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SPARE CHANGE NEWS

SPARE CHANGE NEWS is the nation's oldest street newspaper. We cover issues ignored by Boston's other media—inequality, homelessness, culture and resistance.

The paper comes out on the first Friday of the month. Homeless and low-income vendors buy our paper for 50¢ and sell it for \$2, using the profits to supplement other sources of income.

We are published by the Homeless Empowerment Project, a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit.

Donate. We depend on our readers for support. You can donate by sending a check to the Homeless Empowerment Project, 1151 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138 or by logging on to sparechangenews.net. You can also email director@sparechangenews.net.

Volunteer. We are always in need of volunteer copyeditors, grantwriters, fundraisers, event planners, photographers, web developers and general office help. If you are interested in volunteering, please email director@sparechangenews.net.

Corrections. If you see a factual error in one of our articles, please email editor@sparechangenews.net. Corrections run on page 2 of the following issue.

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On the Cover: The exterior of the More than Words location in South End. Image via Deb Mandel.



GET TO KNOW SPARE CHANGE NEWS

THE NATION'S OLDEST STREET NEWSPAPER

WHO WE ARE

The Spare Change News vendors – the men and women who shape and sell this newspaper – are at the core of our mission.

Since 1992, hundreds of individuals have worked as vendors and writers with Spare Change News and the Homeless Empowerment Project, its parent organization.

Vendors buy papers, as many as they want, for 50 cents each, and sell them for \$2 each, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Our mission is to support our unhoused and low-income neighbors through a dignified income source and a platform for their voices.

BUY A PAPER

With the money made selling the newspaper, vendors are able to secure basic needs, independence and dignity, and work toward obtaining or maintaining housing. Vendors play an important role in the management of Spare Change News, acting as members of the organization's Board of Directors, regularly contributing to the paper, and serving as ambassadors in our community. At any given time, throughout the city, approximately 40 vendors are at work, rain or shine.

GET INFORMED

The newspaper helps to support and provide valuable local journalism. Spare Change News is a newspaper that focuses on issues of social justice with coverage on a wide variety of interests, including housing, poverty, criminal justice, and issues affecting the low-income neighbors in our community. Vendors are encouraged to write and regularly contribute poetry and perspectives.

TAKE ACTION

Donate to the organization and give vendors experiencing homelessness and poverty a hand up. It supports not only the newspaper but also our advocacy efforts on poverty issues throughout the Boston area. We welcome members of the community to volunteer time and/or expertise and help the organization grow. Please share Spare Change News with your network and if you support what we do, please consider making a donation.

VOLUNTEER WITH SPARE CHANGE!

We're looking for reliable individuals from all walks of life and with a variety of skills to help us continue to lift up our unhoused and low-income neighbors.

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LOCAL NEWS

MASSACHUSETTS HAS A HUGE WAITLIST FOR STATE-FUNDED HOUSING. SO WHY ARE 2,300 UNITS VACANT?

**Todd Wallack and
Christine Willmsen,
WBUR**

Deb Libby is running out of time to find a place to live.

Libby, 56, moved to Worcester, Massachusetts, four years ago, in part to be closer to the doctors treating her for pancreatic cancer. She rented an apartment — a converted garage — and spruced it up, patching the walls and repainting all the rooms.

But Libby's landlord, who has been trying to get her to leave, now wants her out by the end of the month. She can't find anything else she can afford. Libby earns only a little more than minimum wage working at a hardware store and often has to take unpaid time off when she doesn't feel well.

She thought she found a potential solution nearly a year ago: She applied for state public housing, a type of subsidized housing that's almost unique to Massachusetts. But she's heard nothing since.

"It's frightening," she said. "I seriously don't know what to do. It's like the system's broken."

In a state with some of the country's most expensive real estate, Libby is among the 184,000 people — including thousands who are homeless, at risk of losing their homes or living in unsafe conditions — on a waitlist for the state's 41,500 subsidized apartments.

As they wait, a WBUR and ProPublica investigation found that nobody is living in nearly 2,300 state-funded apartments, with most sitting empty for months or years. The state pays local housing authorities to maintain and operate the units whether they're occupied or not. So the vacant apartments translate into millions of Massachusetts taxpayer dollars wasted due to delays and disorder fostered by state and local mismanagement.

As of the end of July, almost 1,800 of the vacant units, including some with at least three bedrooms, had been empty for more than 60 days. That's the amount of time the state allows local housing authorities to take

to fill a vacancy. About 730 of those have not been rented for at least a year.

The vacancies are aggravating a statewide housing crisis. Massachusetts is spending \$45 million a month to house people temporarily at hotels, shelters, college dorms and a military base. Gov. Maura Healey declared a state of emergency in August to deal with the wave of homelessness. Massachusetts reports that the number of families with children staying in emergency shelters has almost doubled in the past year to 6,386.

Our investigation found that one cause of the prolonged vacancies is the flawed online waitlist system the state rolled out four years ago. Massachusetts replaced town-by-town waitlists with a single pool of applicants that 230 local housing agencies draw from. But the state failed to implement an efficient system for selecting potential tenants. Understaffed and underfunded local agencies have to screen applicants for income, criminal background and other eligibility criteria. Apartments are left in limbo as some candidates turn out not to qualify. Applicants often indicate they would accept housing in many towns, but then reject offers from communities that are far away from their current location.

"I think it's the most horrible, horrible, inefficient program," said David Hedison, executive director at the housing authority in Chelmsford, a town 30 miles northwest of Boston. He said the agency spent six months contacting 500 people who were on the waitlist for a three-bedroom apartment, before it finally found one who responded and qualified for the unit. "The whole sense of helping residents in your community is gone," he said.

Since the centralized waitlist went into effect, local housing agencies have increasingly told the state that they need extra time to fill vacancies, requesting more and more waivers to extend the usual 60-day deadline. The number of waiver requests has tripled since 2018, state data shows.

The state's new secretary of housing, Ed Augustus, acknowledged that there's no justification for having so many vacancies.

"I think it's unacceptable," said Augustus, who was sworn in less than four months ago. "I think that we need to do everything we can to make sure that every single one of our precious public housing units is filled and the amount of time between tenants is as short as is humanly possible."

Zagaran, a small software developer in Boston, created the program that runs the state's central waitlist system. Co-founder Josh Zagorsky put the responsibility on state officials, saying that complaints were about "matters of policy, not Zagaran's software."

In most states, low-income residents seeking affordable housing must rely on federal housing, vouchers for private housing and other assistance. But Massachusetts is one of four states — alongside New York, Connecticut and Hawaii — with state-funded housing. Massachusetts has more than twice as much state-subsidized housing as the other three states combined.

With tens of thousands of units, Massachusetts public housing is a linchpin of the social safety net for seniors, people with disabilities and families with limited resources. Adding in 31,000 federally funded units, Massachusetts has more public housing per capita than any other state, according to a WBUR analysis. But so many people are in dire need of housing that both the state and federal systems have lengthy waitlists.

The Massachusetts public housing system was originally established to accommodate low-income veterans after World War II. The state typically spends more than \$200 million a year on operating expenses and renovations to keep rent affordable for low-income tenants. When units are empty, the local authorities miss out on rental income, but they generally continue to receive the state money.

Massachusetts ranks as the third-most-expensive state for

private housing. But tenants in state-funded units typically pay less than a third of their household income in rent. That means a family earning \$30,000 per year would pay a maximum of \$800 a month for a two-bedroom, far below the state median of about \$3,000 a month. And when families in state-funded housing don't have any income, they only pay the \$5 monthly minimum.

But actually landing one of those apartments is extremely difficult. Doris Romero, a housing coordinator at the Women's Lunch Place day shelter in Boston, has helped dozens of women sign up for state-funded housing. But, she said, only one has actually moved into a state unit in the past year. She was stunned to hear about all the vacant apartments.

"Honestly, that's a travesty," Romero said. "The commonwealth should be ashamed."

Brady Village, a state-funded family housing complex in the western Massachusetts town of Agawam, is a microcosm of a statewide problem. Barbecue grills and children's bikes stand outside some of the units where families live. But Agawam Housing Authority Executive Director Maureen Cayer points out one vacancy after another. Ten of the 44 units were empty in July, including seven that had been unoccupied for more than a year.

"They're clean. They're bright. And they're empty," said Cayer, who is responsible for overseeing the buildings and filling the vacancies. "It's not the way it's supposed to be."

Cayer blames the statewide waitlist for the vacancies in Brady Village. Historically, local agencies with state-funded housing each managed their own small waitlists for homes. But critics complained that some local housing authorities played favorites, and that the process was cumbersome for prospective tenants, who had to file separate applications, often in person, for every community where they were interested in living.

To address the concerns, the Legislature ordered the state in 2014 to create a statewide online system, called the Common Housing Application

for Massachusetts Programs, or CHAMP. The system was supposed to make it easier for people to find housing by allowing them to apply anywhere in the state with a single form. Each housing agency receives a state-generated list of people who indicated an interest in that area.

The system, which has cost the state \$6.8 million, ran into problems as soon as local housing authorities began using it internally in the fall of 2018. In January 2019, a state housing official sent a memo to all local agencies alerting them that they might need additional staff to screen applicants. The memo said that the new system created an "acute administrative challenge" to determining who qualifies for priority placements. The state gives priority to people whom it considers homeless through no fault of their own, due to reasons like a natural disaster or domestic violence. As a practical matter, it's almost impossible for families to obtain state housing without priority status.

