

# THE LYNN JOURNAL

Thursday, December 10, 2020

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Maraya Sierra (foreground) is pictured with other members of the Lynn Street Division DPW crew, from left, Danny Cannata, Foreman Dan Baetzel, Jose Menjivar, and Marcus Snook.

## It's Showtime for Ronald Ellis Lynn boxer fights Saturday at Mohegan Sun

By Cary Shuman

Ronald "Akeem" Ellis is ready to return to the ring and he couldn't have picked a bigger stage.

Ellis, who grew up in Lynn and attended Lynn English before graduating from Lynn Tech (Class of 2007 with a specialty in Electrical), will appear on Showtime Boxing: Special Edition Saturday night as part of the featured bout card at Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Conn.

As boxing fans have known for years, Showtime is the gold standard of televised professional boxing events. Ellis' bout will be broadcast live to millions of

Showtime subscribers and boxing fans worldwide.

A 6-foot tall middleweight contender, Ellis (17-1-2, 11 knockouts) will be facing Matt Korobov (28-3-1, 14 knockouts) of Royal Palm Beach, Fla., in a 10-round bout.

"I'm excited to get back to work, especially after this long year," said Ellis, who has been training in San Diego and Los Angeles for the bout. "It's time for me show out on Showtime."

Due to the coronavirus, Ellis hasn't fought in a pro bout since last December. But he has been doing some serious training and

Please see ELLIS Page 3



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOWTIME BOXING

Ronald "Akeem" Ellis will be fighting on Showtime Saturday night in a bout televised live from the Mohegan Sun in Connecticut.

## First Street

### Maraya Sierra makes history in Lynn DPW

By Cary Shuman

Maraya Sierra wasn't aware that she was the first woman in the history of the city to work in the Lynn Department of Works Street Division.

But when she learned of her groundbreaking achievement, the 35-year-old Lynn resident

was understandably proud.

"It feels good – the crew treats me well, they've all been welcoming like I'm part of the team," said Sierra. "I didn't know I was the first woman in the division. But I feel it's a good thing. There are a lot of movements going on right now and to be part of it is pretty cool."

Sierra began her employment in the Lynn DPW in October and it's been a busy schedule each day. "We do street work, paving, tree work, potholes – things like that," said Sierra.

Last Thursday, Sierra was contributing to the Street Division's meticulous paving of a sidewalk and driveway on Bennett Street. The weather was cold and winds were brisk, but the DPW contingent worked diligently to make the sidewalk safe for the public and complete the job.

Sierra credits the expertise of her foreman, Dan Baetzel, and the other members of the DPW crew for helping her making a seamless transition to the depart-

ment.

"Dan is my foreman and he's been teaching me a lot and he's a great teacher," said Sierra. "The crew makes sure I'm safe on the job. I was really nervous when I started, but they made me feel so welcomed, like one of them."

"I also want to thank [DPW Associate Commissioner] Lisa Nerich, [DPW Commissioner] Andy Hall, and [DPW Street Superintendent] George Potter for giving me the opportunity and believing in me to take part in this," said Sierra.

"We're very happy that Mariah is breaking new barriers as the first woman in the DPW Street Division," said Nerich.

DPW foreman Dan Baetzel said Sierra has been an excellent addition to the team.

"It's been great – ever since she's been on the department, she's been a great addition," said Baetzel. "She gets her assignments every day, goes out, works

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Maraya Sierra is the first woman to work in the Lynn Department of Works Street Division.

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# EDITORIAL

## HAPPY HANUKKAH

The eight-day observance of Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, gets underway this Thursday, December 10, and will culminate next Friday, December 18.

In summary, Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees -- a group of fierce warriors who used guerilla tactics against an occupying army -- in 166 BCE when the Maccabees liberated the Jewish people from the Greek-based rulers who essentially had outlawed the Jewish religion.

When the triumphant Maccabees captured the city of Jerusalem, they quickly entered the Holy Temple, tossing out the images of the Greek gods that had been installed there by the occupying rulers.

When the Maccabees went to light the Menorah candles in the Temple, they thought they only had one day's worth of oil. However, the lights remained lit for eight days -- hence the miracle of the Festival of Lights.

Hanukkah is a joyous occasion for Jews world-wide, marked by large gatherings of friends and families and the playing of traditional games such as the dreidel and eating traditional foods such as latkes.

Although Hanukkah celebrations this year will be much more subdued than is typical because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we wish all of our Jewish friends a happy, healthy, and meaningful Hanukkah in 2020.

## THE VIRUS IS A HUNTER -- AND WE ARE ITS PREY

It now has been nine months since lockdowns went into effect in many states, including here in Massachusetts on March 16. However, despite all of our previous efforts, the COVID-19 pandemic is surging across the entire United States.

The pleas of public health and government officials can only go so far if Americans fail to heed their warnings and do not take the common-sense and easy-to-follow steps of wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and not congregating in group settings of any kind.

With the promise of a vaccine on the horizon, this is no time to let our guard down. The virus is everywhere and no one is safe from it. Each and every one of us must assume personal responsibility for the safety of ourselves, our families, and our friends.

The coronavirus is a living organism that is stalking us wherever we go and whatever we do. We are its prey -- and it requires that we must be ever-vigilant in order to avoid becoming another victim and spreading it to others.

Selfishness and failure to follow the rules simply are not options amidst this widening pandemic.

