up in the St. Andrew Road, Thurston Street and Bayswater Street area. The tough thing with these crimes is the victims that reported these car breaks also reported that they don’t think they locked their vehicles. Ultimately, the best way to put a stop to the car breaks is for everybody to make sure that they take all their valuables into their home or lock them in the trunk and lock their vehicle. Our detectives are finding that probably 90 percent of the vehicles that are victims of car breaks left their vehicle unlocked and there’s no forcible entry. We’re hoping, going forward in 2021, we can bring some of these numbers down.”

It seems the number of motor vehicle larcenies, an opportunistic crime that only takes seconds to pull off, is up all over Boston. Citywide the number has gone from 2,713 in 2019 to 3,348 in 2020 or a 23 percent increase.

As for other Part One Crimes, Eastie nearly ended 2020 with no recorded homicides, but the Christmas Eve killing of Kerwin Barthélemy in Maverick Square became the only recorded homicide of the year.

“We were doing really well with homicides and we didn’t have one until Christmas Eve unfortunately,” said Simons. “We had the assault in Maverick Square that resulted in a fatality. However, I can’t stress it enough that with the community’s help, the help of witnesses and the quick action of the police we were able to apprehend the suspect that was ultimately charged with the homicide. Unfortunately 2019 ended the way it did with just one homicide in East Boston which is one too many.”

Rape or Attempted Rape was down from 10 to 6; Robbery or Attempted Robbery remained the same at 57 for both 2019 and 2020; Domestic Aggravated Assault was up from 41 to 43; Non-Domestic Aggravated Assault was up from 49 to 67; Commercial Burglaries were up from 25 to 29; Residential Burglaries were up from 49 to 56; other Larcenies were up from 199 to 203; and Auto Theft was up from 44 to 51.

Overall there were 736 Part One Crimes, up from the 583 reported during 2019.

THIEVES TARGET PRIUS CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

EAST BOSTON - Just before New Years Eve an Orient Heights resident awoke to a loud noise outside his home.

“I heard a loud noise, looked outside and didn’t see anything,” said the residents who will remain nameless.

The next morning when he started his Toyota Prius he realized someone had stolen his catalytic converter.

“It was so fast within 10-20 seconds,” he said. “They also got another resident who lives right near me.”

A car’s catalytic converter acts to decrease the harmful chemicals in car emissions and the theft of these parts from Toyota Priuses are on the rise here and nationally.

Apparently thieves target these devices on the underside of cars because they contain valuable metals that act as oxidation catalysts and are mandated to reduce pollution.

The Prius catalytic converters contain platinum, palladium and rhodium and thieves can pocket up to \$200 per converter and it takes only minutes for a skilled thief to cut it from underneath the car. All the thief needs is a reciprocal saw and a steady hand. Experts believe it takes two to three minutes to pull off the heist.

This type of crime has gotten so bad that online manufacturers sell metal plates to cover the catalytic converters, which make them more difficult to steal. Those parts are rarely covered by insurance and retail at around \$440 installed. While they’re pricey they are cheaper than the cost to replace a stolen one. Even with insurance a replacement cost is around \$500. Without insurance, it could cost a Prius owner \$3,000 or more to replace.

It has gotten so bad that many Prius owners have asked Toyota to recall Priuses and install the metal plates that should have been there to begin with to protect converters.

“Yeah, we did get one theft recently in East Boston and I believe like three or four citywide,” said District A-7 Community Officer Dan Simons. “The report I saw that was recorded in the last few days was that somebody went out and realized that their catalytic converter was taken. He realized this because the car was making a loud noise like a muscle car. Those are valuable parts to thieves.”

MCGEE LAUDS DELEO ON WORK

LYNN - Lynn Mayor Thomas M. McGee had an up-close look at the prestige and honor associated with being the Speaker of the Mass. House of Representatives.

McGee’s father, the late Thomas W. McGee, served as Speaker of the House from 1975 to 1984, rising from his seat on the Lynn City Council to be elected state representative and then elected by his House colleagues to one of the most powerful positions in state government.

“My dad was elected Speaker when I was 19 so I visited him in the Speaker’s Office a lot,” said the mayor. “It was an exciting time. I was thinking of the day my dad was elected speaker, how excited he was and how proud we were of him. It was a culmination of the hard work he did over the years. I’m very proud of what he did when he was Speaker of the House. It’s a position that only a small number of people over 200-plus years have served in. I was

thinking of my dad and how important it was for him to be able to be in that position and make a difference in people’s lives.”

McGee thus had a unique perspective as Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo retired from the position last week. DeLeo is seeking a teaching position at Northeastern University, his alma mater.

McGee served eight years in the House of Representatives with Robert DeLeo. As state senator and chair of the Mass. Democratic Party, McGee continued a good working relationship with DeLeo, who represented Revere and Winthrop in the House.