When the new system launched for the public that April, more than three years behind schedule, housing authorities immediately complained it made it harder to sift through the flood of applications and find tenants who qualified for the units. "The system is not working," the housing authority in Warren, a town in central Massachusetts, told the state in November 2019.

Despite these shortcomings, Massachusetts officials hailed the new statewide waitlist as a success. At a formal celebration at the Statehouse in December 2019, complete with a reception and appetizers in the marbled Great Hall, then-Gov. Charlie Baker honored the development team with an award for "excellence in public service."

In the four years since, complaints from local housing officials have only grown louder. Under the old system, it would take the Agawam Housing Authority a couple months to find a new tenant, Cayer said. Now, it takes years. Baker did not respond to a request for comment.

Continued on page 14

MASS CLIMATE SCIENTISTS, ADVOCATES SAY CURRENT STATE CARBON EMISSION TARGET IS TOO HIGH TO PREVENT CATASTROPHE

Taylor Brokesh
Boston Institute for
Nonprofit Journalism

Self on leading the nation in environmental and climate reform. Maura Healey made headlines when she created the position of climate chief on her first day as governor, and Massachusetts has been consistently ranked as one of the top two most energy efficient states since 2009, with California as its only serious competition. But concerned residents say there is an area of reform the Commonwealth needs to address with more urgency: reducing its carbon emissions.

Bill S.9, signed by former governor Charlie Baker in 2021, pledges Massachusetts will work toward achieving net zero emissions by the year 2050. But a growing number of activists and climate experts suggest that achieving net zero emissions would not be enough to prevent a climate catastrophe.

The problem with net zero

The process of reaching net zero emissions would entail “cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere” by naturally-occurring carbon sinks, such as forests and large bodies of water, like oceans.

“Net zero really means we’re going to have as much carbon dioxide coming in as going out,” said Johanna Neumann, acting director of Environment Massachusetts, an environmental advocacy nonprofit with branches in 30 states. “But the science suggests, globally, that we have to stop burning all fossil fuels by 2050 if we want to avert the worst impacts of climate change.”

Neumann said the net zero target will still allow for harmful fossil fuel emissions to enter the atmosphere, and because of the target, Massachusetts will not feel as much pressure to convert entirely to green energy, an expensive and time-consuming endeavor.

“We think that [this goal is] absurd given just how much clean energy potential Massachusetts has,” Neumann said.

Achieving net zero emissions by 2050 is not a target exclusively set

by Massachusetts. In the 2015 Paris Climate Accords, which nearly every country in the world ratified (the United States joined under the Obama administration, withdrew under the Trump administration, and then rejoined on the first day of the Biden administration), it was stipulated that reaching net zero globally by 2050 would keep the Earth’s temperature from rising by 1.5 degrees Celsius to “preserve a livable planet,” according to the United Nations.

Biden pledged a similar effort to reduce the United States’s own emissions to net zero by 2050 with an executive order in December 2021.

Raymond Bradley, a climatologist and director of the Climate System Research Center at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, explained some of the ways that Massachusetts is currently attempting to reach net zero emissions.

“They’ve taken a number of approaches,” Bradley said. “One is to import renewable energy from different places, such as Quebec and the hydropower that they’re importing. And another is promoting offshore wind.”

Vehicle emissions are a major obstacle

Bradley said these deals are a step in the right direction to lower emissions, but they are not enough to address the Commonwealth’s long term limitation in the transportation sector. He said emissions from vehicles account for roughly a third of Massachusetts’s total emissions, and there is no comprehensive policy in place from the state government about the best way to reduce them.

“We have to remember, they spent \$14.6 billion on the Big Dig,” Bradley said. “I feel that money would’ve been better spent putting in a better mass transit system. Nobody in Europe would think about driving around the way we do here—the subways there are usually cheap, frequent and pleasant in most cases.”

Bradley said a huge problem lies in the fact that Massachusetts is a state that “runs east-west,” with no simple way to actually travel from east to west or vice versa, other than the Massachusetts Turnpike.

While Baker signed a law in 2022 to ban the sale of all new gasoline-powered cars in Massachusetts by 2035, Bradley said it is simply not enough to bring about the needed changes because of the significant amount of time it would take to make an impact.

100% renewable energy could be the way forward

Instead, Neumann and Bradley advocate that Massachusetts should set a new, more ambitious goal of reaching 100% renewable energy by a set date to make meaningful progress and to divert entirely from fossil fuels. It would certainly cost more, Bradley said, “but even if you fall short, at least you’re heading in the right direction.”

Extinction Rebellion, a group of climate activists who frequently stage non-violent demonstrations and protests across the country, also share these sentiments. Susan Lemont of XR Boston explained the reason why members are often found on the steps of the State House demanding more action from the government.

“I don’t know why people don’t see the urgency, because it’s pretty obvious to me that carbon pollution is killing our planet,”

Lemont said. “I would think that not much happens because of the money that fossil fuel companies have given to government officials, certainly on the federal level but also the state level.”

Baker and Healey have garnered criticism from opponents in the past for supporting a gas tax holiday and accepting donations from utility companies, respectively.

But while both had pledged to make progress on the climate crisis, it certainly is not the urgent leaps and bounds that XR Boston is searching for. The group demands halting the use of fossil fuels altogether and to achieve net zero emissions by 2025, not 2050. Lemont said it is because the climate is “collapsing.”

“It’s imperative that Massachusetts makes big steps now. I think it’s going to be dicey if we don’t achieve net zero by at least 2030,” Lemont said. “We’re just trying to press the Commonwealth to do that.”

Bradley said these “big steps” can even start small, such as pledging to reach net zero emissions, and then thinking bigger along the way.

“I think the way this works is you start off with something that people think is completely

unrealistic, or very ambitious, and then suddenly, it’s not so unrealistic and it’s not quite as ambitious because new technologies come along, new people adapt and adopt things,” Bradley said. “So then, you can begin to say, okay, well, maybe that goal can be improved upon. So it’s a sequential sort of process.”

Environment Massachusetts has pressed for the passage of the 100% Clean Act (H.3689), which Neumann, who is also Environment America’s senior director of the Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy, explained would codify a commitment to switch to renewable energy sources by 2035, along with many other stipulations for the transportation and building sectors to ensure emissions reduction and work towards a greener and environmentally friendly Commonwealth.

“Shifting how we produce energy is a monumental task, and we’re going to have to build the bicycle at the same time we’re riding it. It’s not going to be a process without hiccups. But we know that it’s something that we need to do and the resources are there,” Neumann said. “We just need to get cracking.” ■



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To register for the October 9 online orientation and to learn more about direct action to demand action on climate change visit: xrboston.org.

LOCAL NEWS

HEALTHY INCENTIVES PROGRAM: HELPING THE FOOD INSECURE EAT HEALTHIER

Robert Sondak
Spare Change News
Vendor-Writer

Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) started a little more than a decade ago as a nutrition incentive pilot. This pilot ran from 2011-12 and was funded via a USDA grant to test the concept of incentives that focus on healthy eating for low-income people. This pilot was conducted in Hamden County and partnered with 75 community-based organizations like Springfield-based Gardening the Community and Nuestras Raíces in Holyoke. These groups assisted in program implementation and recruiting retailers. This pilot successfully demonstrated that incentive programs could improve individual and families diets through eating healthy foods. This pilot led to the 2014 establishment of the USDA's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive program (FIN). Four years later FIN was renamed the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program, or GusNIP, and provided incentive program grants nationwide. This program was named after former Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resource (MDAR) commissioner Gus Schumacher.

In fact, the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) received one of the first FIN grants of \$3.4 million in 2015. This required that the state provide an equal funding match. This program implementation

process lasted for two years until 2017 and occurred under Governor Charlie Baker.

HIP had a slow and bureaucratic two-year start-up phase from 2015-2017 under the Baker administration. DTA worked with The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative to help jumpstart the roll out of the program. The MFSC represents a group of food advocacy groups including the Western Massachusetts Food Bank. They helped the DTA to draft and file enabling legislation that would write this program into law versus only into DTA regulations. Additionally, the MFSC assisted DTA in securing backing and support from state legislators. This legislative process would help protect the program from any legislative or administrative funding opposition. Between 2016-2017, DTA in conjunction with MDAR and MDPH started to conduct outreach and recruit farms.

HIP was launched during the summer of 2017 by DTA with a federal grant covering program construction along with launching. However ongoing incentive and operating costs were borne by the state. HIP provided a dollar-for-dollar electronic reimbursement for SNAP vegetables with fruit purchases directed to participating farmers via farmers' markets, mobile markets, farm stands and community-supported agriculture farms (CSA)'s.

Households were able to earn incentives up to a monthly limit based on household size which

for my household of one, myself is \$40 and goes up to \$60 for a 3-5 person household. This program was one of the only few statewide nutrition incentive programs integrated into the national EBT system whereby people can buy veggies and fruits via HIIP.

HIP statistics demonstrate that for the first half of 2023 the program is working. Approximately 800,000 transactions were recorded from January through July 2023. Incentives earned were an impressive \$8.8 million dollars and breakdown to \$11 per transactions. 82% or 250,000 out of the projected 300,000 HIP households used it in the winter of 2023. The questions to ask and look at is how to expand program capacity realistically in the urban inner city and suburbia to draw more food customers. Possibly more local mini-markets, which is what Somerville has implemented, or more winter farmers markets. Additionally, I suggest that program people and experts look at what other cities nationally have created with respect to mobile truck mini markets. Boston-based Fair Foods utilized mobile mini markets before the coronavirus. Should we look at mobile mini or mobile markets statewide? Also, more consumer outreach is needed, possibly involving church participation, which is what other cities in the Midwest have successfully done. Finally, it is good to see that newly elected Governor Healy and her administration have been more positive about the HIP program.

