



Parade Committee Allows Veterans Group With Gay Members To March

When asked, South Boston Allied War Veterans Council Commander Brian Mahoney, who is the editor of SBT, said, “After considerable internal discussion among the 9 members present out of the 13 members of the Council, including an honest and open question and answer session with Brian Bishop, who is the leader of the veterans group Out Vets, the Allied Veterans War Council voted 5-4 to allow this group to march in the 2015 St. Patrick’s/Evacuation Day Parade. It is my opinion and belief that this group

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EDITORIAL *Step Into The Arena If You Dare*

Teddy Roosevelt authored a much-referenced quote that is timeless in its application. "It is not the critic who counts; nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena..."

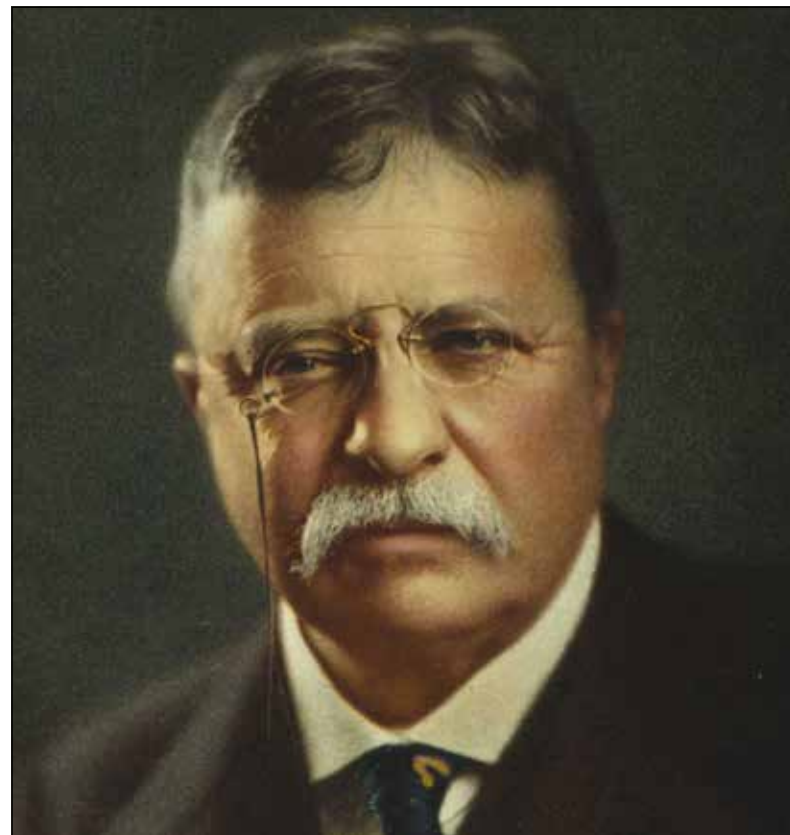
This come to mind when one reads the anonymous and often mindless, banal, biased, arrogant, uninformed, false, and juvenile statements made in online comments by individuals, who have never had to make a decision that affects people's lives, other than their own. While that is their right as Americans to do so, that doesn't make them right.

A dream is different than a fantasy. Both are different than reality. Rhetoric is different than a supposition. Both are different than a fact. Lies are different than innuendo. Both are different than the

truth. An anonymous rant is different than a private comment. Both are different than a public decision.

If we deal in reality, learn the facts, speak the truth and be decisive, then the results are more often right and the consequences are certainly defensible.

Allow me to complete Roosevelt's quote... *;whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.*



"May GOD fill your life with love, peace and joy this Christmas season and throughout the New Year" - Richard Miller

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The Information Center



Merry Christmas To All/My 2014 Gift List.

SOUTH BOSTON TODAY
John Ciccone

Note: talk back to John Ciccone by email at jciccone@southbostontoday.com

Before we get into our regular Christmas column, just a comment on the divide that seems to be pretty deep regarding the CIA torture methods used against Al Qaeda terrorists. Many liberals are furious and horrified. Other Americans feel it was justified.

Let's look at the contrast. Waterboarding: When it is used to get information, it gives the victim the illusion that he is drowning but in reality, he is not. It's scary to the one who is being water boarded but causes no permanent physical damage and certainly not death. Compare that to what the terrorists do to captured Americans. They beat, maim, cut off heads and put it all on YouTube for the entire world to see. Personally, I

have no problem with the CIA doing whatever they need to do to get information from these foreign terrorist animals, if it saves even one American life. But more often than not, it is done to find out where and when the next attack will be, which could have the effect of saving many American lives.

Former president Dick Cheney said he was aware of the water boarding technique used by the CIA during the time he was in office and he supported it 100 percent. And he said, he would do it all over again. The difference between Cheney and liberals like Obama, Pelosi and Elizabeth Warren and others, who are 'outraged' by what the CIA did, is that Cheney lives in the real world and knows our enemies. The other side still actually believes that

if you make nice with these terrorists and show them compassion, they will change their ways and probably take up knitting as their past time instead of blowing up and beheading Americans.

And now, as this column does each year, in the spirit of fun, we make a list of gifts we'd like to be able to give to selected groups and individuals for Christmas. Here is the list for Christmas 2014:

-To Mayor Walsh: I think he already got his gift. His dream has always been to be Mayor of Boston. He is working hard, day and night. He is virtually everywhere and seems to be enjoying every minute of it.

-To William Bulger: To be honored by having the South Boston Branch Library named for him.

-To City Council President Bill Linehan: Kudos to him and City Councilor Steve Murphy for pushing for the William M Bulger Library.

-To Senator Ed Markey: A GPS to help him locate Massachusetts even when its not election time.

-To Senator Elizabeth Warren: To run for president. The only place she could get elected to anything is Massachusetts so as the Democrat's presidential nominee, it will guarantee a Republican win in 2016.

-To Hillary Clinton: Some advice: Watch your back because the moonbats in your party are getting ready to turn on you just like they did in 2008. They don't think you're wacky enough.

-To Al Sharpton: Prison

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STATE TO NAME STREET HOCKEY RINK AFTER DONALD “DONNY” HIGGINS

BOSTON—**Governor Deval Patrick** recently signed into law House Bill 4201, officially designating the street hockey rink on Farragut Road, behind Murphy Rink, as the Donald F. Higgins Memorial Street Hockey Arena.

Several decades ago, the Commonwealth built two full size tennis courts behind the rink on Department of Conservation and Recreation property. Donald “Donny” Higgins, who grew up right across the street and who had worked as a skate guard at Murphy Rink, lobbied to transform one of the tennis courts into a street hockey court so that the children of South Boston could play hockey during summer months while the rink was closed.

Since then the street hockey courts have served generations of South Boston youth. Many players, both men and women, who grew up playing hockey on the court, have built successful careers, earning high

school and college scholarships, with some being drafted to play in the National Hockey League. Annually this court is host to some of the most competitive street hockey competitions in the Commonwealth.

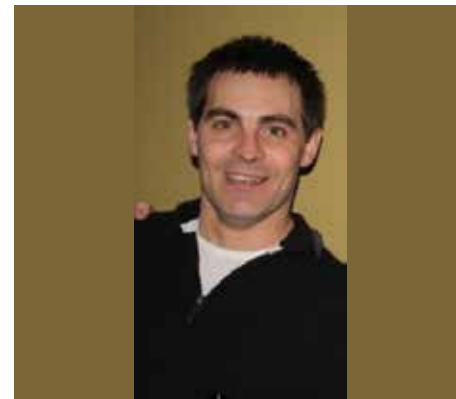
“Without the advocacy of Donny Higgins and the support of his family, who lived across the street and bore the brunt of late night games that kept kids off the street, this important community resource would not be there and none of its benefits to our local youth would have been realized,” said **Representative Nick Collins**, who sponsored the bill.

“As someone who grew up playing hockey at these courts and as part of an entire generation of South Boston youth who did as well, it could not be more fitting to name this court after the man who made it all happen.”

“I am proud to have helped my colleague, Representative Nick Collins, pass this legislation in the Senate to honor Donald “Donny”

Higgins’ efforts,” said **Senator Linda Dorcea Forny**. “By naming this street hockey rink in memory of Donny, we are recognizing the great contributions that he and his entire family have made to the South Boston community,” concluded Senator Forny.

“On behalf of the Higgins family, I would like to thank the state for approving the naming of the rink and a debt of gratitude to Representative Collins and Senator Forny for their work in getting this done,” said Billy Higgins, Donald’s brother.