“I got a chance to know him really well and I really enjoyed serving with him,” said McGee. “I also had the opportunity to work with him as senator over the years and also as mayor of Lynn. He’s always been a great supporter of the city on issues of importance that we’ve needed help on. He topped off a great 30-year career by serving as Speaker of the House and he had a lot of major accomplishments. He was always available by phone on things of importance to Lynn and he’ll definitely be missed. I wish him the best.”

Interestingly, five candidates are running in the special election on March 2 for the state representative seat held by DeLeo. The Democratic candidates are Marc Silvestri and Juan Pablo Jaramillo of Revere and Jeffrey Turco, Valentino Capobianco, and Alicia DelVento of Winthrop. As of Wednesday, there was no Republi-

can candidate running for the seat.

“It’s been 30 years so when there’s an open seat, there is an opportunity and it’s good to see a lot of candidates coming out and putting their names out to run,” said McGee. “Public service is tough during these pretty challenging times and it’s important that good people continue to be involved and serve in the Legislature. So that should be an interesting race with a good field of candidates.”

KEEFE REFLECTS ON TERM AS PRESIDENT

REVERE - Ward 4 Councilor Patrick Keefe completed a successful year as City Council President. The Council elected its new leader at its first meeting of 2021 on Monday, Jan. 11.

Keefe led the 11-member Council through an unprecedented year that was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic which had a major impact on all areas of life in Revere. Due to the coronavirus, the Council began holding its meetings on Zoom, giving councilors the opportunity to participate remotely from their respective homes. To their credit, Keefe and virtually all of his colleagues had perfect attendance records in 2020.

Keefe drew praise from his colleagues for his leadership and accessibility throughout the year. He was held in high esteem by the longer-serving councilors and the newer members such as Councilor-at-Large Gerry Visconti and Ward 6 Councilor Richard Serino.

As a newly elected member of the Council, I felt President Keefe was very welcoming and cordial,” said Serino. “In the early days of the pandemic, we got to know each other and bond a bit while we put together food packages at the Senior Center for the City’s COVID food delivery program. I always found Pat to be receptive to my ideas, and I thank him for his service as our Council President during a very challenging year.”

The Revere Journal asked President Keefe to talk about his and the Council’s achievements during the past year and the challenge of leading the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keefe issued the following statement reflecting on his year as the president of the Revere City Council:

“The last year serving as Council President has been a pleasure. It was my honor to represent my colleagues and I feel like I represented them well.

The year 2020 was nothing that we expected and since early March it has certainly reshaped our focus on how council business is handled and what our priorities should be.

I don’t like to personally list my accomplishments as I feel they should speak for themselves and the residents of Revere certainly acknowledge me when they are happy, and I hear when they are not happy with the decisions we make. This is how I always do my job. It’s not about me, it’s about the residents we serve.

One of the most significant achievements we as

a Council made this year was an enormous sense of inclusion and communication within the council membership.

Even though we may not have met in person as much as we would have liked, I can honestly say that the entire team chatted almost every day - more often it was all throughout the day. Technology has certainly brought us closer together, even for my senior colleagues!

Whether it was about how we can better serve our residents in need during these tumultuous times or just checking in on each other, everyone at some point came across a personal or family struggle.

If I can look back, I will say my most important accomplishment was this: creating a better bond among the group. And we had a few tough meetings -communicating through Zoom can at times be misinterpreted and give the wrong impression or you might miss what a fellow councilor meant to say. But in the end, we had a productive year and we are all stronger because of it.

As I said before, maybe I’ll go down as the first Zoom President in Revere’s history, but I hope at some point I’ll get another chance to yield the gavel in front of a live audience.

Let’s all hope we can go back to normalcy soon, but in the meantime I want to wish our residents, my fellow councilors and the next President of the Revere City Council (Tony Zambuto perhaps) a happy and healthy new year!

And thank you.”

Keep Your Name in the News!

As the cold winter months bear down and the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, let us get your message out to our thousands of readers of **The Revere Journal, The Winthrop Sun Transcript, The East Boston Times Free Press, Chelsea Record, Everett Independent, and Lynn Journal** in our January editions.

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THE MODERNA VACCINE



Director of Public Health Sabrina Firicano began administering the new Moderna COVID-19 vaccination on Tuesday to frontline essential personnel who have been awaiting the vaccine's arrival for quite some time. The Moderna vaccine is given in two doses: the interval is 28 days between the first and second dose. Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine is expected to provide immunity for 1 year. The first person to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the City of Everett was Private Rocco Andreotti (above) from Everett Fire Department. Then, 32-year veteran of the Everett Police Department Gina Collyer Below) was the first member of the Everett Police Department to receive the vaccine. The City's Board of Health will be administering the vaccine from 9 AM-4 PM Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday this week and will continue as long as necessary. There are 30 people signed up per day.