## PEARL HARBOR WAS 79 YEARS AGO

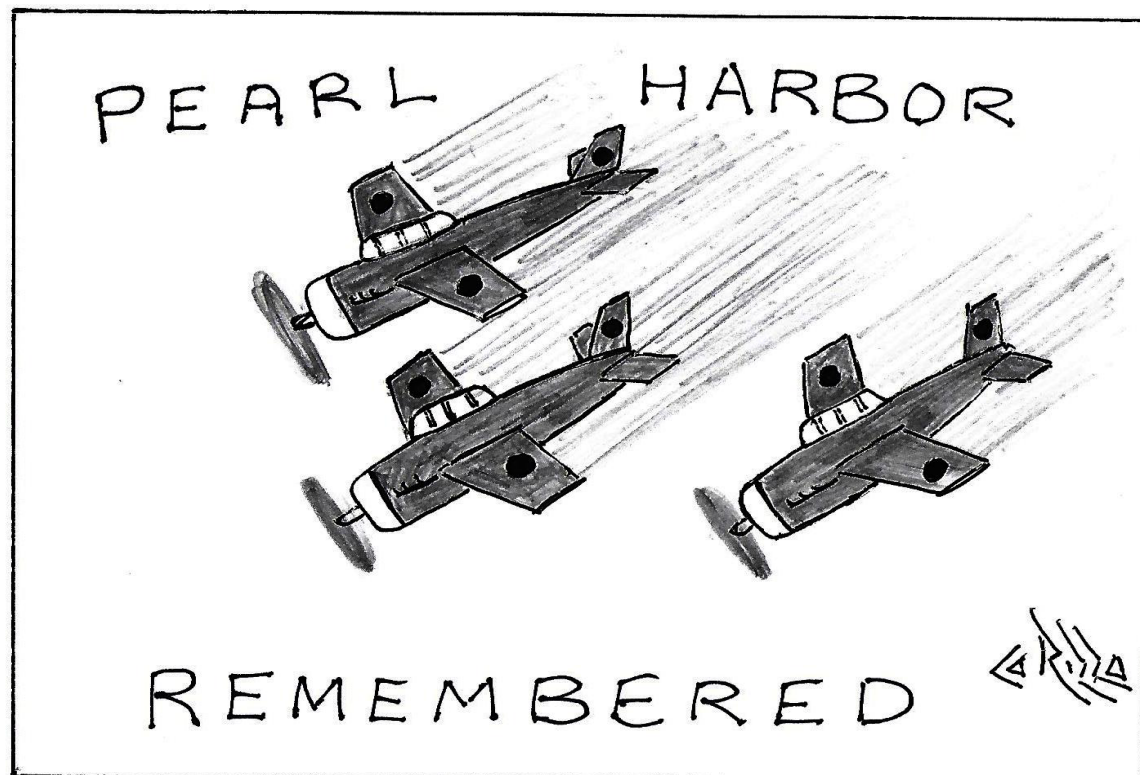
It was 79 years ago this week -- December 7 -- that the nation of Japan launched its attack on Pearl Harbor.

The very next day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt convened a joint session of Congress in which he famously declared the attack as, "A day that will live in infamy," and asked Congress for a Declaration of War.

For more than two years prior to the attack, America had stayed out of the war that already had engulfed the rest of the world. By the time of the Japanese attack, Hitler's Nazis had conquered all of continental Europe and much of Africa, while the Japanese had invaded almost all of Asia, save for the U.S. outposts in the Philippines and other small islands in the Pacific.

Americans clung to the belief that our isolation, separated from the rest of the world by two oceans, would keep us out of the war. But after Pearl Harbor, we no longer could keep our heads buried in the sand.

The lessons of Pearl Harbor are many, but chief among them is that freedom isn't free -- and that we always must be vigilant to recognize the forces of evil that seek to destroy our way of life.



"A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY"

GUEST OP-ED

## When Does Christmas Begin?

Dr. Glenn Mollette

Christmas has different beginning times for most everyone.

For some it's when you put up the Christmas tree and decorations.

For others it's when you wrap some presents and put them under the tree.

While for others it's about the Christmas music. When they first start hearing Christmas songs on the radio then Christmas has begun for them.

Christmas may begin for you when your family arrives home to share in your celebration. Or your Christmas celebration may really begin when your family finally leaves.

When I was a child Christmas started for me when everything came together. The big fresh tree was hewn down from the hillside. Once it was decorated, I started watching for Santa. But it still was 't Christmas until I came up with a big package of firecrackers, cherry bombs and other noisy fireworks. I always loved putting firecrackers and cherry bombs under cans to see how far they would fly through the air.

My mother would make cookies, cakes and pies. My dad would always buy a big box of

apples and oranges. It seems like they lasted a week.

Christmas really began when family came home. When we all got together that's when it seemed Christmas really started. The excitement came by us all being together. Sharing gifts was fun and provided moments of laughter. Eating my mother's delicious meal was always a stable holiday treat we always enjoyed.

The best part was everyone being together for a couple

of days. With social distancing, this may be one element of Christmas that many will not get to enjoy in 2020.

So many thousands of people have died from Covid-19 and they will be missed at the Christmas table. If this is you please cling to the hope of life beyond this world and that you will see your loved one again.