Jim Brett President & CEO of New England Council, David McCullough author and historian and Rep. Nick Collins @ NEC's Annual Xmas Party

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Reading Between The Lines

“Christmas Time”

SOUTH BOSTON TODAY
Brian R. Mahoney

Note: talk back to Brian by email at bmahoney@southbostontoday.com

With all our daily turmoil, it would be easy to pick a subject to grouse about. To do so, however, would be to allow events to control our lives. Instead we have to be in control. If the world refuses to allow us time for enjoyment, we have to make thee time.

Christmas is such a time. The kids' love for Christmas is obvious. Toys, games, iPods and whatever else “Santa” leaves under the tree. For us big kids, however, Christmas pleasure and enjoyment takes a different form. The trees, lights, music and even a few gifts add to the general sense of enjoyment. Many, though, find the opportunity to just sit and talk and enjoy time to be their favorite part of the season.

The Paul J. Saunders American Legion Post #383 held their Christmas Memorial Remembrance Mass at St. Vincent's Church Saturday December 13. This was followed by the annual Post Christmas dinner across the street in St. Vinny's Clubhouse. A fly on the wall would have said this little dinner captured the true spirit of Christmas. Spouses of departed members, and sons and daughters, shared the meal with the usually much older Veterans. Conversation mainly centered on the humorous foibles of those departed but remembered members. The Irish have a great habit of saying things like “he was a rotten bastard, God Bless Him” at a wake. The talk had a bit of that humor to it.

Christmas stories of the past surfaced. One funny story of the poor old days was of a mother who would buy a few pairs of those cheap cotton tube socks sold in the fifties that sold for about 20 cents a pair. The kids would each thumbtack a sock to the bookcase used to

represent a “fireplace”. Christmas morning, tangerines, nuts and candy canes would fill the stockings. When the goodies were devoured, in short order, the stockings became mittens during the cold of Christmas vacation. When school began in January any “mitten-sock”, not ripped to shreds, was used for its intended purpose as a sock. As the expression goes - “if we were poor we didn't know it”. Probably because we didn't have many material things, what we did get was perhaps treasured and appreciated a little more.

It also emphasized the importance of just sharing time with loved ones and friends, which, of course, was the subject that seemed to animate everyone the most - sons and daughters on the way home from college; the military service; out of town on jobs; aunts and uncles making their yearly visit. Sure, at the end it might be a little overwhelming but the anticipation and the lead up to the big day make it all seem worthwhile. Plus we all get another year to try and get it right.

It's up to each of us to take charge. Don't let the outside distractions of the world get you down either - at least at this time of the year when there's nothing to be done but enjoy the season. So enjoy. This is the one time you should put it off until tomorrow.

I have a feeling there's a lot of “drama” some will be creating right around the corner. Believe it or not there are some in town saying bad things about me. Something about the parade. Who ever that might be I'm pretty easy to locate.

For the rest please spend and enjoy this special time with special loved ones.

Merry Christmas and take care till next week.

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Window Into The State House

Window Into The State House provides our readers a synopsis of important issues of interest, past and current, that are being proposed, debated or acted upon by the Massachusetts Legislature. Many issues that are not related to local city government services are acted upon and have a direct impact on daily life. They are tax policy, transportation infrastructure, judicial appointments, social services and health, as well as higher education.

We will excerpt reports from the gavel-to-gavel coverage of House and Senate sessions by news sources focused on this important aspect of our lives. These sources include a look ahead at the coming week in state government and summaries and analyses of the past week, re-caps of a range of state government activity, as well as links to other news.

HOSPITALS BENDING UNDER RATE DISPARITY PRESSURE

Citing the interests of patients and caregivers, a union official representing Boston Medical Center workers says she will closely monitor a potential merger between BMC and Tufts Medical Center. The Boston Globe reported on the possible merger Thursday and Veronica Turner, the Massachusetts head of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, which represents 2,500 BMC workers, issued a statement Thursday morning. "Extreme disparities in reimbursement rates are putting incredible pressure on the healthcare safety net and the hospitals that care

for the most vulnerable patients in our state," Turner said. "1199SEIU healthcare workers will be assessing and monitoring this issue very closely, and as always, we will be advocating for the interests of both patients and caregivers during the process." - M. Norton/SHNS ON TV, PATRICK PITCHES SELF AS "PRO-GROWTH PROGRESSIVE"

Dodging a question about whether U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren should launch a presidential bid, Gov. Deval Patrick on Sunday said Republicans were successful in the November elections due to Democrats running campaigns focused primarily on criticism.

"Democrats didn't stand for anything, and the Democrats who lost are the ones who were saying, you know, 'Look, we're just not as bad as the other guys and gals,'" Patrick told CNN's Candy Crowley. Patrick declined to say whether Warren should seek the nation's highest office, saying he is a "great admirer" of Warren, as well as presumed presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and others. Warren, who led last week's push against a federal spending bill because she said it would weaken investing regulations, is on the receiving end of increased calls to run for president. Asked if the Democratic Party aligns with Warren or its

more moderate members, Patrick argued the dynamic is not "quite that simple," before describing himself as a "pro-growth progressive." "I was in business," Patrick said on CNN's State of the Union. "I'm a capitalist. I say that without apology. I just don't believe that markets solve every problem in everybody's life. And I don't think government solves every problem in everybody's life. I think they have to work alongside each other." Massachusetts's voters returned a completely Democratic delegation to Washington, D.C., in November, while handing the governorship to Republican Charlie Baker. - Andy Metzger/SHNS

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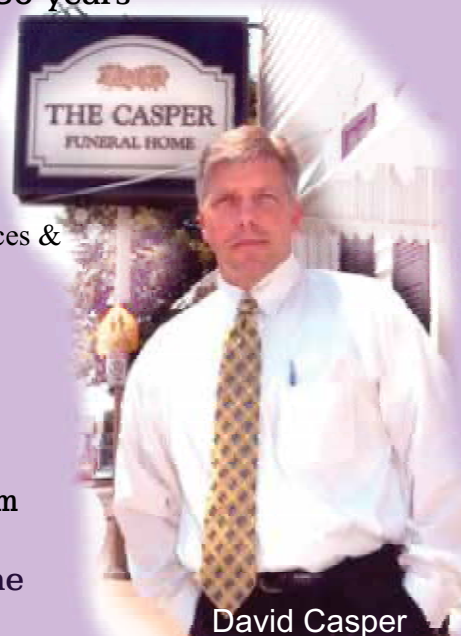
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-To Attorney General Eric Holder: Same as Al Sharpton.

-To Governor Elect Charlie Baker: Best of luck and God speed as he cleans up the mess left by Deval Patrick.

-Deval Patrick: To ride off into the sunset and never return.

-Martha Coakley: Same as Deval Patrick.

-Vice President Joe Biden: A shoe-horn to regularly pull his foot out of his mouth.

-To John Kerry: Maybe a career change to standup comic since no world leader, anywhere, takes him seriously.

-To the Hollywood airheads: To be hacked and exposed more often for the fakers they are.

-To Ken Turner: A tree stand with a hot tub and flat screen TV.

-To Jimmy Allen, owner of South Boston Sign Shop: A rocket powered Harley Davidson.

-To Jim Fallon owner of PS Gourmet Coffee (Home of the Bucket): A rocket powered snowmobile.

-To Michelle Obama: The White House Chef to only prepare the menu with the exact same food she forces

on America's public school children.

-To Harry Reid: A vacation with Nancy Pelosi so they may pout together, since they are now both without their gavels. Can I get an Amen?

-To Texas Governor Rick Perry: Kudos for sending his National Guard troops to protect our southern border since Obama wont.

-To Barack Obama: He gets the title of 'Worst President Ever' formerly held by Jimmy Carter.

-The City of Cambridge: To be sealed off and quarantined so as not to infect the rest of America with its absence of common sense.

-To Liberal Harvard Professors: Same as the City of Cambridge.

-To ISIS: To have Dick Cheney put in charge of eradicating the threat they pose. It shouldn't take long.

-To the Christmas Grinches: Christmas trees and the singing of Carols 12 months a year in front of your homes.

And to all of South Boston and beyond: May the peace and joy of this blessed, festive, wonderful and Holy season find you in the company of family and good friends...and may this be the best year ever. Merry Christmas.



Councilor Linehan Names Constituent Services Coordinator for South Boston

Councilor Linehan has named John Ulrich as his new Constituent Services Coordinator for South Boston. John is taking over for Mark McGonagle, the new Community Affairs Liaison for the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

John will be responsible for directing Constituent Services in South Boston. He brings with him an extensive knowledge of the neighborhood and the issues it faces. John is a long-time resident of South Boston who grew up in the Gate of Heaven neighborhood as the second youngest of eight children.

John said: "In my new role, I'll be able to give back to my community. I always enjoyed being able to help city residents during my tenure with the Parks Department, and this new opportunity will give me a chance to positively impact people's lives on a

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will conduct itself accordingly and within the guidelines of the Parade Committee as presented and as indicated in their application."

