North Shore to South Boston Ferry Service! WOW!

Direct flights from Istanbul! Tokyo! Beijing! South Station is undergoing major renovation. I-90 and I-93 intersect in South Boston. L Street is a thoroughfare. All roads lead to and through South Boston.

Efforts are underway to support the “full transformation of the South Boston Waterfront into a distinct and vibrant neighborhood within the City of Boston”. It is billed as a world-renowned, memorable, and accessible destination for tourists, conventioneers, and other visitors, alike. Oh, and let us insert here:

North Shore to South Boston Ferry Service!

CONTINUED ON page 4
EDITORIAL

When a new project or development occurs, everyone in the community, for better or worse, is affected. Obviously, depending on proximity, some are more affected or impacted than others. The Court recognizes this common sense logic and has ruled that abutters living within 400 feet of a proposed project have “legal standing”. Another way of saying it is that everyone can have an opinion, but only those directly impacted can legally support or oppose the project.

The Gaming Commission, perhaps unknowingly, has used the same logic. “Surrounding Community” status and a certain amount of benefits for inconvenience has been slated for those communities. “Host community” status is reserved for the actual site and most impacted area deserving the greatest compensation. Either site, Everett or especially Suffolk Downs, abuts Boston and share a border. To deny that Boston will not be as severely impacted, (if not even more so), than Revere or Everett by casino gambling is to deny reality.

Mayor Walsh is absolutely correct to pursue, by all means, Boston’s proper status as a host community, using all city resources to protect that status and those Bostonians. The very reason developers are proposing either site is it’s proximity to Boston. They seem to want the benefit, but not the responsibility.

“Too many Americans are out of work and our debt is out of control” - Susana Martinez, Governor of New Mexico

This Week’s Poll

The South Boston Waterfront Sustainable Transportation Plan is being jointly sponsored, supported, and led by the MCCA, Massport, the City of Boston and MassDot

Do You Agree That South Boston Residents Should Have Representation At The Planning Table?

Strongly Agree
Somewhat Agree
Don’t Agree

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Press Copy - Monday at 6:00pm • Advertisements Space Reservations - Friday at 6:00pm • Ad Material - Monday at 4:00pm • Camera Ready Ads - Tuesday at 6:00pm
Let’s open with a brief comment on last week’s controversy over at Harvard.

Was anyone really surprised that when it comes to nutty ideas, Cambridge and specifically Harvard University would be among the places to be selected to hold the so-called Black Mass by Satan worshippers? Bizarre characters tend to gravitate to one another. As many know, this ritual is meant to mock Christianity. The crackpots in such cults along with their anti-faith supporters enjoy targeting Christians, because they figure it’s safe. They would not dare, ever, try to hold a gathering with the intent to openly criticize Islam or the Muslim religion for one simple reason: They are cowards. They would be too afraid of retaliation.

Congratulations to the reasonable and normal Harvard students and faculty; yes, there really are some over there, who refused to sit by quietly and let this circus go on unchallenged. The amount of pressure and opposition to what was planned was a shocker and will also establish a scholarship fund in his memory.

It will also be a lot of fun with many familiar faces; something John would have wanted. For more information on the tournament you can call 781-844-5043 or go to the website to learn more about the details and/or pre-registration: www.golfdigestplanner.com/JohnFBourqueMemorialGolfTourname/index.html.

Donations can be sent to John F Bourque Memorial Golf Tournament, PO Box 85, South Boston, MA 02127.
Police Making Good Progress with Drug Arrests/Raids

SOUTH BOSTON TODAY

SBT Staff Report

Boston Police Commissioner William Evans announced the arrests last week of 36 people allegedly involved in illegal drug trafficking and drug related offenses in several sections of Boston, including 2 in South Boston. In what is being called a major crack down on drug trade offenders, the arrests were made on May 8th and the police sources say the effort will be ongoing.

Commissioner Evans said in a statement that “Since the start of the year, we’ve seen a 13% reduction in violent crime and I’d like to thank the men and women of the Boston Police Department for not only their hard work, but their ongoing efforts to make our city the safest city it can be. Because of their hard work, coupled with some tremendous community support – 36 offenders are in custody and, hopefully, reassessing their decision to involve themselves in the drug trade.”