MDAR statistics show that our state has around 270 summer farmers markets and 50 winter markets. Additionally, the data indicates that there are 7,000 farms in the state. Farm HIP participation is very small, however. This is despite statistics showing DTA households have purchased \$49 million from local participating farms over the past decade.

Projections for this article show that farmers markets with a 15 table size twice a month yield 9,600 vendor spaces and for larger markets with 20 table size twice monthly yield increases to 12,800 vendor spaces. The statement that we need more farmers is not sufficient. What is needed rather is more outreach and innovation.

Strengths and Weaknesses

HIP has a series of combined strengths and weaknesses. First of all, HIP represents a very tech-oriented platform that aids low-income families plus provides a new income stream for farmers. DTA data shows that HIP reimbursement for the first six months of 2023 is over \$10 million dollars. This coincides with data released from the 2022 Baker administration and the new Healy administration which shows reimbursement funding to be \$20 million with no program suspensions. Furthermore, it represents one of the most

successful national nutrition incentive programs. It is also good to see that HIP has a new collaborating partner networking with the Healy administration and state legislature the Massachusetts Food Systems Collaborative. On the other hand, the HIP program has weaknesses reflective more on how its facilitator DTA operates. DTA represents a very bureaucratic agency which may be difficult for many to access. Additionally, the Baker administration and the state legislature underfunded it from 2018 through 2020 resulting in a one-month shutdown. A \$400,000 yearly incentive budget is inadequate for a statewide program. This ineffective operation did not do the program any good and it took over 3 years to set it in a more positive direction.

For more information on HIP access the Campaign for HIP funding at www.hipma.org and the Massachusetts Food Systems Collaborative and open the link to HIP history: www.mafoodsystem/program/hip

Robert Sondak is a vendor writer for Spare Change News. Robert previously worked at MGH Boston and Tufts New England Medical Center. Robert also worked as a nutrition intern for the founding Greater Boston-based Food Bank in Jackson Square Boston. ■

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HOW A SPARE CHANGE NEWS VENDOR USES THE HEALTHY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

Robert Sondak
Spare Change News
Vendor-Writer

On a hot June Thursday rush hour, I'm selling Spare Change News in Coolidge Corner, pitching my third in a series of articles about United Way's Mass 211, when one of my regular customers, Janet, compliments me on writing and hands me a packet of six Brookline Farmers Market coupons as a tip.

Two weeks later on the Thursday following July 4, I stop selling Spare Change at 5 pm and cross over Beacon Street heading one block west to Center Street. I head up into the West Center Street parking lot, which is closed to autos but open to pedestrians, and it becomes an outdoor farmers market. I am surprised to see a 5 p.m. crowd of approximately 150 people buying a wide range of foods like fresh produce and fruits, cheese, herbs, honeys, hummus, breads or pastries and prepared take home and cold deserts from

any one of the 20 to 25 food vendors. This small 1/3 of an acre space becomes the Brookline Farmers Market. The BFM is one of the oldest independently run farmers markets in Massachusetts. In 2023, BFM turned 43.

I decided to take a quick 30-minute walk around and noticed a setup with four vendor tables rows that are linked to the east by a walkway and are easily accessible. I see a group of young couples and women with children eating cool desserts, and I'm reminded of my work at the Arlington Farmers Market, pre-Covid, in 2007 when they would draw 3,000 to 5,000 customers a summer day.

I am impressed to see two very well-stocked organic farms selling here: Langwater Farms of North Easton and Assawaga Farms of Putnam, Connecticut. These farms looked to be selling high quality, green-, white-, purple-, and red-pigmented produce that didn't show any yellow or broken steams. I also noticed three of the better known regional farms

right here: Dicks Market Garden of Lunenburg, Pepperell-based Kimball Fruit Farm and Bolton-based Nicewicz Family Farms. This week Dick's and Kimball's were selling vegetables with berries and apples while Nicewicz has apples with fresh bell peppers.

After a quick walk around, I pulled out four BFM coupons at the Dick's Market Gardens table and purchase an extra large green cabbage, a bunch of kale, and carrots. I then used my SNAP card for the Healthy Initiatives Program (HIP) and buy some red potatoes with a 1/2 pound of yellow onions. Two rows over, I go to the Kimball Fruit Farm table and use HIP to buy collard greens with a pound of zucchini. The female farm assistant said that these veggies were picked earlier in the morning. I end at the Nicewicz Farm table and buy 1 1/2 pounds of apples via HIP. I then found a comfortable chair to sit in and snack on a sugar free candy bar and bottled water that I bought here and proceeded to speak with three people I recognize from newspaper hawking in Coolidge Corner before heading back to Cambridge.

How it Works

While taking the MBTA back to Cambridge, several thoughts crossed my mind. First, the food I bought was part of the HIP program and to SNAP members it is free. DTA reimburses approved HIP certificated farmers for sales made to SNAP members. Second, the quality of the produce looked excellent in color and showed no signs of yellow. Third, the produce had a nice smell and looked very fresh, comparable to shopping at Whole Foods Market and 15 percent cheaper. Fourth, the taste of some of these foods were exceptional: red potatoes, very sweet; nappa cabbage, crispy, crunchy; organic kale, sweet and crispy.

SNAP households which utilize HIP earn incentives reflecting a monthly limit based on your household size. For example, my household of one, Robert, has a limit of \$40, which goes up to \$60 for a three- to five-person household. This program was one of the only few statewide nutrition incentive program integrated into the national EBT system whereby people can buy veggies and fruits via HIP.

SNAP members which buy produce and vegetables via HIP need to follow two simple rules. The first parameter requires that you stay within your household monthly incentive limit. Also you need to know that you cannot roll over anything left over from your monthly limit. The second parameter requires that you stay within your SNAP monthly allocated budget; for my household of one this is \$149.00. DTA data shows that households use up 70 percent of their monthly allocations within the first two weeks of each month. Consequently, I pay attention to all my HIP and SNAP and make sure that I have a minimum of \$6 left on my monthly EBT balance of \$149 monthly to use HIP for the entire month.

Robert Sondak is a vendor writer for Spare Change News. Robert previously worked at MGH Boston and Tufts New England Medical Center. Robert also worked as a nutrition intern for the founding Greater Boston-based Food Bank in Jackson Square Boston. ■



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RESEARCH PROGRAM

LOCAL NEWS

MORE THAN WORDS: WHERE “EVERY PURCHASE EMPOWERS YOUTH”

Deb Mandel
Spare Change News

On a beautiful September day, I visited More Than Words on 242 E. Berkeley St. in Boston’s South End. Warmth enveloped the store as sunshine streamed through the tall windows of this former two-story garment factory, whose first floor was the Medieval Manor Restaurant from the 1980s until 2015.

Near the Broadway Red Line T stop, this spacious and eye-catching shop sells a wide range of new and gently used books for adults and children, music, pre-loved clothing and unique gifts. Different areas of the shop can be rented for events such as book clubs, film showings, parties, weddings and pop-up shops.

Youth workers Mo and Jocelyn and Chief Advancement Officer Naomi Parker gave me an in-depth tour before we sat down to chat. I came to learn how well this business has succeeded in transforming young lives through training, teaching, practical support and personal development.

As stated on its website, “We are More Than Words: More Than Words is a nonprofit social enterprise that involves system-involved youth to take charge of their lives while taking charge of a business.” Youth in its program, age 16 to 24, have been court-involved, homeless, in foster care, out of school, parenting, or struggling with mental illness. More Than Words staff helps their youth with “wraparound supports” which includes accompanying them to court dates, helping with housing, and advocating for transition services from the Department of Children and Families.”

In FY2022, More Than Words served 314 youth and earned \$3.14M in revenue. 81% of program graduates were engaged in work or school for 15+ hours per week.

Both Jocelyn and Mo have benefitted by their More than Words experience.

Jocelyn, 18, has been working at More Than Words since May. Her brother formerly worked there. Jocelyn was new to the

Boston area and the store helped her get shelter. She is now an associate who is working on her banking and life skills.

Jocelyn starts her morning shift in retail talking to her team before the shop opens. Her tasks include receiving and sorting books, creating displays and assisting customers. Besides learning new social skills to “get out of her shell,” Jocelyn has taken on leadership roles such as leading new workers. Jocelyn said that her More than Words experience has helped her to take better steps in her life. Her favorite part of the job is working on core professional competencies and reflecting daily how she can improve and be more of a leader.

Near the elevator Jocelyn pointed out a white board where the department communicates the progress being made on different shifts. There is an ongoing feedback loop between team workers and leaders. Staff discuss what they accomplished and what they need to improve. She also showcased the Youth Development Space where managers work with youth. A large detailed chart articulates their model and zeroes in on how youth simultaneously work on their specific “Business Jobs” and “You Jobs”, or personal achievement goals which will advance their education, career and life skills. One is promoted through this system and then graduates.

Mo, 22, has worked at the shop for about a year. She is an associate who works in the warehouse while focusing on dependability and money management. Mo learned about More Than Words through a friend that worked there. The store offered her help with court involvement, housing, schooling and getting a therapist. “They make sure you’re OK in your personal life before you step into the social enterprise of working.”

Mo described the readiness period for new trainees. During the first month one learns about the different parts of the operation through hands-on work. “And then you get to pick a department that works best for you. More Than Words helps us with everything—food, bus passes.”