As a refresher to the background of this issue, in 1995, the Supreme Court of the United States upheld the right of the South Boston Allied Veterans War Council to decide who can march in its parade. At the time, John "Wacko" Hurley, in stating the council's position, said "we have always had Gay marchers in our parade". This is a truth that society has acknowledged and over time has been accepting. Since then, the Council has held fast to the requirement that any themes that do not honor America's first victory, those Revolutionary War Veterans and all Veterans since; or St. Patrick's Day and, by extension, the ongoing struggle for Irish Catholic acceptance, are forbidden. That was the

reason that the applications of Veterans For Peace and Mass Equality, both with clear and public admission of a political agenda, were rejected.

Forward to 2014, two groups, who in their application noted Gay membership in their units, were allowed to march in the parade. One advocated for a public park to honor our Revolutionary Heroes. The other brought attention to the good work that non-profits accomplish in South Boston. Neither advocated a social or political agenda. Both groups received a great reception and reported no problems. Public comment indicated they were a positive addition to the parade.

On December 15, the Allied War Council, at the request of the committee's parade organizer, Phil Wuschke, met to discuss an application by a Veterans unit called Out Vets of Boston. Founded by 20 year Air Force

Veteran Brian Bishop, this group also noted Gay membership in their unit in their application. They also noted that their unit had no political or social agenda, but that their mission was to honor the service and sacrifice of all brave veterans, who risked life and limb to defend our nation, including Gay men and women.

Both Boston dailies, the Herald and Globe carried the story earlier this week. Since then, according to sources, rumors and reaction have murmured through the South Boston community with many comments essentially considering this decision a non-issue. Others consider the vote a capitulation to politics and outside pressure. In the case of a recent press release put out by the Catholic Action League, the basis for its position is totally false, according to Mahoney, including its reference to political pressure and the legality of the vote.

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Welcomed Improvements to the Murphy Memorial Ice Skating Rink

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Deputy Commissioner Kevin Whalen today joined state and local officials to announce improvements to the Francis L. Murphy Memorial Ice Skating Rink in South Boston.

"The improvements being made to the rink will provide a space for the community to come together and be active during both the winter and summer months," said Deputy Commissioner Whalen. "DCR has worked to create additional space for skaters and lifeguards to utilize throughout the rink."

The improvements will allow for year-round use of the facility, serving as a beach bathhouse, lifeguard station and food concession area in the summer months. The \$2.4 million project includes the installation of new locker

rooms and team rooms, an expanded concession area, better circulation and viewing areas. The new locker rooms will include showers and toilets for the athletes and the new team rooms will provide additional rooms to accommodate co-ed hockey.

"I am proud to join DCR and the South Boston community for this groundbreaking at Murphy Rink. South Boston is known as a hotbed of hockey and these improvements will allow for greater access and usability for young people and adults alike," said Senator Linda Dorcea Fory. "DCR's additional upgrades will allow for year-round access, which showcases its commitment to enhancing South Boston's recreational resources. I want to thank Governor Patrick and DCR, led by Commissioner Murray, for their leadership on this project," continued Senator Fory. "I also want to thank my

colleagues Representative Nick Collins for spearheading this legislation and Representative Dan Hunt for his hard work on this project both in the House and during his time at DCR. Finally, I want to remember Boston Firefighter Francis L. Murphy who lost his life in the line of duty 50 years ago. This rink stands as a monument for a man who sacrificed his life so that others may live; I hope that those who enjoy this facility see this plaque and remember a hero," concluded Senator Fory.

"As someone who grew up as a rink rat at the Murphy rink in South Boston, I made it my personal mission since I took office in 2011 to work with the DCR to secure the funding for these much needed improvements to Murphy Rink," said Representative Nick Collins. "I was happy to work with Commissioner Murray, his predecessor Ed Lambert and former Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray to ensure that these investments will enhance this important community resource for future generations."

The rink was built in 1961 and, four years later, was named in honor of Francis L. Murphy, a lifelong resident and Boston firefighter, who was killed in the line of duty on October 1, 1964. During the event, DCR unveiled a new plaque rededicating the Francis L. Murphy Memorial Rink to the people of Massachusetts and recognizing Governor Deval Patrick and his Administration's work to improve the rink. Since taking office in 2007, the Patrick Administration has invested more than \$16.5 million in DCR Rinks. These investments include structural upgrades, energy efficiency improvements and improvements to safety and refrigeration.

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For some time now, many residents have said that were so tired of the unfair way that South Boston is being portrayed on this matter that they feel the parade should be moved downtown.

Mahoney reacted by saying, "The Allied War Council is simply trying to run a parade. It is not in the business of sending a political or social message, but it has rules. Out Vets has complied with our rules." Mahoney further noted the reaction by parsing Pope Francis' response to a question on Gay Catholic priests by referring to his statement, "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?" In that vein, Mahoney continued, "if these men and women, who defended our country and shed blood, honor their fellow veterans according to the rules of our parade, the fact they are a mostly Gay group is irrelevant."

Brian Bishop stated, "The Council really grilled me about our membership and our intentions as a veterans group. I was confident that our application complied with the parade rules and I pledged to insure that our intention is to honor veterans and not openly promote a rules-breaking agenda."



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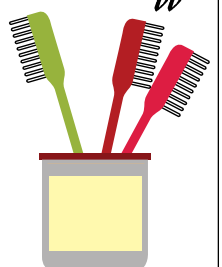
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403 West First St UNIT 303 Condo	\$845,000	10/29/14	4	2	1125
288 C St UNIT 3 Condo	\$720,000	10/29/14	5	2.5	1909
723 East Second St UNIT 2 Condo	\$699,000	10/30/14	5	2	1640
85 O St UNIT 1 Condo	\$657,500	10/29/14	6	2	1600
74 F St UNIT 2	\$612,250	10/29/14	4	2	1589
345 D St UNIT 5	\$599,000	10/24/14	4	2.5	1250
74 F St UNIT 3	\$599,000	10/28/14	4	2.5	1311
617-619 East Second St UNIT 2	\$480,000	10/30/14	5	1	800
186 West Seventh St UNIT 1	\$395,000	10/30/14	4	1	965
386 East Eighth St UNIT 7	\$367,000	10/29/14	4	2.5	1630
202 West Eighth St UNIT 2	\$345,000	10/30/14	4	2	861
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Christmas in South Boston 2014

SOUTH BOSTON TODAY
SBT Staff Report

Well, there's no doubt now, Christmas is nearly upon us and as is the case every season at this time, it brings with it a feeling different than any other. To most people, it holds a mix of sensations. It's hectic, yet there is a feeling of peace in the air. The rush of shopping, perhaps one or more special events and gatherings that tradition dictates we must attend. Yet in the middle of it all, if we're lucky, we are able to bring the rapid pace to a welcome slow down, even if just for a short time to savor the good feelings as we walk by a Nativity Scene or catch a children's choir singing carols at a school or church pageant. All of which give us a chance to catch our breath and bask in the warmth and the true meaning of what Christmas is all about.

For over 2000 years since the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, much of the world has considered Christmastime to be very special. Yes, there is also Santa Claus,

reindeer and elves to entertain and fascinate the kids. Huge displays of bright and colorful lights bring smiles to the faces of most and all of it; the religious and non-religious combine to make it wonderful.

Here in South Boston, like most places, tradition continues especially at Christmas. Homes are lit up and decorated, our schools are festive and churches are hubs of activity with caroling, Masses and Services featuring beautifully decorated altars. It may be cold outside, but there's always a warm glow and welcoming atmosphere inside of our Churches.

Like most, we here at South Boston Today cannot help but be impressed with all the special happenings that go on in our wonderful community at Christmastime. From the 2 Christmas concerts at the St. Augustine's Chapel, to the caroling at Marian Manor, to the children singing like Angels with all their hearts and Souls during their plays and pageants heralding the birth of Jesus.

There are many 'Toys for Tots'



events where people are happy to drop off brand new toys for kids and families who otherwise might not have any. Several groups, in cooperation with the US Marines, host many drop off points. We have Christmas tree lightings in our public squares. The lampposts along East and West Broadway display the wreaths that have been hung with great care to add even more spirit to the season. And who can forget the annual Christmas Day Dinner held each year at St. Monica's Church, where hundreds gather for a delicious home cooked meal served by dozens of dedicated neighborhood volunteers. These folks are happy to donate their time to bring pleasure and great food to make sure that no one need spend Christmas alone?

South Boston at Christmastime is such a special place that not only are long time traditions passed on from generation to generation, but we even add new ones such as the St. Peter

Academy Breakfast with Santa and the absolutely beautiful and spiritual concert with the talented Maeve performers. The 4th Presbyterian Church's Gospel singers and Choir are so talented they can compete with the best anywhere. If you want to really get in the Christmas spirit, catch their concert this Saturday at 3:pm at the Church.