In addition to raids in South Boston, arrests were made in Dorchester and Roxbury. As was stated above, 2 arrests were made here in the South Boston community in the area of 42 Vinton Street. The substances that were recovered included Heroin and Cocaine, along with drug paraphernalia. The arrested pair was charged with possession with intent to distribute Class A, B and C Drugs.

The drug trade and all the crime that it brings with it has become the scourge of many young people, as well as adults in so many cities around the nation. As a result, an increasing percentage of municipal resources have to be made available to combat this growing problem.

This problem is causing already tight budgets to be strained even more. Here in the City of Boston, officials have made combating the drug trade among its highest priorities. The Boston Police Department is making excellent strides with their efforts and last week’s raids and arrests are but one of the many success stories to come of their good work.

Law enforcement officials continue to encourage all citizens to assist police by calling in any suspicious activity they notice in their areas. South Bostonians have been working well in this effort and their cooperation has made that success that much easier to realize.
Without doubt the horrible kidnapping of almost 300 schools girls by Boko Haram in Nigeria has made the “lame stream” media sit up and take notice. Curiously, they failed to take note of the Christians that Boko Haram have been burning alive over the last year. Of course, they were actually killed in churches during worship and it would have been impossible to report the story without mentioning the fact the victims were Christians. So, the media gave the murders miniscule coverage or ignored the story completely.

These school girls are Christian, but the story has gone viral, so the “lame stream” IS forced to cover it. They’re very creative. Monday night, Brian Williams managed to report the story without using the words “Christian, Muslim, Islamic or terrorist. He described a video released by the terrorists as showing the girls “wearing garb that the captors prefer”. Think about that phrase, “garb their captors prefer”. The coward Williams wouldn’t call the garb an Islamic Burka, which it was, nor CALL the captors Jihadi fundamentalist Islamic terrorists, which they were, or that the girls were Christians having these Muslim criminals’ beliefs forced upon them.

Last Saturday, the First Lady took an unprecedented step of delivering the President’s weekly address. She used the opportunity to speak of the outrage, but somehow she too failed to mention the girls as Christians being held by Muslim terrorists.

Also, a group of Democratic Congresswomen held a rally in front of the Capitol and one of them stated this could be a “positive” use of drones. Positive use as compared to a “negative” use, such as when we use drones to go after these Muslim fanatics planning attacks on America? Is that a “negative” use? Just like WHEN we send in troops it’s “American military adventurism”. Now we’re putting “boots on the ground” and we haven’t declared what the mission is or anything else and no one is sounding a peep. We’re risking American lives and we’re too politically correct to even name the enemy.

Hashtag hypocrisy is a perfect description of these phony activists. Ayaan Hirsi Ali is the African Muslim author who has a “fatwah” or death sentence on her head for writing about the subjugation of women under Islamic extremism and has called for reform in the Muslim world. Where were the hashtag heroes when a minority of Muslim fanatics, posing as students, were able to force the cowards at Brandeis University into rescinding an Honorary Degree that was to have been awarded to her? Just as Condoleezza Rice was forced to withdraw as commencement speaker. What is it about politically and intellectually successful black women that scares white liberals so much?

Why should American troops be there in the first place? Why us? Saudi Arabia has elite units as do Pakistan, Yemen, Qattar, India. Aren’t they part of the world community? Isn’t Africa part of the Mideast or at least share a border? As horrible as it is, Nigeria is fighting a type of Civil War. Just like Syria, some might argue Ukraine is a type of civil war situation. We haven’t intervened there, so why here?

Plenty of innocent girls, boys, men and women are dying in these conflicts and if we do take some action, why the hell do we have to announce it ahead of time? Above all, if we can’t name the enemy why should our sons and daughters fight them?

Take care till next week.
Rep. Collins Votes to Fully Fund Charter School Reimbursement

BOSTON- State Representative Nick Collins joined his colleagues on the House Committee on Ways and Means in voting to fully fund the charter school reimbursement program for FY14 which expires on June 30, 2014.

The supplemental budget bill would appropriate an additional $27.6 million for charter school reimbursements in local school districts throughout the Commonwealth. If adopted, this amount would fully fund the reimbursement program at a total of $100 million for FY14 and would mark the second consecutive year in which the Legislature fully funded the program.

“This reflects the House’s commitment to fully funding the charter school reimbursement line item, a critical component of the City of Boston’s funding plans for the Boston Public Schools,” said Rep. Collins. “I am pleased to help lead that effort with my fellow members of the Boston Delegation. Parents across Boston and the Commonwealth should know that the Massachusetts Legislature is committed to fully funding public education in every city and town across the Commonwealth.”