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## THE LYNN JOURNAL

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GUEST OP-ED

# MBTA cuts impact on commuters

By the Public Transit Public Good Riders,  
Workers and Communities United for  
Transit Justice

On December 2, 2020 we conducted a series IVR surveys of residents in communities

served by the MBTA during afternoon and evening hours. 467 individual respondents

completed the survey giving a Margin of Error of +/- 4.53%. Below are the topline results

of the survey.

| QUESTION | RESPONSE RATE |
|----------|---------------|
|----------|---------------|

1. GENDER  
Male 38.9%  
Female 61.1%

2. AGE  
Under 30 16.1%  
Between 30-49 33.6%  
Between 50-65 26.6%  
Over 65 23.8%

3. Have you utilized public transportation in the last two years?

HAVE used public transportation 57.5%

HAVE NOT used public transportation 38.8%

UNSURE 3.7%

4. The MBTA announced it is planning millions of dollars in cuts to its services and

staff. Do you support cuts to public transportation funding?

OPPOSE 67.0%

SUPPORT 16.4%

UNSURE 16.6%

5. If the MBTA cuts millions of dollars in funding from the system, are you

CONCERNED about the impact it will have on SAFETY for riders and workers?

ARE CONCERNED 70.0%

ARE NOT CONCERNED 21.8%

UNSURE 8.3%

6. If the MBTA cuts millions of dollars in funding from the system, are you

CONCERNED about the impact it will have on the ability of frontline workers to

get to their jobs?

ARE CONCERNED 75.8%

ARE NOT CONCERNED 16.6%

UNSURE 7.7%

7. If the MBTA cuts millions of dollars in funding from the system, are you

CONCERNED about the impact it will have on local businesses and on a postpandemic

economic recovery?

ARE CONCERNED 69.9%

ARE NOT CONCERNED 22.0%

UNSURE 8.1%

(end of survey)

## Ellis/ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sparring with the best in the business.

“I was training with [world super middleweight champion] Canelo Alvarez,” said Ellis. “And I’ll tell you, ‘while you’re sparring, it’s hard to wear that mask.’”

Ellis said there will be no fans allowed at the fight, meaning that his parents, Ronald Ellis and Margaret Ellis, and his famous boxing siblings, Olympic contender Rashida Ellis, and undefeated world title aspirant Rashidi Ellis (23-0-0, 14 KOs), will all be watching on Showtime.

“I hope to visit my family in Lynn after the fight,” said Ellis,

who began boxing at the age of 13 under the tutelage of his father.

“My brother just fought last month and won the WBC Silver title, so he’s next in line for a great big fight. My sister is training in California at the Olympic Training Center.”

Ellis has watched past performances of Korobov, his opponent in Saturday’s fight. “He had a great amateur career. He is a lefty and he just comes to fight, so I feel like we’re going to put on a show.”

Ellis has lived in California for most of the past seven years. He has three daughters, Jahzara,

5, Zariah, 2, and Khalise, 2 ½ months.

Ellis arrived in Connecticut Wednesday and he’s confident about taking another step toward a title shot.

“On paper, this is the biggest fight of my career,” said Ellis. “I want to close out this year with a statement, so everyone next year will know my name in the middleweight division.”

Asked if he has a message for his friends and fans in Lynn, Ronald said, “Just tell everybody to make sure they tune in – I’m going out of 2020 in a huge way.”

## Op-Ed/ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

I believe throughout our planet that seeing our sick friends get well would make Christmas for all of us.

Christmas is different this year. We must enter Christmas this year with hope. You have to have hope to live. Life without hope is like a car with no fuel. A vaccine for Covid-19 is coming. We are praying this will spare lives in 2021. We have hope that by next Christmas we can all get together and celebrate.

Keep in mind there has nev-

er been anything normal about Christmas. Mary and Joseph and the baby spent their first Christmas in a barn which was like a cave for animals. The baby was laid in a cow’s trough for a bed. Christmas always has the potential of being very different.

Remember Christmas is in your heart and that’s where your main celebration and hope lie. May hope and Christmas be bright and rekindled anew and afresh. May you within your spirit hear the bells on Christmas

day. And, may you hear the angels sing, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to all men on whom his favor rests.”

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

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First Come - First Served

# Baker Administration announces statewide rollback to Step Three

By Lauren Bennett

The Baker administration on Tuesday announced that all Massachusetts cities and towns will roll back to Step Three, Phase One of the state's reopening plan, effective Sunday, December 13.

Following increases in hospitalizations and cases after the Thanksgiving holiday, the "sharp increase is putting a strain on our healthcare system and frontline workers," Baker said.

As of Monday, the state had 2,463 new cases of COVID-19, and the seven day average test rate is about 5.5 percent, the governor said. There are also 1,516 people hospitalized with the virus, and 302 in the ICU.

He said that continuing at this rate is "not sustainable over time" and will continue to put the healthcare system and healthcare workers at increased risk.

Prior to and "just after" Thanksgiving, Baker said that

the "data was showing progress" from the restrictions put in place about a month ago, including a stay at home advisory from 10pm to 5am, and reducing the indoor gathering limit to 10 people. But as the state encounters a second surge of the virus and cases continue to increase, more restrictions are being put in place.

He said that there is "hope" with the vaccine coming soon, but "we cannot simply wait for the vaccine to get here."

Reverting back to Phase Three, Step One will help to "reduce the opportunities this virus can have to spread," said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. Baker acknowledged that a lot has been asked of both residents and businesses over the past nine months, but everyone needs to continue to follow the guidelines in order to slow spread of the virus to ensure health and safety for all communities across the state.

"Today's announcement is

meant to tighten up guidance and to ensure that all residents are taking the proper COVID-19 prevention measures, no matter where they are," Polito said.

