

NEWS IN BRIEF

The Boston Globe

Then and now: a largely cautionary tale

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BROOKLINE

Just in time for the new year, the Brookline Preservation Commission has put together a 2006 "then and now" calendar, featuring historic photos of the town contrasted with present day photos. The most striking difference is on Corey Hill, where in the early 1900s the mansion of Eben Jordan Jr. (of Jordan Marsh fame) stood, now replaced by a box-shaped apartment building. Roger Reed, preservation planner for the commission, says not all of the pictures are meant to serve as warnings. "There are a few views where there is not much change, where we're trying to say, 'look at what we've saved.'" The calendar is available at Town Hall and at Brookline Booksmith and Wild Goose Chase stores.

Coolidge Corner leaps into cyberspace

More than 500 businesses in Coolidge Corner think it's hip to be square. Citysquares.com, a burgeoning community database, launched its Coolidge Corner section late last month, and has gathered information for about 550 businesses. The website establishes virtual neighborhoods, so mom-and-pop businesses can reach beyond traditional means to find new customers. John Heffernan, executive director of the Brookline Chamber of Commerce, contacted Citysquares.com after he saw how convenient it had made looking up events and businesses in Somerville's squares when the site launched in October. Ben Saren, president and CEO of Citysquares.com, said the first thing that goes into launching an online square is defining the boundaries. "Boston is a funny city the way it's built as opposed to Manhattan, where there's a grid system."

Town's loss is Saturday shoppers' gain

In the past few weeks visitors to Brookline saved more than \$30,000 . . . in quarters. According to Traffic Captain Michael Gropman, the town's program to allow visitors to park in metered spots without having to feed the meters on Saturdays, which ran from the last weekend in November through yesterday, meant about \$5,000 a day that the town missed in revenue. "Plus you add the parking tickets we didn't write, and that's anywhere from \$30,000 to \$50,000," he said. Marge Amster of the Economic Development Department of Brookline said the freebie days were "definitely appreciated as a sort of welcome thing."

Got a news item for Brookline? E-mail Patrick Gerard Healy at PGH@globe.com.

CAMBRIDGE

Let the mayoral sweepstakes begin

The inaugural meeting of the new Cambridge City Council and election of the mayor will be held at 10 a.m. tomorrow in the Sullivan Chamber of City Hall, 795 Mass. Ave. With each new council term, the sitting council members elect a mayor and a vice mayor; the mayor serves as the council's chief legislative officer. City Hall will be open for the ceremony, but its administrative offices and most other municipal buildings will be closed in observance of New Year's.

Mayor implements cuts to his waistline

Those who attend the Cambridge City Council meetings have seen significantly less of Mayor Michael A. Sullivan in recent weeks, but not because he's absent. Sullivan has lost close to 45 pounds as part of a two-year weight-loss research study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital. The 5-foot-4-inch Sullivan, a onetime marathon runner who at his heaviest tipped the scales around 230, said he hopes to get down to the 160 range.

At library, a celebration of MLK Jr.

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr., the Cambridge Public Library will hold its 31st commemoration of the birth of the civil rights activist next Sunday at 3 p.m. at the Central Square branch, 45 Pearl St. The event will include an address by the Rev. Howard M. Haywood, pastor at the Myrtle Baptist Church in West Newton.

Council puts lid on trashy behavior

At their last meeting of 2005, councilors approved an amendment to Cambridge's refuse and litter ordinance that will push the time residents are allowed to put trash out on the street later, from 3 to 6 p.m., on the evening before pickup. Trash put outside the evening before pickup will also be required to be secured in an approved can with a lid rather than set out in plastic bags, as is currently allowed. Trash put out on the same day as pickup can be left in plastic bags. The change is set to take effect April 3.

Got a news item from Cambridge? E-mail Colleen Walsh at cwalsh@globe.com.

SOMERVILLE

A curious sight: George on horseback

If you see George Washington on horseback, leading a procession from City Hall to Prospect Hill this morning, don't panic. It's not because somebody slipped something in your drink at the New Year's Eve party. Reenactors are commemorating the raising of the first flag of the United Colonies, which happened on Jan. 1, 1776. The procession begins at 11:30 a.m.

Snow falls, and parking fines pile up

The city expects to shovel in about \$200,000 from the first snowstorm of the season. The structure for traffic and parking violations was changed in October, increasing fines from \$50 to \$100 during snow emergencies. City workers placed tickets on 2,000 windshields on Dec. 9, according to Thomas Champion, spokesman for Mayor Joseph Curtatone. The fines were raised to achieve compliance, not as a revenue maker, Champion insisted. "And it works," he said. "What happens is ticket-writing drops off rather precipitously after the first snowstorm." He said the ticket income doesn't cover the cost of snow removal. To receive e-mail notification about snow emergencies, visit <http://lists.somerville.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/snowalert>.

And now, the most highly decorated

The people have spoken, and the most decorated holiday house in the city is at 166 Central St. According to votes that came in through e-mail and a ballot box at City Hall, the Rigione family's decorations and abundance of lights are the most festive in the city. Second place went to the Pellecchia family of Wallace Street. Winners receive a gift certificate to Out of the Blue, a Davis Square restaurant. The award for best holiday street went to Preston Road. Second place went to Springfield Street, where 87-year-old Joe Carvalho sets up an enormous crèche every year.

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