The bill now moves to the House floor for debate and amendments.

Why Is Tom Menino Still In The Press?

To paraphrase a certain Boston Herald columnist: How can we miss you Tom Menino when you won’t go away? Try as we may to forget him, professional eulogists like the Boston Globe’s Tom Keane insist on memorializing Menino’s political power trip of the last 20 years through the prism of a flawed vision. While it may be true, as Keane’s recent column - “The Numbers Are In – Menino Was A Great Mayor” – tries to make a case for that Mayor Menino maintained fiscal stability, he did so on the backs of communities like South Boston, Roxbury, Allston-Brighton, and Dorchester.

The over-development of South Boston had resulted in scarce options for long time residents to stay here and young working families to move here. Absentee landlords with no reason or incentive to re-invest in their properties had plagued both Roxbury and Allston-Brighton. Failed public school policies gave Dorchester families few options other than to pay for parochial or charter schools placing further burden on tight budgets. Lay on top of these failings an ‘ostrich-like head in the sand’ approach to the obvious drug epidemic and the numbers aren’t quite as praiseworthy as columnist Keane suggests.

Menino’s use of power was the quintessential spoils system. He rewarded those who fed his ego, took care of his family and friends and filled his campaign coffers. He punished those whom he thought had been disrespectful, challenged his authority or simply had not properly paid homage. He kept his friends close and exiled his non-friends. Many City Hall employees went to work afraid to make an honest mistake, fearing banishment.

It always appeared and was often reported that Menino’s policy decisions were based on what his political operatives and his financial backers told him was important to his legacy, not his vision for the City. His idea of moving City Hall to the South Boston Waterfront was about real estate development, not about convenience to the residents. His promotion of the Innovation District was a PR ploy. Corporate tax breaks, typically used to stimulate development in a down economy, were used as a lure to prod developers there. Those who live and work there have no idea what an innovation district really is. They would just like to be able to behave like any other neighborhood and enjoy the daily support services. They are not worried about the ‘next big thing’.

Today, City Hall employees actually look forward to going to work for Mayor Marty Walsh. So far it doesn’t appear that his political operatives plan to play the retaliation game or that preferred developers will have carte blanche, but it remains to be seen. The Mayor’s recent comments on both the Cleveland Circle Cinema project and the Gate of Heaven School proposal appear to give much more weight to neighborhood concerns than the Menino administration ever did. His attempt to open up the BRA development process and improve the processing of permits and the code enforcement at the Inspectional Services Department are critical policy initiatives that

CONTINUED ON page 7
The South Boston Battle Cry: Enough is Enough

SBT Staff Report

Last week in a daily Boston newspaper (Boston Herald), Boston City Councilor Michael Flaherty called for the Boston Redevelopment Authority to stop making inside deals with political operatives of former mayor Thomas Menino. For years, under the leadership and direction of Mayor Menino, the B.R.A. provided “direct designation” that identified city owned sites and awarded these sites to preferred developers, often without a request for proposals from other developers. In this article, Flaherty basically stated that the process was fixed and not on the level and shouldn’t continue any longer. Many people in South Boston felt intimidated by this city administration.

For over 20 years, a select few made a small fortune taking advantage of this neighborhood. These political operatives had easy access to the decision makers in city agencies, especially those that have a significant impact on development, such as the B.R.A., the Zoning Board of Appeals and Inspectional Services. To gain approval for real estate projects in South Boston, developers hired ‘FOMs’ (Friends of Menino) to ensure approval and permitting.

Today, as City Hall considers the future of the Gate of Heaven School Building, word from neighborhood leaders around Boston is that the South Boston neighborhood (and Gate of Heaven parishioners) waged an effective public and media campaign for a charter school. It was clear from these neighborhood efforts that the community clearly does not want luxury condos there. And City Hall took notice of the thousands of calls and letters they received.

As we turn the page in a long nightmare for this community, how do we assess the damage that was done to this town by overdevelopment and inside deals. Even as the new administration conducts an audit of the BRA, a thorough audit should be made of permitting practices, development projects, liquor licenses, restaurants, and parking spaces – the gamut. The neighborhood deserves reparations in some form and Michael Flaherty’s initiative provides us with a good start in stopping these inside deals by the BRA.