Starting on Sunday, the outdoor gathering limit at event venues will be reduced from 100 people to 50, and people hosting outdoor gatherings with more than 25 people "will now be responsible for notifying their local board of health," Polito said. Additionally, the rollback requires indoor theaters, performance venues, and "higher contact indoor recreation businesses" to close, according to the state, and theaters and performance venues that are outdoors may not operate with more than 25% capacity, and not more than 50 people.

Statewide, capacity limits for arcades, driving and flight schools, gyms, libraries, museums, retail, offices, places of worship, lodging common areas, movie theaters, and gold facili-

ties, will be reduced from 50 percent to 40 percent, the state said. Movie theaters may not have more than 50 people per theater.

Polito said that the administration is "hoping this will be a temporary closure," and that they will "consider reopening" indoor theaters and performance venues when the data and hospitalizations improve.

Additionally, there are new guidelines for restaurants as well, including that masks are required at all times inside restaurants except for when actively eating and drinking. No more than six people per table will be allowed, and all tables will have a 90 minute time limit. Also, musical performances at restaurants will no longer be allowed, and food court seating at malls will be closed.

Polito said that residents should only eat at restaurants with people in their immediate household. She added that all social clubs serving food must

abide by the restaurant guidelines.

Inside gyms and fitness centers, masks are required at all times, and all office workers are also required to wear masks except when not in their own personal workspace, and the use of break rooms should be limited or eliminated. Polito also suggested that employers continue to use teleworking as much as possible to slow the spread.

"In order to beat this virus, we must all continue to do our part," Polito said.

Baker said that these new restrictions will help to prevent infection and the spread of the virus, "especially in indoor settings," and will also help to "reduce mobility" and the amount of time that people spend with those outside of their household.

"There's nothing more powerful than people playing their part and understanding their role," Baker said.

## Baker orders first COVID-19 vaccines, expects December delivery

The state submitted the Commonwealth's initial vaccine order to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and expects to get 300,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine by the end of December.

The federal government allocated Massachusetts 59,475 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for this first shipment that is part of 300,000 doses that the CDC is expected to send to Massachusetts by the end of December. The first allotment of 300,000 COVID vaccines will be for the first dose of a two-dose regimen.

Anticipating that the federal government will soon issue emergency use authorizations for additional vaccines, the Administration has been working with the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group to prepare for a safe, equitable and efficient distribution that is based on guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention.

The Commonwealth has actively been working on preparedness and planning for a COVID-19 vaccine since early August. Over the past decade, the Commonwealth has invested in the state-of-the-art Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS), which serves as the state's vaccine registry, ordering system, and inventory system. DPH has enhanced MIIS to prepare to administer the COVID-19 vaccine.

This week, the Administration will roll out further information on vaccination prioritization.

For more information:  
•Preparing for a COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/preparing-for-a-covid-19-vaccine>

•COVID-19 Vaccination Plan (DRAFT): <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-interim-draft-plan/download>.

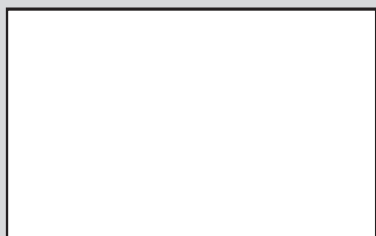
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# STUDENT-ATHLETES RALLY FOR SUPPORT

Lynn High School Student-Athletes came to the steps of City Hall under a cloud of disappointment knowing winter sports were cancelled. They were well organized, well behaved, and followed the health protocols as they tried to make a case why they were not allowed to play any sports during the winter season. Athletic Directors designed a comprehensive plan with approval from the School Depart-

ment. When Covid-19 spiked recently in the community, it caused the cancellation of the season with concerns for safety reasons through public health measures.

Parents, players, and coaches asked for reconsideration from city officials to reverse their decision. A Coach said, "Sports help students to gain confidence, leadership skills, and self-respect. The student-athlete becomes bet-

ter by setting goals and having time management skills. They begin to acquire a sense of appreciation for diversity and gain a strong sense of morality."

The overall picture that student-athletes can achieve by performing on the courts, ice, swimming or track can help them to maintain better grades; it also teaches them to work together with others and to develop a healthier lifestyle.



KIPP Academy stands in solidarity at rally – Basketball Coach Danique Kelsey, Victor Mafo, Chihu Amadi, Gloire Kabongo, Coach Davis White, Hallim Badmus, and Leander Reyes



Lynn Jets Hockey Team – (Front): Alexander Wonoski, Coach Michael Roberts, Christian Alquinta, Steven Downey, and Patrick McHale; (Back): Kyle Candilier, Matt Devin, and Matthew Patrie



Cheerleaders and Players of Lynn English and Lynn Tech stand together – (Kneeling): Rosie Chheang and Arsema Gebreyesus; (Back): Jaliani Loisiga, Ararai Gebreyesus, Alisha Jean, Lilliana Cote, Olivia De Jesus, and Felicity Blaney



Lynn English Coaches – Jarell Byrd and Antonio Anderson with Lynn Classical Coach Keith Lee and his son, Keith Lee, Jr.