The happenings listed above are just some of the ways South Bostonians celebrate the Christmas Season together. Where everyone, no matter your faith, is invited to enjoy. When you add to all of this, intimate gatherings all across our community of family and good friends to enjoy the closeness of one another's company at parties and dinner, it really does explain why most people look forward to this time of year. As we said, Christmas is a very special season of the year in nearly every part of the world and that can certainly be said for Christmas in South Boston 2014.

Lots of good old Southie images



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CONTINUED FROM page 7

much larger scale."

John previously worked for ten years in the Boston Parks Department, and for the Boston Center for the Arts in the South End. While with the Parks Department, he developed extensive first-hand knowledge of how best to bring city services to residents. He will be able to use that knowledge and experience to help make the city work better for everyone.

Councilor Linehan said: "I am excited to welcome John to my office. He is a great addition to my team, and his knowledge and experiences will help us improve the quality of life in District 2."

Mass and Service Times for Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

South Boston

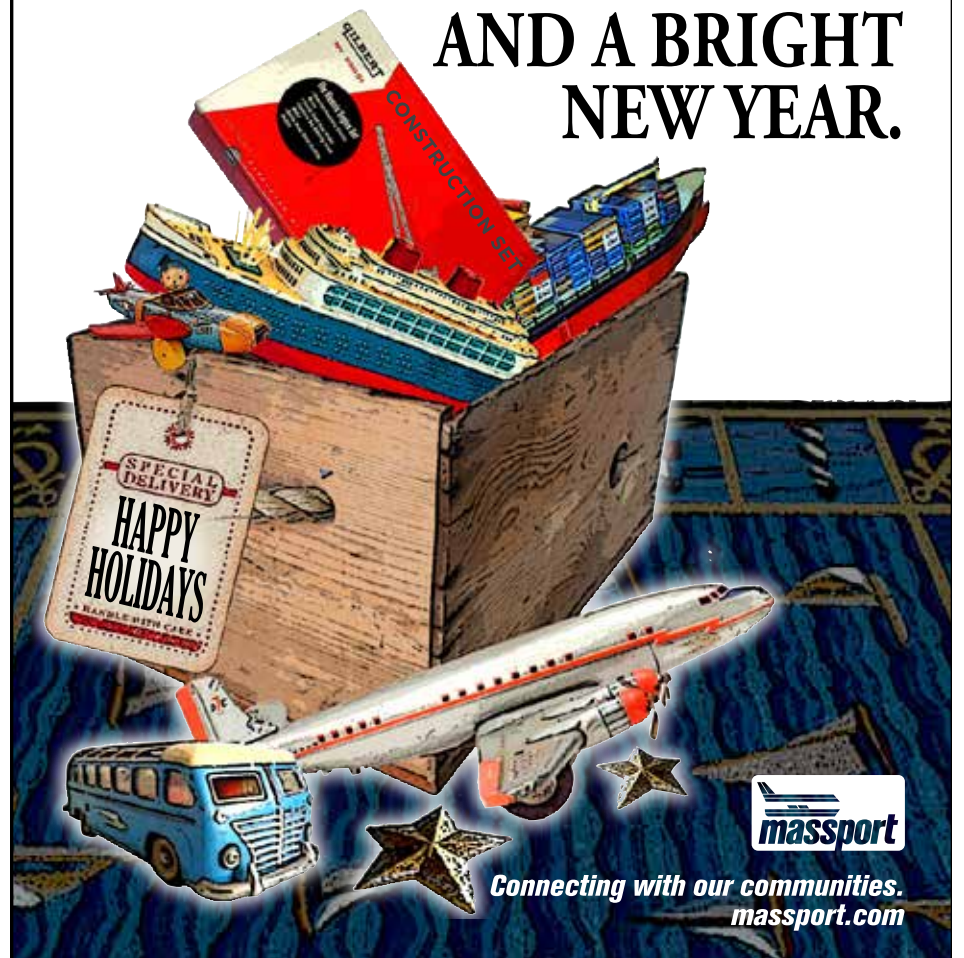
Christmas Eve (Wednesday, December 24th)

4pm: St. Augustine Chapel
4pm: Gate of Heaven Church (Children's Christmas Pageant)
4pm: St. Brigid Church
5pm: St. Peter Church (Bi-Lingual: English/Lithuanian)
5pm: St. Vincent Church
7pm: Fourth Presbyterian Church
7:30pm: St. George Cathedral Albanian Orthodox (East Broadway)
10pm: Gate of Heaven Church

Christmas Day (Thursday, December 25th)

8am: St. Brigid Church
9am: Gate of Heaven Church
9:30am: St. Monica Church
10am: St. Peter Church (Bilingual: English/Lithuanian)
10am: St. George Cathedral Albanian Orthodox 10am
10am: Holy Trinity Albanian Orthodox Church (D Street)
10am: St. Vincent Church
10:30am: St. Brigid Church
11:30am: Our Lady of Good Voyage Chapel
(Gate of Heaven: 615 E. Fourth St, St. Brigid Church: 845 E. Broadway,
St. Monica Church: 331 Old Colony Ave, St. Augustine Chapel: 181
Dorchester St, St. Peter Church, 50 Orton Marotta Way, St. George
Cathedral: 523 E. Broadway, Fourth Presbyterian Church: 340
Dorchester St, Holy Trinity Albanian Orthodox Church: 245 D St. St.
Vincent Church: 363 E Street, Our Lady of Good Voyage Chapel: 65
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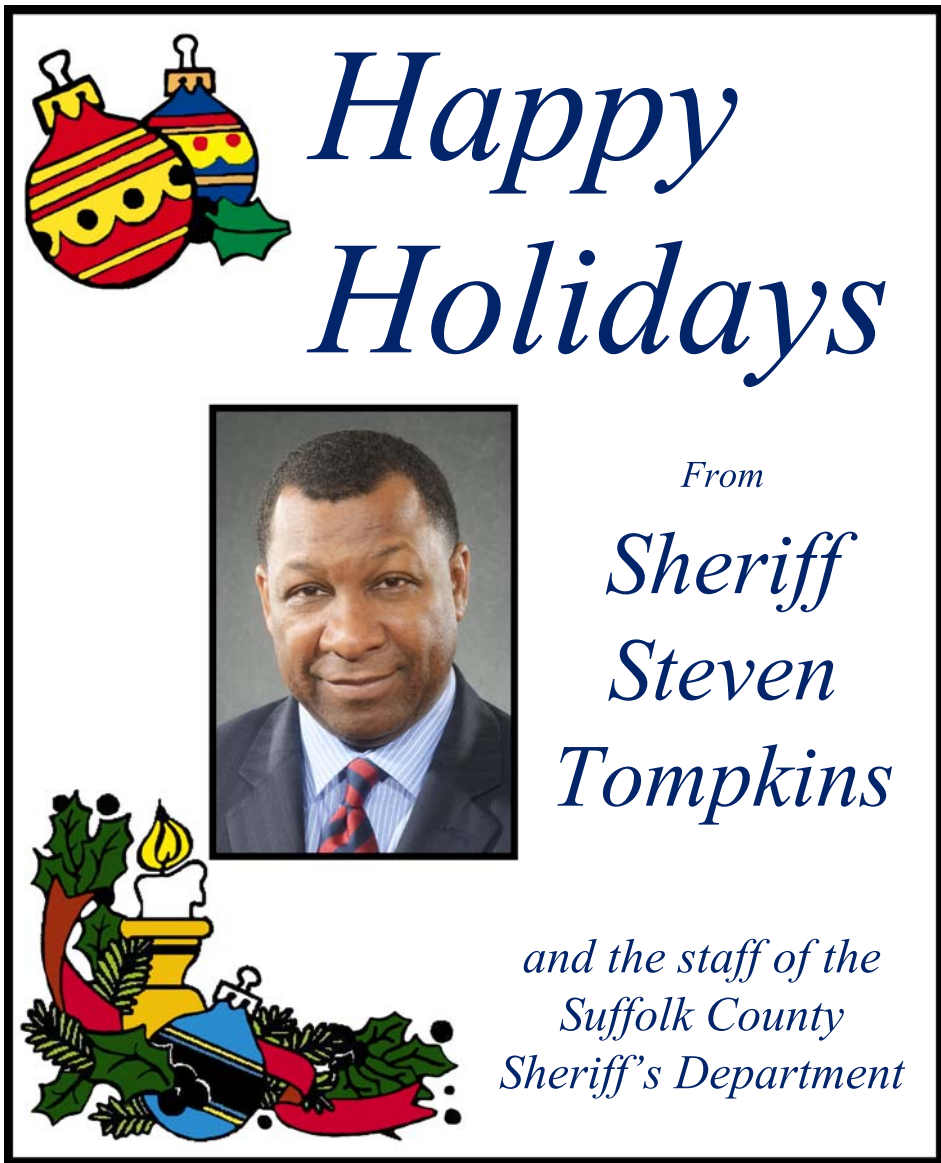
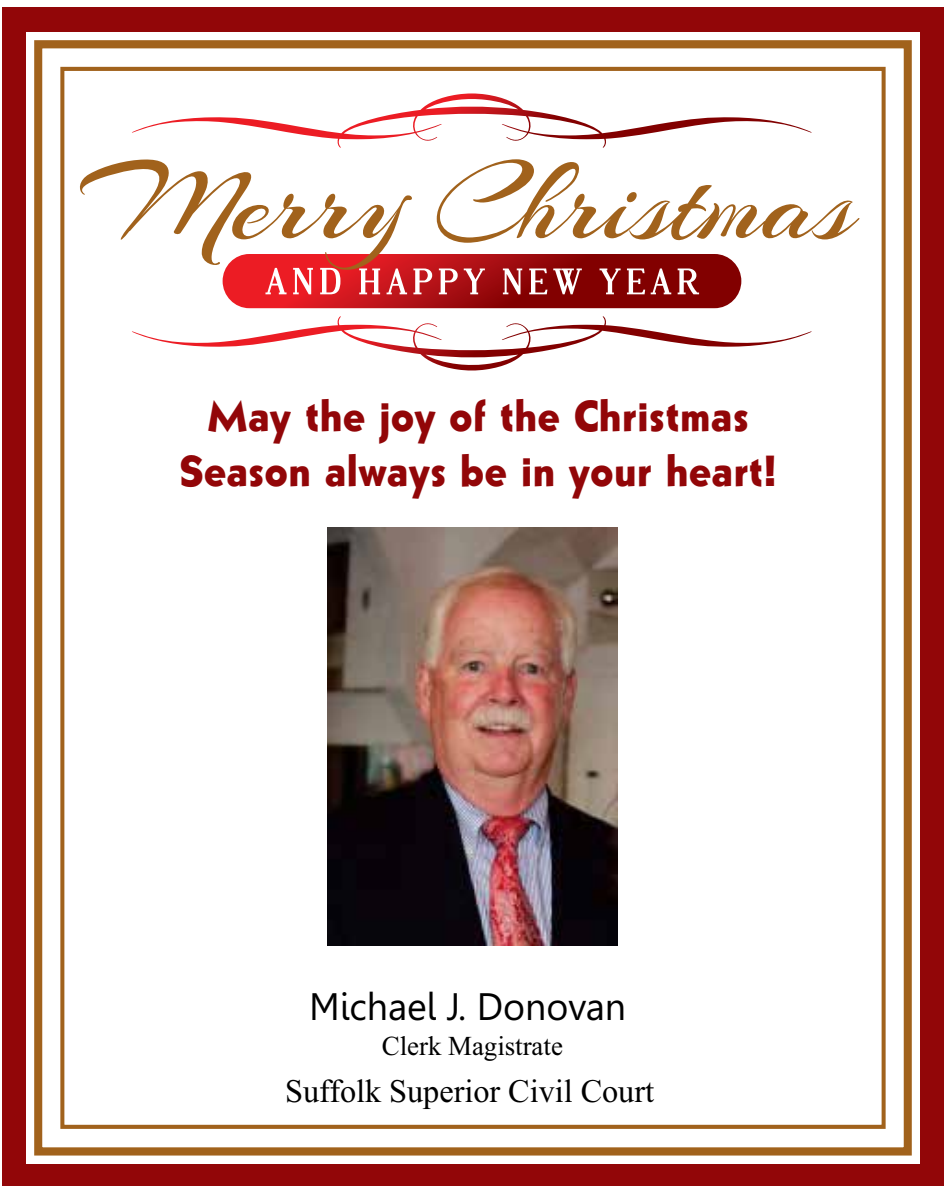
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but, we all need that Holiday smile!