“The people of South Boston have said enough is enough,” one neighborhood leader said at a recent community meeting. And the crowd at the Tynan Community School stood up and applauded. “Enough is Enough.”

CONTINUED FROM page 6

will speak volumes.

Back to Menino. If those whom he rewarded over 20 years wish to put him on their corporate boards, or name a hamburger or a bocce court after him or give him an appreciation award, go right ahead. But, please do so privately. As for those he exiled, let’s hope that Mayor Walsh can benefit from those creative juices that have been bottled up all these years. As for the voices of the communities who are now hoping to be heard, our new Mayor just might find that a little listening will go a long way. Do this and the numbers should take care of themselves.

CONTINUED FROM page 4

manager at a prominent law firm located in the South Boston waterfront. Her quoted comments tell the story: “Working in the Seaport is awesome. Every day there is a new office or restaurant opening, and the vibe in this area is young, professional and full of energy and excitement. The only downside is the commute, as there is no public transportation to this area if you are coming from the North Shore. This move to provide us … with the Lynnway ferry option is honestly the best move that transit in Massachusetts has made for a long time.” Take this comment and multiply it. This is only the beginning.
Southie Trees Spring Happenings!

The Southie Trees organization, a program of the South Boston Neighborhood Development Corporation, and its volunteers have been very busy this spring! We wanted to update the community on our work and spotlight all the volunteers that have helped us out during this planting season. Here are a few of the projects we’ve completed so far:

We planted 2 beautiful Eastern Redbuds on the D St. side of the Laboure Center with the up and coming rock band, Capital Cities, and Reverb volunteers! Reverb, an environmental advocacy group that works with musicians and their fans to promote sustainable resources, recruited local college students and South Boston residents to participate in the planting, which was part of the band’s Campus Consciousness Tour. Despite the rainy weather, everyone enjoyed doing their part to better our community. After the planting we handed out trees from our tree giveaway. We provided a Dogwood tree to residents Dr. Jean Kelley and Joanne Kenney to replace a dead plum tree in their yard.

On Friday, May 2nd, the 6th graders at South Boston Catholic Academy teamed up with Southie Trees to plant a new dogwood, magnolia, and a plethora of pansies around the school grounds. It was a beautiful day and the students learned all about the importance of protecting trees in their urban neighborhoods!

On Friday, May 9th, Southie Trees joined South Boston’s Excel High School for their annual Boston Shines event. Students and faculty volunteered their time picking up trash, clearing dead leaves, and mulching the flower and tree beds surrounding their school. We appreciated all their hard work and enthusiasm, especially on a drizzly day!

Saturday, May 10th, marked the second day of the citywide Boston Shines community service initiative. Southie Trees collaborated with the St. Vincent’s Lower End Neighborhood Association, the West Broadway Neighborhood Association, and the staff at Lincoln Tavern to clean out, re-plant, and mulch the tree pits lining West Broadway. With the help of over 50 volunteers, West Broadway is looking finer than ever! Southie Trees is proud of all the residents that took the time to help plant and orchestrate the event and hopes that neighbors and businesses will help keep the tree pits looking beautiful.

We would not have accomplished so many events without the help of our motivated volunteers. We hope to keep up the momentum in the upcoming months, while continuing to work towards our goal of expanding and protecting South Boston’s urban canopy. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, feel free to email us at southietrees1@gmail.com or find us on Facebook and Twitter!
### Recent South Boston Real Estate Sales

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On Saturday, April 26, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay ran their annual Marine Mammal Safaris on Boston Harbor. More than 800 people registered for the free event, and despite cold and rainy weather, hundreds showed up and took part in the two lively and exciting cruises.

People from all over Greater Boston came together to enjoy the harbor and search for marine mammals together. Some of the larger groups in attendance represented the Intergenerational Literacy Program in Chelsea, VietAID in Dorchester, the East Somerville Community School, the South Boston Neighborhood House, and the West End House Boys & Girls Club, among others.

There were many seal sightings on both the morning and the afternoon excursion—crowds onboard Mass Bay Lines’ Freedom spotted harbor seals in the inner harbor off the shores of East Boston, Charlestown, and South Boston. Save the Harbor/Save the Bay’s Baywatcher Bruce Berman narrated the trip, pointing out landmarks and sights worth seeing in the inner harbor and out toward Spectacle Island, Deer Island, and Long Island.