Lynn Classical Girls Basketball players – Sailor Brinkler, Amelia Pedro, Reese Brindler, and Lauren Hennessey

# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HOLD MEMORIAL MASS



PRG Photo

Fifty people attended the Deceased Members' Memorial MASS at Holy Family Church. PGK Brian Magrane organized this celebration of remembrance as he stated, "Celebrating this MASS is an honor for our deceased members. We had 22 members pass away this year. This is our privilege to memorialize them. Candles had a picture and life-dates of the deceased. A family member or a friend was invited as the name was announced to light the candle during the MASS." At the conclusion of the MASS, candles were taken home by the families or a by a friend who may give the candle to a family member, so the candle can be placed in an area to be honored. The Knights of Columbus has been doing this event for a number of years. Under the difficult circumstances from Covid-19, safety protocols were followed. Pictured are DGK John Minor, FDD/PGK Donald Collins, PGK Brian Magrane, DD/PGK Fausto Carbrera, & Ruel Longfellow with Rev. Chaplain Godfrey Musabe and Deacon Brian Field.

## Sierra/ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hard, does her job – she's been a blessing to have on my crew. Everyone gets along well with her. We got a great team of individuals down here in the DPW."

DPW crew member Danny Cannata said, "This is my first week on the job and my first day I worked with Mariah and she's great to work with. She's good at the job. She's actually showing me what to do. I enjoy working with her."

Sierra previously worked for Aero Snow Removal and American Sweeper in plowing and street-sweeping operations. She had been working for Jet Blue at Logan Airport for seven years and received her Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with the MBTA.

"I can't work in an office," she says of her path toward mechanically inclined, outdoor places of employment. "I have to be outside doing things. I also like working in my hometown keeping the city nice and neat."

Maraya graduated in 2004 from Lynn Classical where she played in the basketball program under the direction of varsity

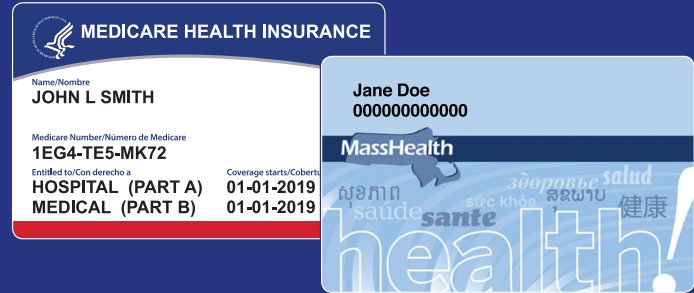
coach Gene Constantino and JV coach Geoffrey Boyd. "I was a freshman when Helen Ridley was a senior," recalled Maraya. "I was at the game when Helen broke the scoring record. I actually know Helen well. I used to play street basketball with her. She's a very good person and very dedicated to the sport."

Maraya praised her favorite educator at Classical, Mrs. White, who was her English teacher. "She's really dedicated to the kids," said Maraya. "She went above and beyond for her students."

After Classical, Maraya continued her education at the New England Institute of Art in Brookline.

Sierra and her DPW crewmates received a preview of New England's cold winters Friday with the first snowstorm of the season. With her experience in snowplowing, the first woman in the DPW Street Division will be helping the department keep Lynn roads safe for motorists and residents alike, free of the wintry hazards of snow, sleet, and ice.


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### STOP & SHOP TURKEY EXPRESS PROGRAM

Stop & Shop community partnership with the Washington S.T. E. M. Elementary School donated 200 turkeys to families to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal. The Food Pantry program was incorporated in 2019 as Stop & Shop partnered with the students and families of the Washington School where food is distributed twice a month.

Community Relation Manager Maria Fruci explained the importance of the Turkey Express partnership program for the Lynn Community as she said, "Stop and Shop every year runs a Turkey Express program; the company donates turkeys and Thanksgiving sides to our neighbors in the five states where Stop & Shop operates. This year we are donating nearly 22,000 turkeys. As Maria continues, "Locally, through our Food Pantry partnership with Washington Elementary School, we are providing turkeys and side dishes

for 200 families. The purpose of the Food Pantry Food Program is to ensure students have access to healthy foods, so they can per-

form their best each day. Stop & Shop is happy to extend our partnership with the school."



Stop & Shop Store Manager, Kevin Waters, helps pack Turkey Express bags with Customer Service Manager, Deanne Ball.



The S&S Turkey Express Team of the Washington S.T.E.M. partnership - Customer Service Manager Deanne Ball, Washington School Principal Anthony Frye, Community Relations Manager Maria Fruci, Store Manager Kevin Waters, and Front Desk Manager Courtney Coffill.

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Grocery Manager Ranko Cuijic and Meat Manager Mel Springs brings a crate of Turkeys for distribution.



Washington Elementary School Principal, Anthony Frye, meets grade 1 student, Zoe, and her dad, Osman, at the Turkey Express Program.

**Jolly Old Saint Nick won't be making any appearances for photos this year**  
**But the Holiday Spirit is alive and well!**  
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Published in the East Boston Times, Revere Journal, Everett Independent, Chelsea Record, Winthrop Sun Transcript, Lynn Journal and Charlestown Patriot-Bridge

**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT FRI. DEC. 18<sup>th</sup> PHOTOS TO BE PUBLISHED WEDS. DEC. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

# Emma Adu named Caregiver of the Year

The Melrose office of Home Instead Senior Care is proud to announce the selection of Emma Adu of Lynn as Caregiver of the Year.

Emma moved here from Ghana 23 years ago and has dedicated her life to helping older adults age gracefully in place, as well as caring for her family. In addition, Emma has opened her own beauty supply store to supplement her income and is working 60 hours or more per week.

Emma has overcome some personal issues, but enjoys her life here with her husband Alex, and her three grown children in Ghana.

“We are thrilled to present this award to Emma, says Bill Mishkin, Managing Director at Home Instead, Melrose. She does an amazing job in helping our seniors and improving their quality of life. Emma developed her skills in caring for older adults

in Ghana, and has continued with our office here, says Mishkin. We are so proud of her and present her with this award as appreciation for her dedication each day.