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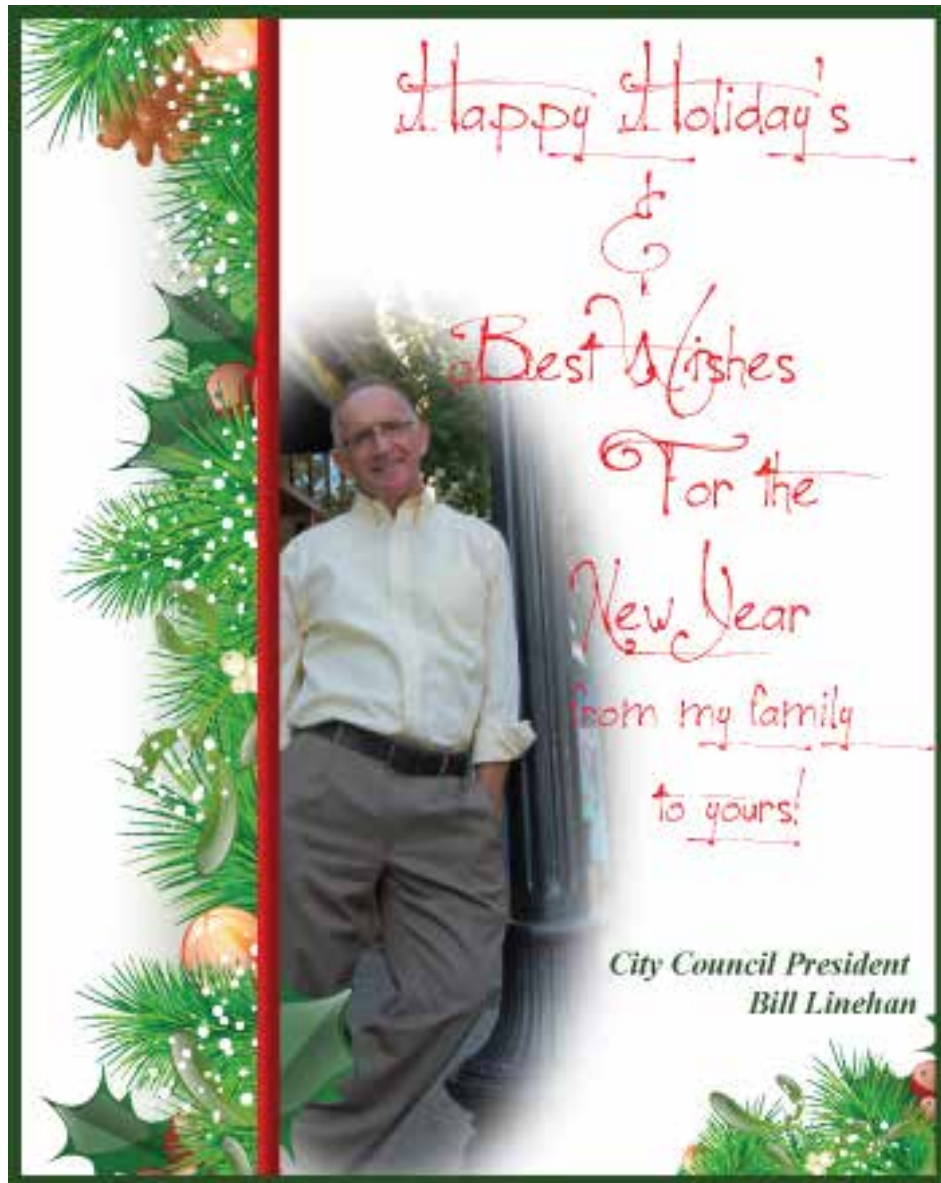
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Happy New Year filled with
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For the
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from my family
to yours!*

*City Council President
Bill Linehan*



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*Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year!*



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Who were the Shepherds at that first Christmas?

Who the shepherds were that were present at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem has been a story that has fascinated the masses over the centuries. Over 2000 years ago, some of the most notable people present after the Baby Jesus was born were the humble shepherds tending to their flocks. These shepherds of the time were considered to be of little importance; lowly, as far as most people living then were concerned. The shepherds were wandering nomads thought to not even have dwellings to live in, but actually lived out in the fields with their flocks. This was a lifestyle that existed long before the birth of Christ and still to this day, in parts of the Middle East, nomadic shepherds can be found living pretty much the way they did at the time of the birth of Jesus.

These shepherds have traditionally been without means or influence, yet God chose them over lawyers and scribes and wealthy landowners and other people of great wealth to send Angels to announce that the Son of God had been born in a manger in the town of David.