Mo has been doing a lot



Mo and Moss working in the More than Words warehouse.

of self-reflecting and learning how to speak with other people, enjoying her co-workers and staff. “I like the fact that everyone is different. We all like different things,” she said cheerfully.

Mo said she wasn’t as stable before More Than Words which has taught her life skills such as motivation, achieving and accomplishing goals, setting goals, budgeting and tax preparation.

Mo showcased the bustling warehouse space where donations are initially stored and barcoded. She starts her 9am shift at a table meeting, where the team decides who’s going on the truck that day and what routes they’re taking. She likes riding in the truck to help pick up the books, and enjoyed her recent trip to Cape Cod. Each truck has a manager assigned with a youth worker. “After the pickup, you unload

the truck and organize bins. If not going on the truck, you’re organizing the warehouse and help out with retail and clothing, making sure everything is alright before next shift.”

More Than Words receives many donations from schools, libraries and local bins. Books they don’t accept are sent to other locations. More Than Word’s robust on-line book operation reaches people worldwide. They deal with a variety of vendors such as eBay and Amazon.

Books play a big role in Jocelyn and Mo’s lives. Jocelyn said she started reading a lot more now since working at More Than Words. “I was a heavy reader in middle school and read less as a teenager. I am now reading more books on parenting skills, which has helped me.” Mo said she is reading more now. “I

find interesting things in the warehouse, and see old books I haven’t seen since I was a kid.” She loves seeing old handwriting in a book, and lately she has started reading comic books which collectors have donated.

The pre-loved clothing is also stored in the warehouse. Naomi explained that the clothing operation sprang up as a pilot during COVID when the store shut down and has shown promise. During FY 2022 clothing sales brought in one hundred thousand dollars. All the clothing is donated and cleaned. Mo explained how youth sort the clothing by season and also sold online via Poshmark and eBay. Certain times a month the shop hosts a “fill a bag” day where you can fill a bag for \$25.

Naomi has worked at More Than Words for more than seven

years. I asked her about the importance of their leadership program. “One of the reasons we think work is so powerful as part of a youth leadership program is because it’s a big part of people’s lives. It’s a place where when you show up, it matters. Where you’re making a difference, where others are counting on you, where you’re hitting your goals, where you’re responsible for the financial health of the organization, where you’re sorting the books, selling the books, bringing in revenue—that is empowering and that gives youth a real drive to keep coming here and showing up.”

“The other thing we care a lot about is to make sure that our work is youth led, that young people are taking a lot of initiative. Every shift is led by a young person, provides feedback and guidance to the whole team—it’s a lot of peer feedback and self-feedback, and they can give feedback to their managers as well. Feedback youth get from youth is more impactful.”

Naomi described a program called Changemakers where workers learn a lot about data and evaluation gathered from a survey of all their peers. “They do analysis on that survey and other research and are able to come back and make recommendations to the organization. For example, this year they looked at attendance and punctuality policies and surveyed other businesses to see what their attendance policies were to make sure that we’re in line with industry. Youth recommended some changes which went into effect. They are able to say ‘this is what’s going to work for us and our peers.’”

More Than Words impacts the community in tangible ways. It’s great to have a place where young people can convene. In addition, the new mobile More Than Words on wheels venture brings books to other locations and community events. “We’re selling and giving out books, partnering with schools; it’s a way we can give back, which is sometimes hard to do from one location.” Mo recently participated in a TD Garden back to school event where the mobile truck crew gave out 400 books for free. “The kids were really excited,” she said. “There were all different kinds of books.”

“The harder community work is engaging in policy work, advocacy,” said Naomi. “No matter how hard our people

work, they still face significant challenges. We have a team called Power is Yours who are especially interested in justice reform for ages 18–25, when youth are still learning and growing a lot but are being held accountable in the adult criminal justice system. We know a lot of people leaving foster care are criminalized.”

More Than Words is part of a bigger network of social enterprises around Boston, Massachusetts and the U.S. “We get to partner with a lot of them,” said Naomi. “A lot of products we have for sale are products for good causes,” said Jocelyn, “like only women making them, maybe domestic survivors, and products from different countries.” One such company is UTEC in Lowell who makes gorgeous cutting boards. “They work with their own model,” said Naomi, one similar to More Than Words.

I hated to leave the lovely meeting room and end our marvelous conversation. My final question was, “What would you like Spare Change News readers to know?”

Jocelyn said, “I want people to know that we are more than just a bookstore. The work that we are doing and the help we are getting on this job are so much more. It’s really an amazing cause.”

“As much as they are hands on, they want you to be very independent,” Mo said. “They don’t just do the work for you. It’s all about how you want your life to go and their mission statement really is you are taking control of your own life. They are helping you find your resources to do that. It’s definitely not a typical job, but it is definitely one of the best jobs I would recommend to anybody between the ages of 18–24, even if you’re looking for a fresh start and want to be a part of a social enterprise.”

For more information: <https://shop.mt-wyouth.org/>

Locations:

More Than Words is located at 242 E. Berkeley St. Boston, MA 02118
Waltham location: 56 Felton St.

If you don’t want to shop, donate, donate, donate. ■



ABOVE: Jocelyn and Mo among the books. BELOW: Jocelyn at the cash register. Images by Deb Mandel.

LOCAL NEWS

WORCESTER CREATING SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS

Brendan Kelleher
Spare Change News

As the number of homeless people in the Worcester area continues to rise and affordable low-income housing options shrink, local organizations and leaders seek new remedies to the problem. According to Central Mass Housing Alliance (CMHA) representatives, there has been a steady increase in single adults and families within the homeless population (30% and 22% increase between 2022 and 2023 respectively). In general, the 2023 point-in-time count found 2,333 individuals who were either unsheltered or supported by shelters,

in transitional housing, or had been recently rehoused. In addition to an increased homeless population, households in the city are currently experiencing high rents and a lack of affordable options, with 50.5% of renter households within the city considered rent-burdened and 25.6% considered severely rent-burdened. With a clear increased strain on existing services and housing options, local service providers have proposed using existing infrastructure to address supportive housing needs.

The Quality Inn and Suites on Oriol Drive in Worcester has become a focal point of supportive solutions as proposed by a collaborative effort of Eliot Human Services and Worcester Community Housing Resources.

Jennifer Schanck-Bowell, who serves as the executive director of Worcester Community Housing Resources (WCHR), previously provided information on the project and explained the vision for this project. The project aims to transform the existing 114 rooms into 90 total units (57 1 bedroom; 33 studio) to offer both housing and other supportive services to residents and provide a more comprehensive solution for the problems facing low-income residents. Supportive services would include clinical care, case management services, and recovery coaching for individuals suffering from a substance use disorder or problem. Laundry and a common space will be included on each floor as well as a fitness

center and community garden available for use by tenants. The building will have staff onsite 24 hours a day, with security present. Residents would sign a formal lease agreement and pay a portion of their income for the room. While state and federal housing regulations require the rentals to accept applications from all Massachusetts residents, WCHR anticipates that most applicants to these types of housing opportunities tend to be present or former Worcester residents, ensuring that the current city needs can begin to be addressed.

Despite facing backlash from the surrounding community when the project was initially proposed in November 2022, it was unanimously approved

by the city planning board in January 2023. The property was purchased for development and renovations in August 2023 to begin the conversion process into the proposed supportive housing units, which WCHR estimates will take approximately 6 to 9 months to complete. Renovations and alterations would address general repairs, reconfiguration of parking, and a general improvement of superficial building aesthetics. With the purchase of the building complete and development slated to begin soon, WCHR aims to begin assessing potential applicants and housing tenants by early 2024 in hopes of providing some relief in the current housing crisis. ■

BOSTON HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS PROGRAM WELCOMES PAUL SELIAN AND DEION HAWKINS, PH.D., TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP), Greater Boston's largest healthcare organization providing compassionate, integrated, and innovative care for individuals and families experiencing homelessness for nearly 40 years, has named Paul Selian and Deion Hawkins, Ph.D., to its Board of Directors.

Selian and Hawkins will play vital roles in advancing the mission of BHCHP, which cares for nearly 10,000 individuals every year with an integrated team of more than 600 medical and behavioral health staff, social service providers, and support staff at more than 30 clinic sites in the Boston area. Their appointments are three-year terms.

"Paul and Deion bring tremendous energy, leadership, and experience in their respective fields, and we are thrilled to welcome them to our Board," said BHCHP Chief Executive Officer Stephanie Sullivan. "Most importantly, they have a deep understanding of our mission and a commitment to caring for our patients, given their expertise in working with other nonprofits. We are fortunate to work with

them."

Selian, who is Executive Vice President and Division Head of Global Credit Finance for State Street, has served on multiple local and national boards of directors, including The Posse Foundation, which is the nation's leading college access and leadership development program, and the State Street Foundation, which helps direct the development of global giving programs to support communities where State Street does business. He also served as Chair of the Advisory Board of the Dean Center at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Boston.

"I'm genuinely excited to join the BHCHP team and be part of this outstanding team of selfless and dedicated healthcare professionals," Selian said. "I hope to use my prior experience working with nonprofit, business, and technology to support the organization's mission to deliver crucial and innovative care to some of our region's most vulnerable citizens."

Hawkins, who also serves as co-chair/DEI of BHCHP's Emerging Leaders Board, is a health advocacy professor at Emerson College, with expertise

in critical perspectives of health communication and Critical Race Theory. He frequently consults on health equity, and racial justice, with a passion for dismantling inequitable public health systems, and his peer-reviewed research can be found in academic journals

and books.