“We have sent Emma’s nomination to the franchisor in Omaha, NE. where she will be considered among 600 other caregivers for the national Caregiver of the Year honor. We are so proud to be associated with quality caregivers like Emma and are grateful for her service. She helps us change the face of aging every day.

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Emma Adu of Lynn announced as Caregiver of the Year.

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**LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS**

**THE HONOR SOCIETY OF PHI KAPPA PHI INDUCTS NEW MEMBERS**

The following people recently were initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.

Laetitia Jowue of Lynn at MCPHS University

Jennifer Campos of Lynn at MCPHS University

Olivia DeGuglielmo of Lynn at MCPHS University

They are among approximately 30,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination

and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 325 campuses in the United States and the Philippines. Its mission is "To recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of

scholars in service to others."

More About Phi Kappa Phi Since its founding, more than 1.5 million members have been initiated into Phi Kappa Phi. Some of the organization's notable members include former President Jimmy Carter, NASA astronaut Wendy Lawrence, novelist John Grisham and YouTube co-founder Chad Hurley. Each year, Phi Kappa Phi awards \$1 million to outstanding students and members through graduate and dissertation fellowships, undergraduate study abroad grants, funding for post-baccalaureate development, and grants for local, national and international literacy initiatives. For more information about Phi Kappa Phi, visit [www.phikappaphi.org](http://www.phikappaphi.org).

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# NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

## CHELSEA EATS PROGRAM ROLLS OUT

CHELSEA - The Chelsea Eats debit card program – one of the first such municipal programs in the nation - has been nearly fully deployed for those who won the chance in the lottery last month, that allowed 2,000 residents to get a set amount loaded on their new cards every month through March.

After a number of logistical issues that had to be ironed out, City Manager Tom Ambrosino said the Chelsea Eats program started in earnest last week just before Thanksgiving, when the first amount was deposited onto the cards. The cards are procured through a Visa provider and can be used at any store in the region.

“We distributed the cards to residents at City Hall the week before Thanksgiving,” he said. “We distributed about 1,500 cards of the 2,000 cards that we announced to lottery winners. We loaded that batch of cards with the first installment of money on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving and so far everything is go-

ing well.”

The City has committed to funding the first two months, including last Tuesday’s money and another loading in December before Christmas. Meanwhile, two donors have submitted large donations to the City to fund the months of January and February.

“That should get people to the end of March and hopefully there is a vaccine and everyone is able and everyone is back to work,” he said.

The donations came from the Shah Family Foundation and the United Way, both of which like the idea of Universal Basic Income. Ambrosino said he isn’t so much interested in that, but says it could help them secure more funding for beyond March.

“It’s possible we could get more donations for that concept, but for now we can get people to March,” he added.

The card is provided by Pre-paid Expense Card Solutions, Inc. out of New York, and they have been a good partner with the City on this trailblazing program. He said the City would incur less than \$10,000 in fees for

the program, which officially can go until June 30, 2021 if there is funding.

Those who have the card get a set amount based on family size, Ambrosino said. Those with three or more in a family get \$400 per load, two in a family get \$300 and a single person gets \$200.

The lottery was weighted to favor those who had more children, who were elderly, disabled, veterans or were in deep poverty. There was also a check for those who were already receiving state or federal public assistance. No one qualified unless they were under 100 percent of the federal poverty line, which is about 30 percent of AMI in Greater Boston.

Ambrosino said there are about 500 cards that weren’t picked up and they have reached out to those individuals, but their contact information isn’t helping. Letters have gone out, but it is assumed many moved on since the application period last August. Anyone not living in Chelsea does not qualify for the program.

## CITY COUNCIL SETS TAX RATE

CHELSEA - The Chelsea City Council took every measure in protecting homeowners with rising tax bills in setting the tax rate at its regular meeting – but did so with a warning that next year those tools won’t be in the toolbox if people are still struggling with the fallout from the pandemic.

The Council applied the maximum commercial shift of 175 percent to commercial property and away from residential property in an 11-0 vote, a move allowed by law and applied virtually every year.

That said, Council President Roy Avellaneda reminded everyone that this usual shift does create a hardship for small business owners – particularly this year when stores and commercial offices are sitting vacant at higher rates.

“I want us to all be cognizant this shift does unfairly burden the small commercial owners,” he said. “I think of Madelyn Garcia who bought a commercial building in Cary Square and has \$20,000 worth of taxes. To overcome that tax burden means you’ll need to make 10 times that amount in revenue. She has to get \$200,000 in revenue to get that. It’s easy to shift to the commercial side, but we have to think about being fair to the small guy as well as the homeowner.”

As well, the Council voted 11-0 to set the owner-occupant residential tax exemption at 35 percent – a rise of five percent and higher than the City had planned for. The City had been carefully rolling out that tax savings over five years and was expected to go to 32 percent this year, and 35 percent next year.

However, City Manager Tom Ambrosino said he recommended the 35 percent owner-occupant fee so that residents could have maximum savings during this difficult time in Chelsea.

“The maximum amount we can give is 35 percent and over the time I’ve been on the Council we’ve upped it consistently,” said Councilor Damali Vidot. “However, after we apply this one there is no more room left to give any higher tax breaks. I want to urge this administration to do what it can. We’re carrying burdens right now that, quite frankly, no municipality should have to carry. At this point, we’ve exhausted all the tools in the toolbox.”

cent of the value of a residential property that is owner occupied, up to a three-family home. That results in substantial savings on the tax bill for those homeowners occupying their homes in Chelsea.