As the story of the first Christmas goes, an Angel appeared to the shepherds, who were at first terrified at the sight of the Angel. The Angel then said to the shepherds “Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths lying in a manger”. Then, other Angels appeared and helped reassure the shepherds. When the Angels had left them, the shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem to see for themselves this event that had happened. And they did and found it to be true. They then went in all every direction, far and wide, to spread the story of the birth of the Baby Jesus, the Son of God.

It has long been debated why it was shepherds that were chosen by God to be the first to receive the announcement of the birth by the Angels. But most believe that it is because God values all people, no matter what their status in life and chose the most humble and unassuming to be blessed with the good news first.



South Boston's Breakfast & Photos with Santa

SOUTH BOSTON TODAY
SBT Staff Report

St Peter Academy's Event, Breakfast with Santa, delighted over 200 children and adults from South Boston and beyond. This was the second year for the Breakfast and this year's attendance has secured the event as a family-friendly, neighborhood must-do event during the Christmas season.

There were lots of Ho Ho Ho's bellowing through the air, while breakfast was served to all; thanks to the generosity of Muls Diner/ Amrhein's Restaurant and Olga's Kafe. Children posed for a photo with Santa himself and the fun continued and the 'Jingle Ball Dance Party' for the kids kicked into full swing. Craft tables provided materials and the kids made cards to send to our service men and women who are stationed overseas.

St. Peter Academy's students wanted to be sure to thank all of Santa's Helpers that included teachers, staff, parents and family members, who are looking forward to the family-friendly 'Sweetheart Ball' on February 7th at the Lithuanian Club on Broadway and the Community Bingo on February 27th at the Seapoint Restaurant on East 8th Street.



St Peter Academy, an independent private school, is celebrating 10 years of service to the community. It is South Boston's only Pre-K through Grade 8 School. Class size is limited to 20 students which is ideal for creating a nurturing environment filled with interactive learning opportunities. They are located at 371 West Fourth Street – To learn more about their programs or to schedule a private tour, please contact Ms. Doreen Brown or Ms. Carol Moakley at 617-268-0750 or email SPA@StPeterAcademy.com.



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The Christmas Dinner Brings Us All Together.

The South Boston legacies of the legendary Monsignor Thomas J. McDonnell and his lay apostle Frank Kelley live in the annual Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners that were spawned in a small food pantry in Saint Augustine's parish hall. Fortunately for us, Fr. Tom and Mr. Kelley have been admired and their ecumenism chronicled by veteran volunteer Bubba Cahill and his able partner, Tom Butler Jr.

Volunteering and South Boston seem synonymous. So, when the health of both men began to fail, South Boston, led by then Senator Jack Hart, took up the mantle and called to 'alms' 150 business and community

leaders, Castle Island Association members and parishioners from all of the churches to coincide with the expansion of the pantry into the full church basement. Kudos are given to all, who answered the call.

For years, residents cooked the turkeys for the dinner and many were upset if not asked. Today, these volunteers become caterers for a day led by George LoCascio, Cathy Walsh and Dan Manning. Fr. Tom insisted as the meals are delivered that the visitors spend at least 10 minutes talking to their home bound neighbor. Secret Santa was also founded by Fr. Tom and he and Frank instituted coffee, muffins and

conversation for all of the community to stop by at 10am.

At Thanksgiving, 245 dinners in microwavable containers holding double the servings (built in 'leftovers'!) were delivered to over 130 homes filled with turkey, all of the fixings, rolls, apple pie, tea bags and plastic. Another 100 were served at St. Monica's Church Hall.

At least this many and likely more will be served on Christmas Day. The Dinner is scheduled from 11:30am-1pm. Free transportation is provided by the Southie Shuttle, so call to reserve a ride 617-268-4110. Those who cannot attend and would like a meal delivered, please call 617-268-1230 before Monday Dec. 23rd. After which you can call 617-590-9922.

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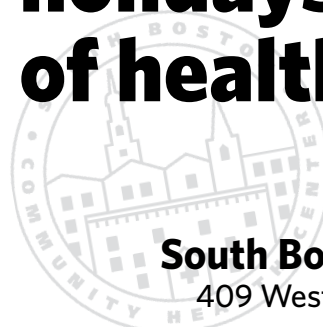


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'Tis the Season *Photographs By South Boston Resident Eileen Murphy*



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Families of South Boston Youth Lacrosse,

For the past six years, the league that we are a part of (Mass Bay Youth Lacrosse League) has offered a Select League to those programs who have enough athletes at the U15 and U13 levels who are serious about lacrosse, committed to lacrosse as his primary spring sport, and looking to experience a higher level of the game through fiercer competition, standings, and playoffs.

South Boston Youth Lacrosse would like to be a part of this exciting program and offer our athletes the opportunity to play at this higher level. We have set up an informational meeting for all U13 and U15 families to introduce the coaches and administrators who would be running this "Select" element, to provide all the details (including costs, scheduling, expectations, and other important details), and to answer any questions or concerns you may have. The meeting will be held on **Monday December 22 from 6:30pm-8:00pm at the Curly Recreation Center/L St. Bathhouse, use the M St. entrance and we will be using the senior center room.**

Here are some initial basic facts about this opportunity:

1.U13 is all current 5th and 6th graders. U15 is all current 7th and 8th graders.

We would put in 1-U13 team and 1-U15 team.

2.To be on the Select Team, the athlete would be required to play for South Boston Youth Lacrosse and commit to all regular practices and Sunday "Classic" games.

3.There would be an additional 7 "Select" games taking place during our regular season.

4.Games would either be on Friday nights or Saturday mornings/afternoons.

5.The scores will count, the records will appear in the league standings, and there would be a single elimination playoff bracket at the end of the season.

6.We would be combining our athlete pool with Charlestown Youth Lacrosse and possibly accepting a few athletes from other programs within the Boston city limits and we'd be calling ourselves "Boston Select."

7.In 2014, 55 out of 112 programs that make up MBYLL took part in Mass Bay Select. There were over 100 select teams.

8.In 2015, there could be as many as 75 select programs in the league with over 150 teams playing "Select" Lacrosse.

9.There would be an additional cost to participate (beyond the fees you pay for the "Classic" Sunday league) based off of team registration fees, a Boston Select uniform, and trainers that would be shaping our practices and coaching our games.

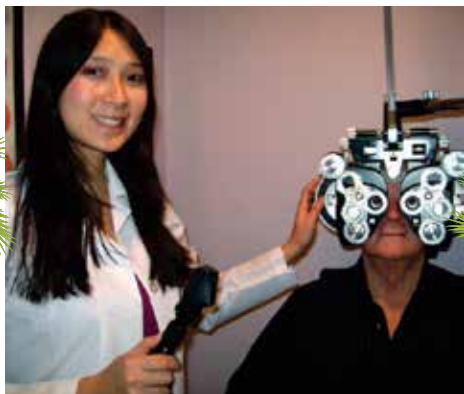
10.We feel very strongly that not only could we get a Boston Select up-and-running for the 2015 season, but that there is enough talent and work ethic in these programs to compete, have a winning select record, and make a serious run at the D2 Championship.

This really is a remarkable opportunity for the athletes, for the program, and for the city of Boston and we welcome your initial feedback and hope to have all of you attend a meeting in person to further discuss the details.

Happy Holidays!

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Lee and Campusano Shock The Boxing World

Every major sport from boxing to racquetball has their favorites, who are ranked according to their ability, as well as their ability to attract sponsors and fans. It is the same in every sport. Bobby Orr, for example, was signed to play for the Bruins in the sixth grade. The scouts, especially now, with social media and hundreds of TV channels know where to find the blue chippers. Very rarely does an athlete come along who nobody knows and who stands the sport on his head. I actually used that premise in my book, "Night Runner", but that was fiction, what happened last week in Tennessee was fact.

A total unknown, who trains out of the South Boston Boxing Club, named Julio Campusano, who has been trained from day one by Tommy Lee, entered the World Series of Boxing and World Championship Team Trial, which is the first step to the 2016 Olympic Boxing Team. Julio entered the Elite Men's Division, which boasted some of the most well-known and toughest fighters in the United States, many of whom were national champs and former Olympians.

The tournament was held in Tennessee and thanks to the generosity of Tommy Lee, who has continued to pay tournament fees, airline tickets,

SOUTH BOSTON TODAY
By Brian P. Wallace

hotels and meals for countless number of boxers who matriculate through the South Boston Program, which is housed at L Street.

Most, if not all, of the boxing experts and officials thought that Julio Campusano, boxing out of the South Boston Boxing Program, would have a cup of coffee in Tennessee and be on his way home after his first fight. They were wrong. Julio won a first round knockout over Antenion Eastman from North Carolina. His next opponent was a polished, well-schooled boxer named Niko Valdes who was a national champion and an Olympic contender named Julio Valdez.. When Julio TKO'd Valdes in the second round, everyone took notice. He made them take notice. These were boxers who had national and international experience and they were falling like flies from the continual barrage by Julio Campusano, a virtual unknown, who was the talk of the tournament.