This year’s trips featured a special activity and contest centered around the Official Sea Shanty of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, “Haul Away Joe”. Everyone on board the cruises had a chance to create their own verse to the shanty, singing together about the sea, the seals, and the soggy weather conditions.

Save the Harbor’s spokesman Bruce Berman, in keeping with the nautical spirit of the event, put it like this: “Seals. Porpoise and striped bass, Boston Harbor has them all. We hope you’ll join us for another cruise, in the summer and the fall!”

Save the Harbor’s youth environmental education programs are made possible with Leadership Grants from Bay State Cruise Company, The Coca-Cola Foundation, DistriGas/GDF SUEZ, the Ludcke Foundation, and theYawkey Foundation II.


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Save The Bay’s Marine Mammal Safari

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"BE LOCAL, BUY LOCAL"
On Monday, May 5, Miss Chapin and the 5th graders from St. Peter Academy took part in an exciting experience at the Children’s Museum. They were invited to participate in this once in a lifetime event – the Gion Festival. This opportunity was offered to only 3 schools in the City of Boston so they were very happy to be included in this event. They were given a private tour of the Japanese House, learning what materials were used to construct it and were also given time to explore the house on their own. They were then able to enjoy a musical show performed by the Gion Festival Musicians from Kyoto, Japan. The students were able to play the drums and gongs and to dress in the traditional Gion yukata, a special kimono that is only worn in the summer when the Gion Festival takes place in Japan. Grade 5 had studied the country of Japan during our International Festival earlier in the year, mainly because Miss Chapin took Japanese when she attended Boston Latin Academy as a high school student. After the program the students were able to spend time in the museum, exploring on their own. We are grateful to have been invited to this awesome experience.

St. Peter Academy, South Boston, is an independent private school with a Catholic focus offering unique programs enhancing the educational experience for all of its students in grades Pre K through 8.
South Boston Dental
Part of the Cavity Free Club

Exciting News!! The ever creative professionals at South Boston Dental Associates have announced that SBDA is part of the ‘Cavity Free Club’. SBDA actually rewards kids 14 and under for not having cavities and gives them an incentive to brush and floss regularly. How can you beat that? What’s the reward? Well, if you go in for a cleaning and you have no cavities, you get a free pass to the highly acclaimed and fun ‘Monster Mini Golf’ and Arcade located in Norwood, Massachusetts; just a short drive out of Boston. Monster Mini Golf is an 18 hole indoor mini golf destination with ‘glow in the dark’ monster holes in a course set up to entertain both kids and adults alike.

South Boston Dental Associates is a business that really cares about their customers and strives to come up with effective and creative ways to encourage people; especially kids, to take good care of their teeth and gums. Taking care of their customer’s teeth is important to the good folks at SBDA. Part of the process of maintaining good dental hygiene is to educate people about the best ways to do it; something SBDA considers a priority.

So make sure you are brushing and flossing so you can get that free pass to Monster Mini Golf. You can call South Boston Dental Associates at 617-268-1030 to make that appointment for that cleaning.

SOUTH BOSTON RESIDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS FROM DEXTER SOUTHFIELD SCHOOL

Two South Boston residents earned Academic Honors for the third marking period at Dexter Southfield School in Brookline, Mass. A Dexter Southfield student who achieves an overall average of high B or B+ receives the designation of Honors; a student who achieves an overall average of A- or above receives the designation High Honors. The following students earned Honors:

• Deirdre Grealy, Grade 9
• Delia Doherty, Grade 10

For more information about Dexter Southfield School, visit www.dextersouthfield.org.

SENIOR BABE RUTH TRYOUTS

Tryouts for the Senior Babe Ruth Team in the South Shore League will be held next weekend at King Field, in Moakley Park. The dates are Friday May 16th at 5 PM and Sunday May 18th at 5 PM. There will be a rain date of Monday May 19th if either tryout is cancelled. In order to play on the Senior Team, you must be a resident of South Boston or Dorchester, have a birth date prior to May 1, 1998 and on or after January 1, 1995, and not play for any other team during the 2014 season. You can play if you turned 19 this year and you will be 16 before May 1 of this year. If you have cleats, please wear them. This is a travel team that plays in Milton, Quincy, Braintree, Norwood, Hyde Park, Dedham, Hingham and Avon-Holbrook. The season runs from June 2 to July 18th with all star and playoffs. The team is in need of coaches. The manager is a Boston Police Officer and his hours vary. Anyone interested in helping out, come down to the field during the tryouts or call Buddy Lane 617-269-1091. See you at the field.
**M Street Softball Starts**

**It’s 44th Season**

After a long and particularly snowy winter the 2014 M Street Softball season is finally upon us and it couldn’t have arrived at a better time as the weather has been perfect. The snow is long gone, the outfield grass is green, and the infield dirt is ready for the many players who will race around the diamond. For some, stepping onto the field this week will be their first time playing in the league while for others (John Gregorio) this season will be another in a long career of M Street openers.