District, state leaders slam plan to require 10th grade MCAS

By Seth Daniel

The MCAS test has been at the back of the line since the pandemic forced schools into different modes of learning, but the state has brought the 10th grade MCAS test front and center with the news it will require the test for all 10th graders this year – whether their district is remote or not. Immediately, many urban districts like Everett that have been remote since last March have decried the decision, noting that it's not the fair thing to do given that the 10th grade test is required for graduation from high school. The test was waived last spring, and this year it will be waived for grades 3-8,

but not 10th grade. The decision was announced late last week by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). State Sen. Sal DiDomenico said it was simply “ridiculous.” “Ridiculous,” he said. “There is a tremendous amount of stress right now on top of everything else for our families and teachers. Honestly it's not fair to require that of our kids right now. I've been an adversary against the MCAS before COVID as well. Any reasonable person could come to the conclusion this isn't the right way to go about things.” Supt. Priya Tahiliani said she feels it could easily be delayed, and doesn't

even understand how such a closely-monitored test in a normal year will be given to remote students sitting at home. “These 10th graders will be 11th graders next year and can do it then,” she said. “It's a graduation requirement two years from now. We have time and should take time.” She said the district is still using diagnostic testing online within their classrooms and grade levels, in Everett's case they use iReady. Those tests, she said, could be a good gauge this year if the state really wants to monitor student progress during the pandemic. Additionally, she said administering the MCAS costs as much as \$30 mil-

lion per year, and that's money she said could be put towards getting urban districts and high-risk communities back in the classroom. “That's money that could be used differently this year,” she said. Meanwhile, School Committeeman Marcony Almeida Barros, at the Jan. 4 School Committee meeting, called on the state to pause the requirement. “We are living in a pandemic,” he said. “When you add to that having to prepare students for MCAS – come on, let's face reality. At least we as a School Committee should send a message and tell them we shouldn't do that now.”

USPS will issue new 2021 stamps for price change

The U.S. Postal Service will release three new stamps as part of 2021 price change: Barns, a 36-cent postcard stamp; Brush Rabbit, a 20-cent additional ounce stamp; and Castillo de San Marcos, a \$7.95 Priority Mail stamp. The stamps will be available beginning Sunday, Jan. 24. There will be no national first-day-of-issue ceremony for these stamps. •Barns The U.S. Postal Service has four new postcard stamps that celebrate the beauty and history of American barns. The artist created digital paintings of four types of iconic

barns found in the rural American landscape. With differing qualities of light and color, each piece reflects one of the four seasons: a round barn surrounded by the hazy light and warm colors of fall; a gambrel-roofed barn in summer; a forebay barn in early spring; and a Western barn on a winter's night. Ashley Walton designed the stamps with original artwork by Kim Johnson. Greg Breeding was the art director.

Along the bottom of each stamp is the word “postcard,” to indicate their usage. These stamps will always be valid for the rate printed on them. •Brush Rabbits The U.S. Postal Service features a brush rabbit (Sylvilagus bachmani) on this additional ounce stamp, available in a pane of 20 or a coil of 100. The brush rabbit is a small brownish cottontail rabbit of the U.S. West Coast and Baja California, Mexico. It lives mostly west of the Sierra Nevada range and south of the Columbia River, which defines the coastal Oregon-Washington border. The adult is about a foot long and generally weighs between one and two pounds. The pencil-and-watercolor illustration is from preexisting artwork by designer and illustrator Dugald Stermer (1936-2011). Art director Ethel Kessler designed the stamp. The words “additional



One of the focuses of the new stamps will be barns.

ounce” on this stamp indicate its usage value. This stamp will always be valid for the rate printed on it. •Castillo de San Marcos The latest Priority Mail stamp, which bears the new price, celebrates the oldest masonry fortification in the United States, the Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine, Fla. The stamp art features a digital illustration of the fortress based on a contemporary photograph. With a view toward the northeast corner of the fortress, the artwork captures it in the golden glow of sunrise over Matanzas Bay. Art director Greg Breeding designed the stamp with art created by Chicago-based graphic illustrator Dan Cosgrove. This stamp provides a convenient way for customers to pay for Priority Mail Flat Rate shipping with a single stamp. Prior-

ity Mail is the Postal Service's bestselling mail service. Domestic deliveries arrive in one-three business days depending on where a package starts and where it's going. Tracking and insurance are included, and shipping boxes and envelopes are free. •Postal Products Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through the Postal Store at usps.com/shopstamps, by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724), by mail through USA Philatelic, or at Post Office locations nationwide. Information for ordering first-day-of-issue postmarks and covers is at usps.com/shop. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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