Next up was another well-traveled fighter named Joshua Balbuena from Syma, Georgia. Julio won a unanimous decision over yet another nationally ranked fighter. Standing in Julio's way for a gold medal

was a world title-holder, US Army Champion and Olympic runner up named Steve Nelson. Tommy Lee was in awe when the former United States Olympic coach, Israel Acosta, asked Tommy if he could help Tommy work Julio's corner. That is like Red Auerbach asking if he could help coach your team. A very heavy underdog, Julio fought Nelson blow for blow. When the decision was announced for Nelson, there were many in the crowd who felt that Julio got robbed. After seeing the entire fight on Facebook, I would agree.

Nobody knew Julio Campusano when he arrived. Everybody was talking about him when he left. With his silver medal, in this the first qualifying tournament for the 2016 Olympics, Julio has earned the right to compete in Spokane in January for a spot on the World Championship in 2016, as well as a spot on the United States Boxing Team which, is another pathway program to the

Olympics. Team USA competes in an international competitions with boxers from all over the world. But next up is Spokane and winning in Spokane will make it easier to secure a spot on the 2016 Olympic team.

I really have to congratulate Julio and Tommy Lee. John and Tommy Curran saw something in this raw fighter and worked with him and molded him into a fighter whom you just might see on TV in the 2016 Olympic Games. I especially want to take a moment to talk about Tommy Lee who has toiled in anonymity for over ten years down the L. He has been there for over ten years using his own money to buy equipment, to pay for fighters' tournament fees, their hotel, and their food. It is a labor of love for Tommy, but an expensive one. He has never sought a sponsor but needs our help to get him and Julio to Spokane on January 17th. All that time on the road and nights in the gym might just pay off for Tommy and his new star.

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46 YEAR OLD HOCKEY GOALTENDER GOES TO CAMP FINAL



By Mark Senna



This is the final part of a series of seven articles that appeared right here in South Boston Today. For those of you who haven't been following, this last article won't really make much sense but you can read along and

then go back online and read the other entries. As I was writing these articles I would often run into you, my readers, on the streets of South Boston. Often times you would share that you were enjoying the series and then would often ask "has the camp helped your game?" I wanted to respond to you but knew that my response was going to come in my last article of the series so here goes. After completing four days of camp with Washington Capitals goaltender coach, Mitch Korn, I was anxious to try out all of the new tricks that Mitch and his staff had covered. As I headed home after that last session, I felt that I had everything I needed to become a better goalie. I was back in game shape, was full of enthusiasm, my equipment fit properly, my skates were sharp, and I was full of knowledge that I thought was going to help turn me from a scrambling goalie into a goalie who was going to play the position a bit more like today's goalie - the modern butterfly style. I figured the only thing holding me back was my inability to pull off the butterfly power push in a game situation. Unfortunately, I would learn that my years and years of experience in playing the position in a particular style was not going to change over night. As much as I wanted (still do) to play in the style of the Bruins Tukka Rask, it wasn't happening for me. With each outing I would start the game with good intentions but as the clock ticked away and the

outcome of the game was on the line, I would find myself reverting back to my "old habits" - doing anything to make a save. One time, I even flashed out my right skate and made...ready for this....a skate save! Think about that folks, when was the last time you saw an NHL goalie make a skate save? Even in a desperate save situation today's goalie would fire out a pad instead of a skate to make a save. Over the years the wiring in my brain has changed to follow suit but there are those occasions where I'll short circuit and revert back to my old self. A two pad stack save is another beauty that you have a better chance seeing performed at one of my games than you do over the entire NHL season.

So there in lies my struggle. I knew which save technique I wanted to use and could perform them in the various shooting drills in the camp but when faced with a split second (or less) decision, I kept reaching for the old tried and true technique which was a save selection that wasn't the first choice taught at camp. In fact, more than likely it wasn't recommended at all.

A couple of months after camp had ended this mental struggle to play a different style started to affect my play in a negative way. I was thinking too much about what save to make instead of simply reacting to the situation and making the save. It seemed like I was always a step behind from connecting the dots (reading the play) and anticipating where the shot was going to come

from. After another tough loss where I didn't play well, I was soul searching and remembered a conversation that I had with Mitch Korn about how to read and defend against a particular scoring situation. He said, "Mark, you're a very cerebral goalie but your strengths are your athleticism and quickness. Trust your instincts. Read and react to the play!"

From that day to this, I stopped trying to play a style that wasn't me. I reverted back to my scrambling "Tim Thomas"-like ways. My team (Bar Down) ended the season on quite a roll by winning ten of twelve games but would fall a game short in the finals. It appears we still haven't recovered from that loss as we have started this winter season very slowly but a recent win might be the spark that turns our season around again.

Mitch shared a tremendous amount of information with us that weekend in July. Much of it stayed with me while some of it I read from the notes that I took during class or my scribbles after an ice session. Sometimes, when I'm standing in the net facing a shooter I hear his voice coaching me and other times I don't. One would think that hearing the coach's voice would be beneficial when faced with a save situation but it isn't - not when you're a goalie. So has the camp helped my game? Yes, yes, and yes! Anytime you can spend time learning from one of the top gurus of your sport or career then you are going to benefit.

In closing, I can't help but thank some of those responsible for helping

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me along the way. John Ciccone and Ronnie Devoy were two of the first coaches who saw enough talent in me to give me a spot on their traveling street hockey team – the Marshalls/Terriers. I got a taste of what it was like to compete at a high level and wanted more. Tom Apprille was my coach at South Boston High and he was something. I could stop every shot in practice, the pre-game warm-up, and the game itself but wouldn't get an ounce of credit from him. He

kept me “even keeled” – didn't let ANY of my success go to my head. I love him for that because he kept me grounded and kept me working at my game...something that is still in me to this day. Lastly, Richie Linnehan. While coach Apprille was down one end of the ice covering our fore-check, Rich was firing pucks at me at the other end of the ice. I figured he must have been in his early twenties when he was shooting on me. He was strong and could fire the puck like

no other high school player I would face. If I could stop his shot then they had no chance of scoring on me is what I thought and it often held true. Thank you!

This is the final article in this series that appeared only here in South Boston Today. I hope you have enjoyed reading these articles as much as I have enjoyed writing them. Until we meet again, please stay healthy, keep those pucks out of the net goalies, and have a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year!



Every week, we run part of a segment from Danny Picard's daily iTunes podcast. He can also be heard weekends on WEEI 93.7 FM and seen on Comcast SportsNet New England.

But this week, Danny wrote a column on Jon Lester:

Let's face it. Jon Lester was never coming back to Boston. The Red Sox will tell you they were outbid. Lester will tell you he felt disrespected with the team's initial offer in the spring.

But this goes deeper than that. And both sides are to blame.

On July 31, Jon Lester was traded to the Oakland Athletics. At that point in time, it was strictly business.

All-Star pitcher, contract year, no agreement on a new deal. You can't let that player walk away and receive nothing in return.

So the Red Sox sent Lester — along with Jonny Gomes — to the A's in exchange for slugger Yoenis Cespedes and a draft pick.

On the way out, Lester said all

the right things. He thanked Red Sox Nation. He even kept the door open to returning to Boston as a free agent.

From there, theories ran wild: Lester and Red Sox general manager Ben Cherington were in cahoots. The Sox' ace knew his team needed offense, so he agreed to the trade, all while knowing he'd come crawling back to Fenway on his self-proclaimed hometown discount. Meanwhile, back here in the real world, the only person Lester had a plan with was his agent. And a brilliant plan it was.

Late Tuesday night, Lester chose to sign with the Chicago Cubs. The deal is worth \$155 million over six years, with a \$25 million

vesting option for a seventh year if he pitches 200 innings in 2020 or 400 innings in 2019 and 2020 combined. It also includes a full no-trade clause, and access to 25 hours of personal flights on a private jet per year.

From a business standpoint, Lester and his agent absolutely crushed it. And, in general, how can you be mad at them for that? You only get one chance to go into free agency at the age of 30 (he'll turn 31 in January) and be the talk of the town at the Winter Meetings.

The first four days in San Diego this week were known as “The Jon Lester Meetings.” And if you're Lester, how cool is that? You spend your entire career to get that one

opportunity to be stuck in the middle of a bidding war for your services. It's a position of power that every professional athlete dreams of one day being in.

But it's only a position you can be in if you choose to test the free agent market.

In the days leading up to last season's trade deadline, that was indeed Lester's choice, which was why he finished the year in an Oakland A's uniform.