As been the case for the last 43 years, all of our games are played at M Street Park in South Boston with the first game starting at 6:30 pm. Those that will be making their first appearance in the league are most if not all of the members of Village Pizza, JW Brokerage, The Underdogs, and the Adam Beers Club. The league extends a warm welcome to all of you and hope you enjoy a great season of softball. The Southside Tavern and Harp & Bard teams are also new to the league but both rosters feature plenty of experienced M Street veterans.

Speaking of M Street veterans, when John Gregorio strolls to the mound in the next week or so, it will mark his 34th season of softball at M Street Park. That’s not a misprint folks. In comparison, Gregorio is a few steps ahead of Gordie Howe (32 pro seasons) and Nolan Ryan (27 seasons). As a young teen, John idolized the late Ed Bonano of the Olde Towne Tavern team. At 13 years of age, John was eager to learn and began showing up at the games. After countless hours of practice and tutelage from Bonano and others, he mastered the pitching mechanics and became a dominant pitcher. John’s persistence would eventually lead to seven league championships and three playoff MVP’s. With a career like that I’m thinking the South Boston Hall of Fame will be honoring John in the very near future.

For those teams making their debut, the league has decided to make competing for a championship a much more attainable goal even in your first season. In the past, it was one champion which made perfect sense as we had plenty of talented teams and players that wanted a shot a winning the title. However, circumstances are very different today which has forced leagues and teams to fold everywhere in and around the city. In order to survive and to keep interest in the league for the next Gregorio who comes along we must adapt to the changing times.

With that said, this season we will have two champions – one from each division. Those that compete in the Larry Lucas (“A”) division will have at least one hard throwing, highly skilled pitcher and very few (if any) overall team weaknesses. The 5-time defending champion Shenanigan’s are the class of this group and are chased by the Warehouse, the Playwright, Lincoln Tavern, Southside Tavern, and the Islanders. These games will be competitive and are the best the league has to offer.

The John “Bucky” Feeney (“B”) division will host the new up and coming teams that have loads of talent but might not have an established hard throwing pitcher. These teams include Cranberry Café, Harp & Bard, Telegraph Hill, JW Brokerage, Village Pizza, Adam Beers Club, and the Underdogs. Although they will play against a few of the “A” teams during the regular season, they will compete in a separate playoff bracket and crown a champion.

One of the teams mentioned above (The Underdogs) has quite a story. Prior to the season, this group wasn’t a group at all as most didn’t know each other. Instead, they each found the league individually and signed up as a “free agent” through our website. As the list of players grew to over thirty the league realized the best course of action would be to try to form a new team. To do that you needed someone who would be willing to coordinate/coach the team and you needed at least fifteen players who would commit themselves to the team. Well, about two weeks ago the league organized a practice and much to my surprise it was a very strong showing. Three players volunteered to coach, the practice flowed well, and when pitcher PJ Serrano began warming up the final piece fell into place and we quickly knew we had the makings of a decent team. The Underdogs will be making their league debut on Tuesday (5/13) at 8:15 pm. Good luck men!

Another change that is a work in progress is our attempt in opening the league to the many folks who are new to the neighborhood and are looking to play softball here at M Street Park. We will be offering “No Commitment” softball games that match your skill level and most importantly, your life schedule. We plan on continuing to grow our player participation community while maintaining the goal of providing a fun and rewarding experience for adults to play the game they love - softball. Whether you are new to softball or getting back into the game after years on the shelf, there’s something for you here in our “No Commitment Softball” program. Interested players (men and women) should go to our site to select from a list of “No Commitment” games to choose from – www.sbsports.com.