That 35 percent, as Vidot said, is the maximum amount allowed by state law, a law that was changed in Chelsea’s favor some years ago by Avellaneda. He said that effort was a second go-around for the savings, and he had tried previously with former Councilor Stan Troisi and they were rejected at the State House.

He said it was a “special moment” to be able to have that savings to give, and thanked Troisi for getting the ball rolling so many years ago

With all savings applied and shifted, the residential tax rate was set at \$13.62 per \$1,000 of value. The commercial rate came in at \$26.65.

The largest tax increase is expected to hit two-family and three-family homeowners this year.

The Council has been submitted a request from Ambrosino to transfer \$750,000 into the new Homeowner Stabilization Fund to help those with increasing residential taxes to get assistance. That program would likely roll out in January, and the Council is set to vote on the transfer at the Dec. 14 meeting. They are expected to approve it.

## •GETTING THE VALUES RIGHT

One of the main issues on Monday night, and back to last year, was the questions raised by Avellaneda, Vidot and Councilor Giovanni Recupero about the valuations of multi-unit buildings of eight units or more.

Avellaneda has consistently said those larger buildings are undervalued in his estimation, and Vidot and Recupero have agreed with that.

“Those values are not up to the proper value in my opinion compared to how well they do on smaller properties,” he said. “We have to no disagreement with how they value singles, two-families, condos and three-families. But we feel there is a lot of catching up to do with the others. That under-valuation puts an unfair burden on the smaller residential properties.”

Vidot also stressed that she would like the Assessor’s Department to look to an outside consultant or find a way to ad-

That program erases 35 per-

Please see REGION Page 11

*Jolly Old Saint Nick won't be making any appearances for photos this year*

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**Region /** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

dress these values.

“We have to make sure these bigger commercial buildings are being held accountable and paying their fair share so the burden is not on our residential or small business owners,” she said. “We don’t have any more to give.”

Avellaneda said he would like to see a consultant brought on this year, particularly after Ambrosino announces the hiring of a new permanent City Assessor in the coming months.

“The clock starts ticking today for the Assessor’s to do a better job with these identified properties in that sector so we don’t have this problem next year,” he said.

Ambrosino said they would be paying closer attention next year to those values.

“I think that will be the focus of attention in the next year,” he said. “We’re in the process of naming a new Chair of the Board of Assessors. That will be the top priority for that new person. When we present a tax rate next November I hope we can say with confidence those values are accurate.”

**PLANS FOR PIERS PARK PHASE III DISCUSSED**

East Boston - Two years ago, the Massachusetts Trustees of Reservation (MTR) submitted the only bid to Massport’s call for a private/public partner to come forward and help fund the design and construction of Piers Park Phase III.

The dilapidated pier adjacent to Massport’s award-winning Piers Park and the future Piers Park Phase II is being eyed by Massport as the future site of a third waterfront park.

Last week, MTR’s Nick Black and Amy Eynatian briefed residents on where Massport and the MTR are in the process.

“We’re going around talking to a number of neighborhood associations about our plans,” said Black. “The reason why we’re here tonight is an effort that we’ve been working on for about three or four years now to do something different and create something new within the City of Boston. What we’re really trying to do is create a network of green public open space that is an iconic world class type of destination--a park that really supports the community’s needs and provides access to the waterfront in a public way. We’re also trying to really bring some value to

Boston’s climate resiliency goals and the issues we face in terms of storm surge and sea level rise. We’re all trying to do this in a financially feasible manner which would be great.”

MTR operates 120 miles of protected coastline, which includes over 60 miles of trails, and a bunch of beaches and all sorts of other natural habitats in the state.

Black said Massport has been working with the community and other stakeholders over the last two to three years to build out Piers Park Phase II. It was around this time Black said the MTR started having conversations with Massport about their waterfront initiative.

“A number of years ago we talked about the possibility of what would happen with Phase III, which is this rotted-out pier that sticks off the end of Piers Park. For us it’s a really amazing location. It’s centrally located right in the heart of the harbor and we think it could provide a really great connection point between East Boston and the city as a whole. It also has a fantastic history.”

Black said MTR spent a lot of 2019 working with Massport and others to really investigate the site and understand what the conditions were so MTR could start to piece together what the possibilities would be for a waterfront park that is active and engaging.

“So one of the places that we turn to for inspiration is Brooklyn Bridge Park,” said Black. “For those of you who may not have been there this is a series of five piers along the Brooklyn waterfront that overlooks the skyline in Manhattan. There’s a lot of similarities between what you see in this old industrial waterfront (in Eastie) and Brooklyn. Unfortunately we only have one pier to work with, not five.”

Black said as a result MTR really started to focus on what New Yorkers call Pier One in Brooklyn Bridge Park.

“This park is actually built into the footprints of the old pier that offers a wide variety of experiences for people and is a really close comparison to what we have opportunity wise at Piers Park Phase III,” said Black. “So this is really where we started our thinking in terms of what we would like to see happen at this location in East Boston.”

Black said MTR is looking to build a park that’s both robust and resilient in Eastie.

“And what that means to us is that it can stand up to the ele-

ments,” said Black. “We’ve seen a lot of issues with not only storm surges in increasing frequency but also tidal flooding that’s happening on a regular basis, both in East Boston and across the city. The situation is probably just going to get worse. So we have to build a place, mindful of all of those challenges and also a place that can redevelop some of the ecology along the coast.”