"Serving on the BHCHP Board is fitting for someone who has a passion for health equity and accessibility, especially for our diverse and disadvantaged populations," Hawkins said. "This is a natural extension of my roles

and experience in public health advocacy and I look forward to bringing this dimension to the current leadership team."

Provided by Boston Healthcare for the Homeless ■



The winners of the bake-off competition at the BHCHP recent Annual Staff Picnic

AS PRICES SOAR, FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY LOOKS AFTER ITS INTERESTS ON BEACON HILL

Jon Lamson
Boston Institute for
Nonprofit Journalism

As gas prices and heating costs skyrocket across Massachusetts, fossil fuel producers and providers are spending hundreds of thousands to promote their political agendas to state officials and lawmakers.

The state's five for-profit utilities, which function as regulated monopolies responsible for distributing gas and electricity to residents, cumulatively spent more than a million dollars on lobbying in 2022, a 17% increase compared to 2021.

Meanwhile, other companies and business groups profiting from the sale and distribution of fossil fuels, including the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, Shell Oil Company, Kinder Morgan, Enbridge, and the American Petroleum Institute also maintained expensive lobbying operations focused on climate and energy policy in the Commonwealth.

As the lobbying industry booms, the cost of residential natural gas heating this winter is projected to be about 28% higher than last winter, continuing a two-year trend of rapidly increasing natural gas prices. Since the 2020-2021, the winter cost of natural gas in the state has a projected increase of more than 50%.

According to Massachusetts law, lobbying includes any attempts to influence state officials on matters of regulation, legislation, rules, standards, or general policy, or attempts to influence elected state officials on bills yet to be passed.

Gas utilities used their lobbying operations in 2022 to oppose bills promoting solar energy, heating electrification, gas safety, ratepayer protections, and community representation in utility proceedings.

While utilities are prohibited from financing their lobbying expenses with the heating bills of residents across the Commonwealth, there are a few loopholes that can be exploited. For one, if a utility can prove that the lobbying directly benefits ratepayers, it can be included in the rates the utility charges. Utilities have also previously pushed the state to include in their rates funding for business organizations or trade groups—which exist in part to pursue shared political goals.

It is up to the state's Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to determine what expenses the utilities can and cannot include in their rates, which customers in a utility's service territory are required to pay if they want to keep their heat and electricity running.

"Of course, the utility will always say that their lobbying

benefits ratepayers. The question is if the DPU allows that argument to stand," according to David Pomerantz, executive director of the Energy and Policy Institute, a utility watchdog organization.

"Utility rate cases where this is all decided are voluminous, months-long affairs and it's easy for regulators to miss certain costs, or to decide there are bigger issues to fight with the utility about," he added. "And some regulators are more or less inclined to fight with the utility in the first place."

Powerful allies

The two largest gas and electric utilities in the state, National Grid and Eversource, both spent hundreds of thousands on their lobbying operations last year. Eversource spent a total of \$360,000, while National Grid spent more than \$400,000.

Research has shown that the utilities have historically been the most influential industry on climate and energy policy in the state and have powerful allies with their own significant lobbying operations, including the Associated Industries of Massachusetts. AIM promotes itself as "the state's largest business association serving the needs of more than 3,400 businesses," and its dues-paying members include utilities National Grid, Eversource, and Unitil. Other AIM members include fossil fuel industry appendages like Enbridge and the American Petroleum Institute, a known funder of climate misinformation.

AIM spent more than \$300,000 on its lobbying operation in 2022, which included lobbying on the legislative session's major clean energy bill, along with executive lobbying on a host of energy issues. Not all of AIM's lobbying was focused on issues directly related to energy though; other AIM lobbying activity included their opposition to various bills closing tax loopholes, limiting executive compensation, promoting housing for all, and criminalizing sexual assault by medical professionals.

While the state's gas providers were some of the highest spenders on lobbying, they were not alone among their allies in the fossil fuel industry. Shell Oil Company spent \$268,000 on lobbying in 2022, their first registered lobbying

operation in Massachusetts since 2009. This comes as Shell raked in record profits of nearly \$40 billion in 2022, largely thanks to soaring prices at the pump. While other oil majors did not have their own lobbying operations in the state, the American Petroleum Institute—whose members include majors ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, and Shell—spent more than \$60,000 on its own Massachusetts lobbying operation.

Kinder Morgan and Enbridge, two companies that own and operate natural gas pipelines and infrastructure, spent \$120,000 and \$60,000 on their respective lobbying operations. The American Fuels and Petrochemical Manufacturer Association (which keeps its membership private but includes executives from Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Phillips 66 on its board) spent \$78,000, while the Massachusetts Energy Marketers Association (whose member list includes the American Petroleum Institute) and the Propane Gas Association of New England respectively spent \$43,200 and \$34,008.

NextEra, which functions as a supplier for electricity aggregation programs in 23 towns across the state, spent \$155,000 on its own lobbying operation. NextEra was recently embroiled in scandal after its Florida subsidiary was caught spending millions to fund "ghost candidates" trying to siphon votes away from Democratic candidates, aiding in the utility's push to weaken solar programs in the Sunshine State.

Finally, the fossil fuel industry isn't alone in its lobbying against climate action. One notable ally, the state's real estate industry, has also been a powerful voice against climate policy, and spent accordingly on lobbying. NAIOP Massachusetts, which represents commercial real estate developers, spent more than \$250,000 on lobbying, opposing a wide array of climate bills promoting sustainable development, building decarbonization, and solar energy.

Meager investments in renewables

When considering lobbying from companies that are directly profiting from the sale or transport of fossil fuels, it's important to note that some of

these groups also have a financial stake in certain types of clean energy technology.

For example, Shell is co-developing the SouthCoast Wind project (formerly Mayflower Wind) off the South Coast of Mass. But the vast majority of the company's investments remain in fossil fuel production; despite extensive marketing campaigns to bolster their renewable energy credentials, only about 1.5% of the company's capital expenditures are actually devoted to renewable energy, according to a report by nonprofit watchdog organization Global Witness. And despite record 2023 profits, the company recently announced that it will not be increasing its investments into clean energy.

Eversource and National Grid, which operate the bulk of the state's electrical grid and gas distribution system, also have made investments in offshore wind in the region. At the same time, the companies are proposing to build additional gas pipelines in the state, all while fighting efforts to phase out the state's gas infrastructure. In Eversource's own decarbonization plan to the DPU, the company acknowledged that it expects the gas system to continue to grow in the coming years.

What does this all mean? For starters, companies that are able to spend hundreds of thousands to meet with key regulators and legislators will likely have an outsized impact on the state's transition off of fossil fuels. Also, fossil fuel interests are typically able to outspend environmental groups several times over, even in a progressive state like Mass.

What lobbyists are doing with officials and legislators behind closed doors is mostly a matter of speculation, thanks to the limited transparency requirements in Mass. But oil and gas industries have a major stake in Commonwealth's fossil fuel dependence, and as they increase their lobbying operations in the state, there is little reason to think they've suddenly stopped working to protect their investments.

Jon Lamson is a freelance environmental journalist. ■

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HOW EVERYTHING CHANGES

Marc Goldfinger
Spare Change News
Vendor-Writer

I'm outside Brigham & Women's Hospital waiting for the valet to bring my 2010 Honda Fit from wherever in space it sat while I was visiting my wife. Tomorrow, Wednesday, she is having her fourth hip surgery since December. How can that be? It boggles the mind that the bionic hip keeps breaking.

Everything changes. We've had to cancel our four-day vacation in North Truro at the Horizon Motel—right on the beach—the bay beach where we can watch the sun set over Provincetown every night. Provincetown has some nice bookstores and the people-watching is better than Harvard Square. That's my opinion anyway.

The valet pulls in with my car and we exchange tickets and I hop in and slowly drive away. I'm surrounded by cars. It makes me think of my teenage years when cars had unique looks and there were hardly any on the road compared to modern days.

I used to think about the poison puffing from my exhaust pipe back then. I had no inkling of what a nightmare our exhaust pipes would cause in the modern world. The heat is building up in the climate; there are giant fires in various parts of the world; the hurricanes and tornadoes are shattering the world we once knew.

When I was young I could feel the shift beginning and I knew we were heading down a road that was filled with fire and death. At



Bard College I took an Ecology course in 1971 and we discussed the damage that was creeping our way, fouling our waterways, making the air fill with dirty clouds that were beginning to make our cities into burning cigarettes. If you smoked, which I did at the time, you got a double dose.

It was no wonder that I began using drugs. I had trouble facing what was coming my way; your way too. It was so easy then. Codeine based cough syrup was available over the counter as an exempt-narcotic; you just had to sign your name. That was how I began to dream. It all became a nightmare as time went on and I aged and, instead of building a future, I was subtracting my life.

Somehow I got saved. It was a higher power that I couldn't understand but I was able to stop using drugs—one day at a time. I met my beautiful wife at a meeting in Harvard Square and we used to go out for coffee together. Actually, I had no idea what was taking place

but it was frighteningly good.

Even as the world was continuing to be destroyed by the human species, I fell in love and married Mary Esther and went on a journey that I never could have predicted. We danced, we laughed, we went to the beaches and the Weston Priory to worship with a group of monks.

Now I'm so much older and Mary Esther is too and there are doctors and surgeries and hearing aids, even eye drops so I don't lose my vision. Of course, you could say that I never had much vision and you wouldn't be half wrong. Life is like that.

Right now, as I write this, a giant hurricane is heading towards Florida and one of the islands of Hawaii has been destroyed by fire. There are fires in Canada that are so large that the smoke hangs over Massachusetts like an external cigarette. Washington state is burning too.