Lastly, as we embark on another season here are some league notes that caught my attention. One of the very few who has Gregorio’s attendance record of “season openers” beat is M Street Softball’s super fan, Billy O’Neil Jr. I’m pretty sure Billy can tell you about the time Babe Ruth hit a baseball out of the “pahk” right here at M Street. Our very own Jim “Sully” Sullivan (Harp & Bard) has enjoyed seeing his news/commentary articles published in the Boston Herald. Way to go Sully! Less than headline news but still worthy of mention, the Islanders have had a new team name every season – Ole Rebels, Paramount Bucks, Nix Mate Islanders, and this year there is another name change coming - stay tuned. Prepare for the fight - the Cranberry Café, Telegraph Hill, and the Harp & Bard could be locked at the top of the standings in the Feeney division. Contenders - the Southside Tavern has assembled a very talented roster of players from several teams. Brad Cole, Garrett Hauck, Marc Montesano, Steve True, and Brian Pacheco come from the Brewers team. Charlie Conners, Pat Doolbear, John Manning, Josh Neely, Pat Pickup, and Rob Rogers head over from the Pirates. Joel Kershner and Pat Wilson hail from the Blood, Sweat, and Beers squad. While Seth Smith, Jim Innocent, Jimmy Pinkston, and Jim McNiff also join the team. Folks, that’s quite a roster...let’s just hope they all show up and play the full season.

League games are played on weeknights starting at 6:30 pm and 8:15 pm at M Street Park in South Boston. Whether you are on the field playing or cheering in the stands, we look forward to seeing you at the park. As always, supporting fans can follow the league through our website (www.sbsports.com), and right here in the South Boston Today. Have a great week everyone!
DANNY PICARD: So the NFL Draft is now over, but tell me how you felt going into the draft? What did you think the Patriots were going to do? Or, I should ask, what did you think the Patriots needed to do, going into this draft, and more specifically, with their first couple picks?

JEFF HOWE: Well I thought they should have addressed impact players at defensive tackle, which they clearly did. They got a big check-mark there. Then, tight end and defensive end, and they didn’t get either one of those. So, I think in terms of what they should have done, at least in my opinion, they came up short in a couple areas. And it’s easy to second guess the entire body of work on Friday. I mean, that’s what the draft is anyway. But you get a quarterback instead of getting a guy like C.J. Fiedorowicz, a tight end who could have been an instant starter or rotational player with Gronkowski. You get a quarterback over Scott Crichton, who would have been a pretty good third defensive end to enter the mix with Ninkovich and Chandler Jones. So I think they missed an opportunity there. And then in the third round, they traded down only a dozen picks, but my second guess there is, yeah, they got three good offensive linemen on Saturday, guys who will make Ryan Wendell and Dan Connolly sweat for their jobs. And I know they took Easley. I was shocked that they took Easley. I was shocked that they didn’t trade to Jacksonville for a fourth rounder and a sixth rounder. I thought they would do something like that with their first round pick, with it being at the very end of the first round. They ended up taking Dominique Easley. And the situation with him is that he’s torn both of his ACL’s in both knees. And the question I had was why would you take a kid late in the first round that has that type of knee situation? I mean, were you surprised at that point, when you get to the 29th overall pick, were you thinking the Patriots weren’t going to make that pick? Because I wasn’t shocked that they took Easley. I was shocked that they made the pick in general.

JH: When you get to that point in the draft, and you know it’s the Patriots, you’re always waiting for them to trade down, especially when you’re on deadline, and you wonder if you’re going to have to write a story for the paper about pretty much nothing. So yeah, you’re always surprised when the Patriots make their pick and don’t trade down. But with Easley, when healthy, and I know at this point that is a fluid situation, but when healthy, he’s a terrific defensive tackle. And when it’s all said and done, outside of Clowney, he could be the best interior defensive player in the entire draft class. He’s really disruptive, he makes a ton of plays and with his force on the inside, he’s going to help Chandler Jones and Rob Ninkovich make more plays on the outside. So that’s huge right there. Yeah, he’s come back from an ACL before. The first one he tore was the left one in 2011. He came back in 2012 and wasn’t 100 percent in 2012, but I spoke to his defensive coordinator at Florida, and he said Easley was out there and still had his best season. Throughout the year he was icing and rehabbing the knee to make sure that he could get back out there every Saturday. So I think you’re going to see a similar situation with Easley now, now that he’s going through the right knee rehab. I think the risk is worth the reward there. I really like it. I think they hit a home run there.