I will never knock someone for wanting to test free agency. It's their right. And Lester, in this case, earned every penny he eventually received from the Cubs.

But while former Sox GM Theo

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CONTINUED FROM page 21

Epstein introduces his new pitcher in Chicago this week, back here in Boston, someone will get the blame for why that press conference isn't happening at Fenway.

And early indications don't favor Red Sox brass.

Those strictly pointing the finger at Sox ownership are hung up on Boston's original offer of \$70 million over four years back in March. It was an offer that came just two months after Lester publicly and adamantly declared that he would accept a hometown discount.

During that January meeting with the media at the Boston Baseball Writers' Association of America awards dinner, Lester even went as far as to point out Dustin Pedroia's decision to "leave a lot of money on the table" with his latest contract to stay in Boston.

Pedroia signed a seven-year, \$100 million extension in July of 2013. It should be noted that the starting-pitching market is much different than the second-base market. Still, the point was made, and Lester's message was clear.

"I want to be here until they have to rip this jersey off my back," said the Red Sox ace during that media session in January.

Lester also acknowledged 25-year-old

Masahiro Tanaka's seven-year, \$155 million contract with the New York Yankees. So he was well aware of his upcoming market value, at the time. And while proclaiming his willingness to take a hometown discount, Lester also pointed out the responsibility he had to the Players Union.

"You never want to be the guy that takes the market backwards," he said.

But once again, Lester seemed to realize that he wasn't going to get his \$155 million over seven years with the Red Sox — which, keep in mind, comes out to \$22 million a year.

"I understand, that, to stay here [in Boston], you're not going to get a free-agent deal," he said in January. "You're not going to do it. You can't. It's not possible. You're bidding against one team. I understand that you're going to take a discount to stay. Do I want to do that? Absolutely."

Lester followed that up by saying, "But just like [the Red Sox] want it to be fair for them, I want it to be fair for me and my family." Fair enough.

But what is fair for Lester and his family is market value, something he admitted wouldn't come from the Red Sox.

What happened next was a spring-training offer of four years at \$70

million. Fast forward to December, and it's that initial offer which reportedly forced Lester to refuse to negotiate until the offseason. Somewhere in between, business was business, and Lester was traded to Oakland.

Now, the perception is that, at some point early on, business got personal, at least, from Lester's standpoint.

Most in Boston can't get over the initial four-year, \$70 million offer — which, keep in mind, comes out to \$17.5 million a year. Between fans and media, many pointing the finger solely at the Red Sox for not bringing Jon Lester back are caught up in the organization's "disrespectful" start to what was supposed to be an exclusive contract negotiation.

All the while, I've been sitting here since April trying to figure out why Lester and his agent refused to negotiate all season long.

So, just to clarify, one initial offer makes you feel disrespected to the point where you won't even negotiate?

Ok. Fine. April, May, into mid-June . . . still upset. I get it. You were willing to take a hometown discount, and then you get that offer to start things off. Not what you were looking for. Frustration is

completely expected.

But then July rolls along, your team is out of the playoff race, the trade deadline is nearing, your GM once again approaches you about getting to the negotiation table, and you still say no?

"We certainly had a desire to engage on a contract conversation with him and that conversation didn't happen enough for whatever reason," said Cherington in his post-trade deadline press conference on July 31.

"As we got deeper into the season, [Lester] made it clear that that wasn't something he wanted to focus on right now, and so we honored that desire on his part. And I had a conversation with Jon about how we respected that position, but because of the performance of the team, that meant we both might have to deal with this possibility [of a trade].

"If the team's performance didn't really improve, that meant teams were going to start calling on him and it was something we were going to have to deal with," added Cherington. "We both knew about that possibility going into this week because we had talked about it. It was a combination of the team's performance and his desire not to focus on his contract right now, which we respect his reasons for." At that point, it became clear to me then that Lester wasn't doing much to live up to his "rip the jersey off my back" comment.

I mean, if you want to be somewhere as bad as Lester expressed he wanted to stay in Boston, wouldn't you at least get in a room and try to work it out? One day after Lester signed with the Cubs, Cherington once again discussed his attempts to negotiate with Lester before he had no choice but to trade him.

"I believe there's no deal that can happen unless you're able to get in a room and talk about it," said the Red Sox GM at the Winter Meetings on Wednesday. "You might agree, you might disagree, you might go back and forth. But the only way to

actually get to a deal is to be able to get in a room and talk about it. I wish we had been able to do that more.” And when asked if trading Lester hurt Boston’s chances of re-signing him this offseason, Cherington began his answer by saying, “Remember, we hadn’t been able to have any kind of constructive dialogue about a contract in spring training or during the season.” Speaking as someone who wanted Lester to remain with the Red Sox long-term, I’ve never been too caught up with the initial offer in spring training. I never even wanted them to trade Lester, and expressed such, at the time he was dealt. My theory is, if you like a dominant pitcher, don’t trade him. Re-sign him. But then when I found out that Lester wouldn’t even have the discussion — even when his whole “focusing on the season” excuse made no sense while the Sox were out of the playoff race — I realized that Cherington did what he had to do. He resorted to business. And at that point, if you’re not going to re-sign Lester, then it’s a good business decision to get something for him. Cherington is right. No contract in the history of professional sports has ever been agreed to if you don’t get in a room and work it out. It takes two sides to make a deal. And as much as Lester’s side may have felt slighted by the team’s initial offer, he certainly didn’t sound like a guy — in January — who was going to let one bad offer

prevent him from discussing the subject at all, even when it came time to rip the jersey off his back at the trade deadline. When deciphering who to blame in this mess, I just can’t seem to get over the fact that Lester wouldn’t negotiate with the Red Sox until the offseason. But perhaps that was his plan all along. In January, Lester admitted to knowing he wouldn’t receive market value from the Red Sox while in exclusive negotiations with them. Let’s look at what he said again: “I understand, that, to stay here [in Boston], you’re not going to get a free-agent deal. You’re not going to do it. You can’t. It’s not possible. You’re bidding against one team. I understand that you’re going to take a discount to stay. Do I want to do that? Absolutely.” Of course, saying you’ll take a discount is one thing. Actually going through with it is another. The only way to avoid that discount was to test free agency in the offseason. So while some look at Boston’s initial four-year, \$70 million offer as a slap in the face, turns out, it was actually the best thing that ever happened to Lester and his agent. Not only did it lead to a six-year, \$155 million deal in the offseason, but it also gave Lester an opportunity to save face in Boston when he refused to take that hometown discount of \$135 million over six years — which was the Red

Sox’ final offer this offseason. Now, Lester’s not the bad guy. He shouted “hometown discount,” refused to negotiate on the claims of being disrespected by an initial offer, got caught up in a bidding war that all of baseball was watching, and then signed the second-largest contract for a pitcher in baseball history. Back here in Boston, most of the blame is being thrown at the Red Sox. Don’t get me wrong. I wanted them to pony up the money for Lester. This team needs pitching. And I’m much more comfortable with a guy who we know can dominate in this city. Do everything you can to bring “that guy” back, instead of taking a chance with someone who isn’t proven in this market. For that, I’m not letting the Red Sox off the hook. Not for a second. They have the money to spend, and they should be more than willing to spend it on someone like Lester. But as we know — and even as Lester pointed out to us back in January — the Red Sox put value on certain players, whether it’s fair within the market or not. Those pointing the finger solely at the Red Sox will try to convince us that Lester would have accepted a five-year, \$110 million deal in the spring — which comes out to \$22 million a year — had it been offered instead of an insulting initial offer worth \$40 million less than that. It’s the overwhelming opinion which they’ve turned into a fact: that Lester would’ve signed his \$110 million deal and all would have been

right in Boston, had it been offered. Please. What’s that based on, what Lester told people? If I’m going to believe that, I’d have to believe Lester. And while I’m one of his biggest fans, I can’t ignore the fact that he wouldn’t give the same effort to stay in Boston that he once led us to believe he would, back in January. You can’t convince me that he was going to accept anything less than market value from the Red Sox in the spring. You just can’t do it. I don’t care what Lester is telling people. Because walking away and refusing to negotiate for an entire season after one bad initial offer, with a team that was going to have to rip the jersey off his back, makes less sense than the initial offer itself. It was all part of the plan. And the Red Sox were used as Lester’s biggest bargaining chip. He kept that “love for the city” and “willingness to return” in his back pocket until Epstein went to \$155 million and threw in a full no-trade clause to go along with 150 total hours of private flights. All while everyone back in Boston felt bad for the guy who was “disrespected.” That plan started with a potential hometown discount. It ended with the second-largest pitching contract in the history of the game. Believe what you want. But Jon Lester was never coming back to Boston. And both sides are to blame. Follow Danny on Twitter and Facebook.

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