Climate Change is here and

anyone who is denying it, doesn't have their eyes open. As we age, Mary Esther and I, we see friends who we thought would live "forever" pass away. I'm a poet but most of the time I'm writing prose for my Spare Change column.

Mary Esther will be coming home soon wearing a brace that looks like it was designed by Dr. Frankenstein and the doctors say she'll be wearing it for 12 to 16 weeks. I'm home alone and really miss her; maybe she'll come home today, Sunday, September 3rd. When I wake up in the middle of the night, I still think she's next to me and I look and there's nothing but her pillows.

One of the weird things that I watch while I'm visiting her at the hospital is how much plastic waste is used up every day. The nurses and nurse's aides put plastic gloves on everytime they enter the room. I imagine how many gloves get disposed of each day at the hospital. Also the plastic bags of antibiotics and saline for each patient.

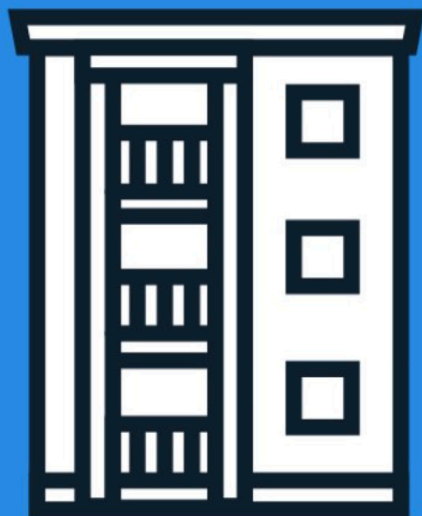
Mary Esther's mother was a nurse in the days before plastics. I think of the giant plastic waste zones in the ocean that break up and are eaten by fish, which we eat. It's amazing how much plastic waste is in our bodies. We are Climate Change also and the roar of engines and their exhaust engages all the living beings on our planet. The major extinction event is taking place and we're part of it.

I loved my youth but I'm glad I'm older. The future is smoky, noisy, and dark. But I'm still looking forward to Mary Esther coming home and relaxing in our old house. We've had a good run but all things are

impermanent. I'm reminded of that whenever I arrive home and see Buddha sitting on our front lawn of white stones. Folks, thank you for buying Spare Change News and for reading our columns.

Hasn't the weather been strange lately? Speaking of strange, I'm having a flashback of driving my 58 Plymouth Belvedere convertible with the push button transmission. Imagine! A push button transmission!

Marc Goldfinger has been published by the Ibbetson Street Press, the Aureorean, Pegasus, The Boston Poet, the Crooked River Press, Earth First! Journal, The New Renaissance, User's News, Poiesis, The Porter Gulch Review, Rubber-Side-Down and many others. Goldfinger is also a member of the Liberation Poetry Collective and is included in the Liberation Anthology put out by the Trilingual Press. He is currently the poetry editor and a regular columnist for the Spare Change News, a paper put out for the benefit of homeless people. He is a member of The Road Scribes of America, a motorcycle club whose members have been published throughout the world. He also has his own website at marcgoldfinger.outlawpoetry.com where he also has books and a down-load of Getting Fixed In South Carolina, a true story of an event in his life, arranged and performed by The Jeff Robinson Trio, for sale. Goldfinger is formerly homeless and has been a Vendor for Spare Change News since 1993. His e-mail address is junkietroll@yahoo.com and his snail mail address is Marc D. Goldfinger, 76 Unity Avenue, Belmont MA 02478 ■



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Moon

Every moment of the cool season
Of faces passing, of leaves turning
Storms as one experience, the bright trace
Knowing of terra, righteous tower
But lease as west, love showering
Exit in a single shadow
Cascades of men, cast across
Under the bandage to ease the arms of time
The carols allot to tread
Unto the carriage
All quest, her queen of bees
Persuading wax nickels
To a much larger beast

Poem by Julie Scanga

Flame

Pop through her hall of doors
A fighter by calamity
To some they say she would be observed
Of certain witness unfairly schemed

Poem by Julie Scanga
Julie Scanga is a formerly-unhoused poet.

The Dark Angel

Connect connect
put me through to someone anyone
are you there can you hear my call
reach for that one high in the sky
I don't meanwhile you turn to
and I'm a dreamer a believer
do i paint the walls pink with my vision
or should I stay with the colors I have in my life
to make me feel right at the moment
is it bad to be alone most of the time
with my thoughts and interests
or should I tell others would they be convinced
the artist walks I am the dark angel awaken me

Poem by Angel Williams

The 21st Century of Technology

Technology is taking over this planet. It's the reason people can't get a job. Get something better. Everything is run by machines. Have we forgotten how to have fun and observe our surroundings? We're on all these electrical things. Do we not realize that before tv, cell phones, and computers, there were other ways to entertain ourselves? I'm guilty of all this stuff. Unfortunately I need to have a phone for work and other calls. That's our only communication besides meeting up. We get sucked up in all this — agree to disagree.

Poem by Angel Williams

The Shining

He went to the hotel that drove him insane
and the killings began
That started with the wife and son
Danny Isn't Here Anymore Ms Torres, Tony said !
As the boy runs through the maze
Getting away from the ax
Danny! Jack yells out. They get away
Jack freezes to death
But at the end
Jack is in the picture
Like he's been at the hotel for years
With everyone else
All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy

Poem by Angel Williams

Angel Williams is a Spare Change News volunteer.

It Comes With The Territory

The older I get
the more letters I receive
from young writers
some of them from women
but most of them from men
95% of them poets or would be poets
who have this notion I'm a great writer
who think I have it made
most of them want my advice
want me to critique their work
want to know my secret to success
which I tell them is longevity
One compares me to Bukowski
another with Micheline
but the truth is I'm a longshot
posted at 100-1
too often left at the starting gate
This poet is not Harry Houdini
I have no tricks up my sleeve
no secrets to reveal
find yourself a good woman I tell them
don't worry about being published
keep away from the poetry politicians
"stay away from the cafes and bars
stay away from the poets
especially sway away from poets"
the same advice Bukowski gave me
I pass on to them
Stay away from e-mail
I tell them
it's a lazy man's way out
keep pounding the keyboard
draw blood like a lab technician
take a lesson from the great Joe Louis
and never settle for a draw
hang in there like Bukowski did
and maybe you'll make it to the big show
or maybe you won't
for d.a. levy was right
"sum people can't beat the system
and poets can't even pretend

they're beating the system"
If you still want advice
write Dear Abby
she doesn't have the answer either
but she gets paid for it

Poem by A.D. Winans

A. D. Winans is a native San Francisco poet and writer. In 1958 he returned home from Panama and became part of the North Beach Beat era. He is the author of over sixty books of poetry and prose, including *North Beach Poems*, *North Beach Revisited*, *San Francisco Poems*, and *The Holy Grail: The Charles Bukowski Second Coming Revolution*. He edited and published *Second Coming Press* for 17 years, during which time he produced the 1980 *Poets and Music Festival*, honoring the poet Josephine Miles and Blues legend John Lee Hooker. Colin Wilson, Studs Terkel, James Purdy, Peter Coyote, Jack Hirschman, Jack Micheline, and Charles Bukowski have praised his work. His poetry and prose has been published in over 2,000 literary magazines and anthologies, including *The American Poetry Review*, *City Lights Journal*, *Poetry Australia*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Beat Scene*, *Beatitude*, *Rattle*, and *The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry*. In 2002 a song poem of his was performed at Tully Hall, NYC. In 2006 he was awarded a PEN Josephine Miles award for excellence in literature. In 2009 PEN Oakland presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2015 he received a Kathy Acker Award in poetry and publishing. In 2010 *Bottle of Smoke Press* (BOS Press) published a book of his *Selected Poems*.

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Jennifer Alukoni



October's Spotlight faith-based organization is Trinity United Methodist Church, located at 361 Sumner Ave., Springfield, MA 01108, where the Reverend Dr. David Calhoun presides.

Trinity United Methodist states that, as a community of faith, we gather to:

- Celebrate God's love
- Nurture relationships with God and one another
- Serve our community and world as we share the light of Christ

Trinity's community of faith specifically supports those who are struggling, the poor, and the homeless through the Parkside Pantry. The Parkside Pantry was formed by members of the church in March of 2020 and officially opened in April 2021. The pantry has given out 537 bags of nonperishable food items as well as turkeys and other fixings at Thanksgiving time.

Trinity's pantry is a member of the Food Bank of Western Mass. This partnership gives access to fresh food and refrigerated items. The pantry is open every fourth Wednesday of the month from 5:30 to 6:30PM at the Hale Room entrance to Trinity Church.

To donate, volunteer, or for more information about the food pantry call 413-351-0601.

Other Ministries at Trinity United Methodist in Springfield that support the poor is the Thanksgiving Baskets for families who are struggling, and Christmas is Not Your Birthday, a Ministry that collects annual donations for specific community health and anti-poverty initiatives. <https://www.trinityspringfield.org/ministries/mission-justice/>

Church service is at 10:30AM in person and Livestream every Sunday morning.

Learn more at: <https://www.trinityspringfield.org/about/who-we-are/>

Each month, Spare Change News is featuring a different faith-based organization contributing services to the unhoused and low-income community. Do you have suggestions for groups giving back to our community's less fortunate? Please get in touch at editor@sparechangenews.net. ■

LOCAL NEWS

Continued from page 4

The first problem is that the application is lengthy and complicated. Agawam's old form was eight pages long. The new statewide form is 26 pages. There is no initial screening or check to see if applicants have the paperwork they need, so housing agencies generally can't identify problems until late in the process — when an apartment is available and someone's name comes to the top of the list.