DP: But then, their second pick was a quarterback. And there’s a lot of head-scratching with this one. I guess my take on drafting a quarterback is, if the Patriots really like a quarterback enough where they feel like, “Hey, we’ve got to take him now.” Then I’m okay with taking him. The problem is, Jimmy Garoppolo, he wasn’t necessarily on my radar to be the guy to eventually replace Tom Brady. What do you know about Jimmy Garoppolo, and how do you feel about the Patriots using their second pick in this draft on a quarterback, when, at least to me, I don’t see Tom Brady getting ready to retire in the next year or two? JH: Yeah, exactly. I didn’t like the pick. I mean, Garoppolo could be a perfectly fine NFL quarterback some day. But it’s not going to happen anytime soon without some sort of football tragedy in New England. Good player, 6-foot-2 out of Eastern Illinois. Much smaller level of competition, 5,000 yards, 50 touchdowns last season, or 55, something absurd like that. So, good accurate arm, good quick release, good pocket presence, a lot of tools that you can work with. But why go in the second round? Again, the contract thing has always been big for me. And his contract is going to expire the same year as Tom Brady’s, after the 2017 season, when Brady will be 40. And Brady has said that he wants to play into his 40’s. And like you said, and I agree with completely, Brady has not shown any signs of a guy who was anywhere near retirement. You potentially drafted a guy who will never play a meaningful snap for you. I mean, they don’t even let Ryan Mallett take kneel-downs. So it’s not even like Garoppolo is going to get the mop-up duty or anything like that. It doesn’t make a lot of sense to me. And if you drafted him because you like him a whole lot more than Mallett and Mallett is going into the final year of his contract, then yeah I understand that. But, did you need to draft a backup quarterback in the second round? No. You could have got Aaron Murray in the fifth, Zach Mettenberger in the sixth. I thought those would have been much more economical picks. And you talk about value with Bill Belichick in the draft. I really like Aaron Murray. I’ve been talking him up for a while now. I thought he was the guy to go after, if the Patriots were going to go after a quarterback, because it would have been a third-day
pick. And again, going back to the original point, the Patriots passed over needs, guys who would have played immediately in 2014, and who would have had significant roles, as opposed to a guy who, really, again in theory, is never going to play a meaningful snap for the Patriots. Because when his contract is up in 2017, if Tom Brady wants another contract, Garoppolo is going somewhere else.

DP: So they take a quarterback in the second round, a running back in the fourth, a wide receiver in the seventh, but they didn’t draft that tight end that I thought they were going to draft, to play with Gronkowski. They didn’t [draft] that guy. You mentioned some names that were available and they could have had, and I was surprised with that. But as you look at the rest of the Patriots’ picks, outside of the two we just talked about in Easley and Garoppolo, out of all the rest of their draft picks, is there one that really jumped off the screen to you when you saw it?

JH: Nothing to that extent. I mean, there were a lot of guys -- you’d have to be really deep into your draft analysis to know who most of these guys were. And myself included. When you read more about them after the pick, it’s like, “Okay, this is a good player.” But it’s not like I saw the name pop up on the screen and I was like, “Oh, geez, they got a good pick.” I saw some reactions to that on twitter and the people who are hardcore draft analysts. But you know what, in retrospect, and after reflecting on it more, I think you look at the two interior linemen -- Halapio from Florida, and Stork from Florida State -- guys who are going to really challenge Ryan Wendell and Dan Connolly, and Connolly more than Wendell, because the Patriots can save $3 million against the cap by cutting Connolly. Guys who are really going to create some competition on the offensive line.

The kid Zach Moore, the pass-rusher out of Concordia, the D-2 school, he was considered for a couple of years now to be one of the best defensive linemen in all of division two. Now, what is that worth? I think we’re about to find out. You never know with these guys who are edge rushers who are projects. Maybe they develop into something really exciting, maybe the guy doesn’t even make the team and he’s out of the league because he can’t get a second job. James White is the running back out of Wisconsin who has the chance to at least have more immediate playing time than the rest of the draft class, just because they rotate running backs so much. With Vereen and Ridley going into the final years of their contracts, you could see White get more reps because they don’t have to pay him next year. They might want to diminish the value on the open market of their two starters. And White offers more in the passing game too, so he could be a Vereen backup. I think he is the one that the Patriots are going to see more of on the field, or at least hear the name of more. If one of those offensive linemen wins a starting job, you’re not going to notice those guys too often. Or, at least, the Patriots hope you’re not noticing them too often.

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