Black said MTR will start a community process to bring the community together to build this park.

“We have a few ideas in terms of the direction that we want to go but we’re very excited about the community process to really start and have conversations with people in terms of what they would want to see there,” he said. “You’ll probably start to see a lot of us over the coming weeks. We’re going to try to be a presence here as much as pos-

sible, because we want to really hear from folks who would use this park.”

Eynatian, who is a Project Manager for the Waterfront Initiatives at MTR and an Eagle Hill resident, said the design phase for the future park will take the better part of the next year.

“We want to make sure we really have a chance to hear from the community about what you’d like to see happen there so if the design can reflect that,” said Eynatian. “So things like, what type of programming you’d be interested in, what kind of concerns you might have about the project as well as increasing access to the water so there’s a way for residents to come down and really engage with the harbor at the park.”

Eynatian said MTR will be hosting a series of larger community meetings where MTR will invite residents to hear a lit-

tle bit more about the project in more detail.

“This will give us the opportunity to really give folks a chance to engage in conversation about what you’d like to see at a new, free, open public park in East Boston,” she said.

The first in a series of meetings MTR is planning to host will be in January.

“So as the year goes on, I’m hoping that in the summer we can do some more creative in-person programs,” said Eynatian. “We’re hopeful to be able to get out and engage with you in person but in the meantime we’ll be doing a lot of different virtual opportunities and putting together some different ways to give us feedback. This is so folks can either join us live in meetings or give us feedback to make sure we can gather input from as many folks as we can.”

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# City of Lynn COVID-19 update

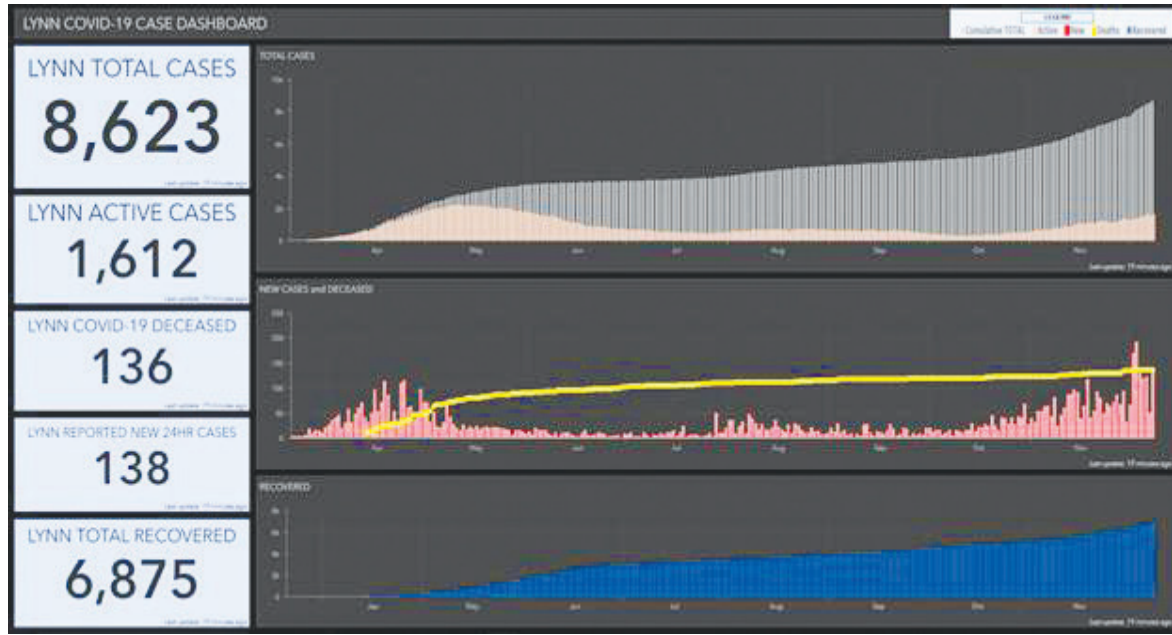
The Lynn Public Health Department has confirmed that as of today, the number of active, confirmed positive COVID-19 cases is 1,612 with 138 new cases today. 6,875 Lynn residents have recovered and 136 have died. The total number of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in Lynn since March 21, 2020, including those who have died and recovered, is 8,623. Please visit the City of Lynn COVID-19 Data Dashboard which is updated daily.

A reminder that Lynn City Hall, the Department of Public Works, Lynn Library, Police and Fire Department Administrative Offices will be open to the public by appointment only as

of Monday, December 7th. Residents are encouraged to conduct any urgent City Hall business via phone, email or at [www.lynnma.gov](http://www.lynnma.gov). If you do need to visit City Hall in person, please call 781-598-4000 to make an appointment with the respective department. Lynn City Hall hours are Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 8:30AM-4:00PM, Tuesday 8:30AM-8:00PM and Friday 8:30AM-12:30PM.

Stop the Spread Initiative Testing have been extended until December 31st

Please visit [http://www.ci.lynn.ma.us/covid19/resources.shtml#p7GPc1\\_2](http://www.ci.lynn.ma.us/covid19/resources.shtml#p7GPc1_2) for more information on how you can get a free COVID-19 test in the City of



Lynn until December 31st.

We will continue to provide regular updates on COVID-19

through the City website ([www.lynnma.gov](http://www.lynnma.gov)), social media, and the Smart 911 emergency notifi-

cation system (sign up at [www.smart911.com](http://www.smart911.com)).

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