Cayer recalls a two-bedroom unit in Brady Village that was empty for two and a half years before finally getting a tenant this past February. Agawam housing officials went through roughly 600 names, grabbing a batch from the waitlist almost every week and mailing out letters with a 15-page supplemental form to determine eligibility. Applicants had 10 business days to reply.

Most never responded. Or it turned out they weren't eligible for public housing. Or they had to be moved down the list because they didn't qualify for priority status as they contended they did. Or, when they were finally offered a home, they turned it down because they had competing offers or they decided Agawam was too far away from their work or family. The typical applicant seeks housing in 20 communities, according to the state.

"It's an exercise in futility," Cayer said. "We have people calling or applying from the Cape or from Boston. They can't reasonably live here." (The largest town on Cape Cod, Barnstable, is 150 miles from Agawam.)

The state revamped the applicant form in December, adding a map of the 14 counties in Massachusetts in hopes of dissuading people from signing up for housing in communities they have no intention of living in. So far, Cayer said, the map has not been effective in deterring far-flung people from applying to Agawam.

And since people often apply to multiple towns, it's common for them to be contacted by many housing authorities at once. As a result, multiple agencies simultaneously hold units open for the same applicant, who can choose only one place. Meanwhile, Cayer said, some waitlisted families are stuck in shelters or sleeping in their cars.

"I think it's criminal," Cayer said. "Criminal."

Public records show that local housing authorities have regularly told the state they need more time to fill vacancies because of problems with the CHAMP waitlist, as well as a lack of staff to comb through applications.

The state has received so many complaints about the CHAMP system that it has hired a Boston marketing firm, Archipelago Strategies Group, to take over some of the screening of public housing applicants, starting this month. Archipelago referred questions to state officials.

A state housing official said Archipelago will be paid \$3.3 million to go through the backlog of applicants requesting priority status for housing assistance. But local housing authorities will still be responsible for some of the vetting, such as background checks. The secretary of housing said he expects improvements soon but doesn't know when the problems will be fully resolved.

"This is an iterative process," Augustus said. "We'll continue to make changes as necessary."

The state also significantly reduced the size of the waitlist for state-funded public housing this spring — but not by placing people in apartments. Instead, it dropped tens of thousands of people who did not respond to a letter in the mail asking them to confirm that they were still interested in housing.

The waitlist is a mystery to people who are desperate for housing. They don't know where they stand in the line of applicants or when they will find an apartment.

After applying for state-subsidized housing in January, Konstantina Gountana, 41, of Arlington, and her family are living with these unknowns.

During the pandemic, Gountana's husband lost his job as a barber in Harvard Square and three of her family members died, including her only relative in Massachusetts.

"Anything that could go wrong went wrong," she said. "It was a disaster."

To make ends meet, she and her husband started to drive for Uber on alternating shifts, with Gountana looking after their infant and 5-year-old during the day, and her husband handling child care in the evening. But their Toyota Prius broke down and they had to quit.

The Gountanas are facing steep odds. They limited their

application to one town: Arlington, where more than 25,000 families are on the waitlist. They didn't want to uproot their older son, who has symptoms of autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. His therapist had recommended against changing his school and schedule. The family also applied for housing vouchers, but there's a long wait for those, too.

The Gountanas were evicted in June. They were forced to toss most of their belongings and squeeze into a friend's spare room with their two kids. But they aren't sure how long they can stay. "Everything got destroyed," Gountana said, bouncing her now 21-month-old son on her knee to keep him quiet. "I'm embarrassed. I'm sad. All these feelings."

The executive director of the Arlington Housing Authority, Jack Nagle, said that filling vacancies is a challenge because of the state's online waitlist system. Twenty of Arlington's 700 state-funded units sat empty as of the end of July.

Gountana is still hoping to move into a state-funded apartment. "Honestly, I did not expect it to be so, so long," she said.

The waitlist woes are one of several reasons for the glut of vacancies. Hundreds of apartments across Massachusetts can't be filled because they're undergoing renovation, or because local housing authorities lack the staff or funding for vital repairs.

Units in the town of Adams, in the Berkshires near the New York state border, have been condemned as the problems piled up. And housing officials have razed other dilapidated apartments in cities such as Lowell, northwest of Boston, and Fall River, near the Rhode Island line. About 70 apartments across Massachusetts have been demolished or sold in the last dozen years, according to the state housing agency.

"We need a long-term plan," said Rachel Heller, of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association. "We can't lose these homes."

For decades, advocates have warned that the state public housing system needs billions of dollars in funding for additional staff and renovations, including new roofs, plumbing and heating systems. A 2006 audit called the situation a "state of emergency."

But those alarms weren't heeded. In 2018, the Legislature allocated \$600 million over five years for capital expenditures for public housing — not enough to catch up with all needed repairs. Today, local authorities have a \$3.2 billion backlog for renovations, by the state's estimate. Augustus, the state housing secretary, said the state is working on a new bond bill, but it was too early to provide details.

Advocates pushed for \$184 million this year for operating and maintaining the units day to day, but Healey's proposed budget allowed for only half that amount. The Legislature ultimately allocated \$107 million, an increase of 16% from last year. Healey, House Speaker Ron Mariano and Senate President Karen Spilka declined to be interviewed.

In the meantime, the state public housing stock is suffering. Take the housing authority in Watertown, a Boston suburb, which has six maintenance workers. Patrick Breen, the maintenance supervisor, said that's not enough to care for the agency's 589 units, many of which were built 60 to 70 years ago.

Breen said his crew must focus on emergencies, like broken cast-iron pipes and electrical outages. Often, no one is available to prep empty units for new families. Some longtime tenants just abandon the apartments, forcing the maintenance crew to haul out their belongings and repair walls, floors and counters. The units sit for months before they are ready to lease.

"It's a nightmare," Breen said. "There's not much more you can do really, when you don't have enough staff."

Some apartments across the state stay in limbo even longer while housing authorities plan major renovations or redevelopment projects. That's what happened in the city of Somerville, where units in the Clarendon Hill complex sat empty for as long as six and a half years before work began in March on a new \$200 million private development of affordable and market-rate housing at the site. During that time, the state continued to pay Somerville to manage the vacant units.

Somerville Housing Authority interim director Joe Macaluso explained that the agency hadn't wanted to spend money maintaining aging buildings that it planned to demolish, even

though they were still livable. "We would have had to inject capital — good money after bad money — just to get them ready," he said.

The state's executive housing office rarely questions these long vacancies, approving 92% of requests to keep units empty past the 60-day deadline. But advocates for homeless people say they wish agencies would let someone live in the empty apartments — even if it's only temporary.

"If you were to ask me or ask our clients, they would say, that's four or five years I'm not in a shelter or out in the street," said Mike Libby, executive director of the Somerville Homeless Coalition. He's not related to Deb Libby, who's seeking housing.

Across the state, housing authorities have also converted at least 121 state-subsidized apartments for uses including office spaces, storage areas and laundry rooms — further shrinking the pool of units available for families and seniors.

The Boston Housing Authority converted 11 units to offices for employees and tenant organizations and set aside another for a children's program. Nearby, the Somerville Housing Authority repurposed 10 apartments, including a two-bedroom unit that was turned into office space for the agency's police department.

Beverly, Fall River and Quincy turned units into laundry rooms. And the housing authority in Salem took four apartments in a downtown tower for seniors and converted them into offices, including a break room and space for file storage. After the president of the tenants' association stumbled onto two of the repurposed units last year in the building he lives in, the housing authority launched eviction proceedings against him. The agency said he was trespassing. He said there was no indication that the offices were off limits. The case is pending.

One social services executive was astonished to hear about all the apartments converted to offices and storage.

Housing "seems like a bigger priority than a break room or storage facility," said Laura Meisenhelter, executive director of North Shore Community Action Programs, which runs a family shelter. "You know, you can get sheds at Home Depot."

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Augustus, the state housing secretary, said there are often good reasons to repurpose units, such as to provide a library or a laundry room in a complex for seniors. He said the state has to sign off on the conversions, but it generally defers to local officials. "There's always going to be unique circumstances," Augustus said.

At least one agency hopes to switch its converted units back soon. The Fitchburg Housing Authority plans to build a \$12 million community center with plenty of office space, enabling it to convert seven offices back to their original purpose: housing.

Deb Libby, the Worcester woman facing eviction at the

end of the month, never worried about becoming homeless. She's worked at Lowe's for two years, doing everything from fielding questions to moving supplies in the garden section. But it's been harder to work a full schedule since she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer five years ago. Her job is physically demanding — she walks six to eight miles a day — and the disease has weakened her immune system, forcing her to take frequent days off without pay.

She said surgery removed the cancerous tissue in November 2018 and after that she'd been in remission. But an MRI recently found the cancer has spread to the liver. "We're still trying to figure out what to do with that."

Libby has struggled to keep up with the \$1,450 monthly rent for her one-bedroom apartment near the College of the Holy Cross.

For a while, pandemic relief funds helped her pay the rent. Then a friend pitched in. But the building was sold, and she didn't have a long-term lease.

Last October, after her landlord began the formal eviction process, Libby signed up for state public housing in Worcester. Libby managed to stave off the eviction in housing court for a year with help from an attorney from a legal aid nonprofit. As part of an agreement to settle the case, the landlord acknowledged Libby was not at fault, promised to provide a good recommendation, and cited "economic reasons" for the

eviction. The building's owner did not respond to an email asking for more specificity.

Libby prefers to remain in central Massachusetts, close to her mother, three children and three grandchildren. Her family doesn't have room for her, she said, and she's willing to move anywhere in the state to find an affordable apartment. Early this year, she expanded her search for public housing to 30 additional communities — from Chicopee in western Massachusetts to Provincetown on the tip of Cape Cod.

In June, she applied for priority status for state housing on the grounds that she is losing her housing through no fault of her own. But Libby said she hasn't

received any response. When she called some housing authorities, she said, they wouldn't tell her where she stands on the waitlist.

"I just really need something," she said. "I really need help."

Libby said she has no idea where she will live — maybe in her truck or a friend's garage. She was surprised to hear about all the units sitting vacant across the state.

"It's frustrating," she said. "It's maddening."

This story was originally published by ProPublica and WBUR. It is being reprinted here in accordance with ProPublica's Steal Our Stories policy. ■

MASSACHUSETTS TO LAUNCH 90-DAY PUSH TO FILL VACANT STATE-FUNDED APARTMENTS

Todd Wallack
WBUR

Massachusetts housing officials announced Friday that they are launching a "90-day push" to reduce the number of vacancies in state public housing by the end of the year.

The initiative comes after an investigation by WBUR and ProPublica found nearly 2,300 of 41,500 state-funded apartments were vacant at the end of July — most for months or years — despite a housing shortage so severe that Gov. Maura Healey called it a state of emergency. Massachusetts is one of only four states with state-subsidized public housing, and about 184,000 people are on a waitlist for the units. Massachusetts also has federally funded public housing, which is more common nationwide.

The state's plan focuses on providing financial and other assistance to local housing authorities, which maintain and operate the apartments, to help fill units. The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities is "undertaking a new initiative to significantly reduce the number of state-aided public housing vacancies," Fatima Razzaq, acting director of the public housing division, said in a memo. "We recognize the shared responsibility in tackling

this challenge and are therefore initiating a 90-day push to assist with reoccupying units."

Chelmsford Housing Authority Executive Director David Hedison, who has complained that state policies for managing apartments hamper local agencies, said the new initiative shows the state is now committed to reducing vacancies.

"I'm thrilled," he said. "It appears to me now that all hands are on deck and if there's an issue, they're going to be highly responsive."

Among other measures, the state will help pay employee overtime costs for localities that have high vacancy rates and are approved for budget exemptions. It will also pay for contracting with other local agencies to assist with tenant selection and preparing units for new tenants.

In particular, Razzaq wrote, the state will closely monitor local housing authorities with vacancy rates above 10%. State housing management specialists will conduct weekly check-ins and provide technical assistance.

State housing officials will also visit local agencies where units are empty for more than 60 days — the amount of time the state allows local authorities to fill a vacancy — because they need certain types of repairs. As of the end of July, WBUR and ProPublica found almost 1,800 of the vacant units, including some with at least three bedrooms, had

been empty for more than 60 days. About 730 of those have not been rented in at least a year.

Because the state pays local housing authorities to take care of the units whether they're occupied or not, the vacant apartments translate into millions of Massachusetts taxpayer dollars wasted due to delays and disorder fostered by state and local mismanagement. Reasons for the vacancies include a flawed online system that the state created for selecting potential tenants, as well as underfunding for maintenance, renovations and staff.

The housing authority in Watertown, a Boston suburb, has six maintenance workers for 589 units. Michael Lara, executive director of the agency, said he plans to request additional maintenance staff as a result of the state's initiative. The announcement shows that the state is "treating the situation seriously and with care," he said.

In an interview with WBUR this week, Healey said she has asked Housing Secretary Ed Augustus to take the lead in fixing the problems and noted the state will centralize the screening process for people on the waitlist.

As WBUR and ProPublica first reported, the state recently hired a marketing firm to take over a portion of the applicant screening to try to speed up the process of filling units.

"Our public housing system is absolutely crucial to helping to

solve our housing crisis," Healey said in an interview on WBUR's Radio Boston on Wednesday.

Healey also vowed to unveil a new bond bill with additional funding for public housing, but she declined to provide details. The state has estimated there is a \$3.2 billion backlog of repairs needed in public housing. Some units are in such disrepair that they have been condemned or demolished.

In 2018, the Legislature allocated \$600 million over five years for capital expenditures in public housing — not enough to catch up with all needed repairs.

House Speaker Ron Mariano said that the Legislature originally ordered the state to create a central waitlist to address concerns that some local housing authorities weren't offering units to people fairly in order of who applied. But Mariano acknowledged the new system created "some inefficiencies," making it harder for local housing authorities to find new tenants.

He said he was glad the administration is trying to improve the system.

"That's what we need to do," Mariano said at a news conference earlier this week. "We need to make sure that these local authorities have the ability to get in and get the apartments livable and ready."

Still, Mariano seemed skeptical about some of the claims that local housing

authorities need more staff and funding to repair units and fill vacancies.

"I'm sure that's true in some cases. I'm sure it's not true in other cases," Mariano said. "It's like any other need in a city or town."

The Legislature approved a 16% increase in operating funds for public housing this fiscal year, allocating \$107 million in total. But that's short of the 100% increase some advocates had lobbied for. Healey had proposed keeping the funding at the same \$92 million as last year.

On Thursday, Augustus met with Hedison, the Chelmsford housing authority director, and toured an empty building there slated for renovations. Hedison said the cost has ballooned after discovering additional repairs that need to be made, something he said is indicative of aging public housing. The average age of state-funded public housing is 57 years.

Hedison said Augustus acknowledged agencies need more money for repairs and is working on a bond measure.

"I want to see what it actually means," Hedison said. "You know, show me the money. Show me the bond bill."

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sudoku *Fill in the grid so each row, column and 3x3 box has the numbers 1 thru 9.*

			1		4			
4		9		2	6			
1				6				7
	1		5					3
6	3					8	1	
7				8		5		
9			4					8
		7	8			1		4
		8		7				

happy all saints' eve

In the spirit of October 31st, each of the following letters represents one of the numbers from zero to nine. Can you determine the numerical solution to this simple arithmetic problem?



word play

Add the letters of the two words to the remaining eight boxes to form common English words reading across and down. Then form another word using all nine letters.



city on six continents

Three of these cities with the same Latin name are in Europe (Sweden, Romania and Italy), two are in South America (Ecuador and Peru), one is in Asia (Indonesia) one is in Africa (Lesotho), and one is in North America (Texas). The English version can be found as the name of at least seventeen other cities, townships or towns all of whom are in the United States – Georgia, Illinois, Indiana (2), Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania (3), and the Badger state of Wisconsin (2). It was popular in America in the 19th century for a town or city to change its name to one from the Old World. So, what is the name of these cities?



boston begins . . .

However one of these entries is not true. Can you discern the fiction from the facts?

- Before it was named Boston, it was first called Shawmut and later Trimontaine.
- First European settler was a Puritan.
- Boston was named for a town in England by Isaac Johnson on September 30, 1630.
- Boston (England) is a contraction of "St. Botolph's town," town's patron saint.
- William Blaxton (Blackstone) left Boston 1635 for what is now Cumberland, RI one year ahead of Roger Williams.
- Trimountaine (later Beacon Hill) was the tallest of the three peaks in Boston. The name was shortened to Tremont from whence Tremont Street gets its name.

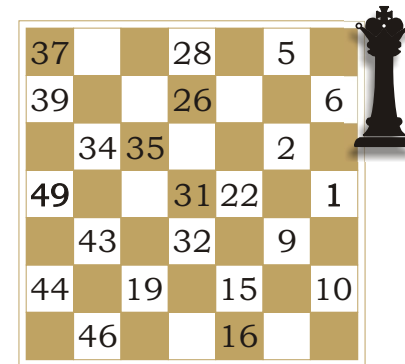
gens

What generation matches with what age?

- a. Gen X b. Millenials c. Boomers
d. Gen A e. Gen Z
1. 7__ 2. 26__ 3. 38__ 4. 48__ 5. 63__

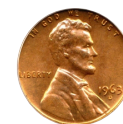
king's kickabout

Move the king one square at a time up, down or diagonally landing on each of the 49 squares only once. Some of the squares are numbered, but there is still a bit of plotting to be worked out in getting the king to his destination. Good luck!



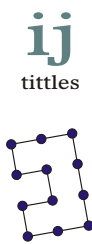
penny pinch

Without losing a cent, take this series of coins from a four-three-two-one sequence and make it a one-two-three-four sequence simply by moving only one penny.



solutions *to last issue's puzzles*

3	7	2	1	8	9	4	5	6
8	4	6	3	5	7	9	1	2
1	5	9	4	6	2	3	7	8
7	2	3	8	9	1	6	4	5
4	8	5	6	7	3	1	2	9
9	6	1	2	4	5	7	8	3
2	9	7	5	1	6	8	3	4
5	1	8	9	3	4	2	6	7
6	3	4	7	2	8	5	9	1



A a
C cee
D dee
G gee
H haitch
J jay
K kay
L el/ell
L el/ell
M mem
N en
T tee
X ex

Education

C	U	T	M	A	S
O	N	E	E	M	E
D	I	A	T	A	T

 Teammates

Graduates

R	E	S	M	A	M
U	T	A	A	L	E
G	A	D	R	A	T

 Alma Mater

(Apologies for the repeat of the word MET)

Back The Future
A View A Kill
Road Perditiion
Path War
Bridge Terabithia
Return Oz
No Time Die
The Trip Bountiful
Coming America



designed by Samuel Weems