

The Boston Globe

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A LOSING BET

COMMUNITIES FIGHT BACK

ACTIVISTS DECRY CASINOS, PROMOTE ALTERNATIVES



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

The Pao Arts Center has sought to expand the activities for Chinatown residents, including karaoke nights

BY **CHRIS SERRES** AND **DANNY MCDONALD** | GLOBE STAFF
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Two dozen men in parkas huddled against the frigid wind in tight, almost meditative circles around metal tables strewn with playing cards, cash, and cigarettes. Every few minutes, one of the men slapped money on the table, and shouting would erupt, as players scooped up their winnings.

The scene is familiar to those who pour into Chinatown each day. From late morning to dusk, from cold to sweltering temperatures, groups of Asian men and women transform a patch of pavement adjacent to the Chinatown gateway into gametime.

The open-air play is often harmless fun: pai-gow poker, Chinese blackjack, and other games of chance. It's communal time for people in a

阅读简体中文版



Read in simplified Chinese

neighborhood lacking other recreational outlets.

But for many longtime Chinatown residents, the outdoor games further prove that unfettered, compulsive gambling is encroaching into nearly every corner of the enclave. It is rupturing families, forcing people into bankruptcy, and is scarring the image of the neighborhood.

So they are pushing back — against the casinos, their elected officials, and their neighbors.

Yet the challenges they face here are daunting, made more difficult by years of government apathy and neglect.

COMMUNITY, Page A6

“The women here are just not going to put themselves out there like that.”

ANGELA PERI, founder and co-owner of Boston Casting

What's the real story: Are we too good or too square for 'Housewives'?

BETH TEITELL

Is it a snub? A compliment? A bullet dodged?

Bravo has finally deigned to set a “Real Housewives” in New England, but rather than do something that makes sense — like The Real Housewives of Beacon Hill, or of Nantucket, or of the Karen Read Trial — we're staring down The Real Housewives of ... Rhode Island.

Twenty years into the House-

wives franchise, the closest we've come to a RHOB was when famed Bravo kingmaker Andy Cohen addressed our dreams — and mocked them.

“People keep asking me when I'm going to do a ‘Real Housewives of Boston,’” he said in a 2020 episode of his talk show, all inner smirk, as he put guest Rachel Dratch through a fake screen test while she drank pinot grigio from a bottle through a straw and barked out retorts in thick Bostonese.

REAL, Page A8

Drama comes to head for cannabis retailer

Whistle-blower complaint led to high-profile spat

By Gordon Russell
GLOBE STAFF

After nearly three years, the Cannabis Control Commission is poised to take action on a whistle-blower complaint that figured prominently in the ugly spat between the agency's former executive director, Shawn Collins, and its chairperson, Shannon O'Brien.

The whistle-blower claimed in 2023 that his former employer, Greatest Hits, a canna-

bis retailer with shops in three towns, was running an illegal grow operation and using under-eraged workers.

More significantly, he has also alleged company leaders often bragged of close connections to Collins and claimed the then-CCC director would shield their firm from regulators, allegations Collins strongly denies.

The commission's current director, Travis Ahern, said in an interview that Greatest Hits will face an “enforcement action,” which could range from an order to make minor fixes to the seizure of a license. He

CANNABIS, Page A8

Trump soft-pedals hard facts of war

Insists economy will soar again after ‘little bit of hit’

By Jim Puzanghera
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — It's no secret President Trump is fond of the Village People's “Y.M.C.A.,” but after the last week, the White House might consider adding the reggae hit “Don't Worry, Be Happy” to his playlist.

Just as in his first term, Trump has publicly downplayed the negative impact of major developments — often ones he has initiated, such as high tariffs. The latest example is the war against Iran. Although major stock indexes had dropped from record levels and gas prices have soared since the attacks began on Feb. 28, Trump insists it's all just a temporary blip.

“We had the greatest economy ever. We had the greatest stock market in history. I said, ‘We're gonna take a little bit of a hit,’” Trump explained of his war calculations during a Cabinet meeting on Thursday, overstating the struggling US economic performance before the war. “A short-term hit.”

The upbeat forecast mirrored comments Trump made on March 8, when he declared on Truth Social that, “Short term oil prices, which will drop rapidly when the destruction of the Iran nuclear threat is over, is a very small price to pay for U.S.A., and World, Safety and Peace.”

Oil prices have continued to rise since then, and the average cost of a gallon of regular gas in the US topped \$4 Tuesday, up more than a dollar since the war began, according to AAA. The higher gas prices

TRUMP, Page A4

One of many Rubio roles faces scrutiny

Senator questions if he overstayed archivist stint

By Sam Brodey
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — It's become something of a running gag in President Trump's second term: Marco Rubio simultaneously serving in multiple administration posts of importance beyond his main day job as secretary of state.

In one of those jobs, however, Rubio's moonlighting is not seen as a laughing matter. It has, instead, raised questions on Capitol Hill as to whether the administration has violated the law concerning temporary government appointments.

In February 2025, Trump fired Colleen Shogan, the archivist of the United States — which oversees the National Archives and Records Administration — without explaining why.

Rubio was tapped to serve as acting archivist, a position he was permitted to hold for 300 days under federal law, or until the Senate confirmed a replacement. Trump, however, only just named a nominee last month.

Now, a Democratic senator from Illinois is questioning whether Rubio overstayed his term at the Archives and suggested the administration may have fudged the records to make it look like he stepped down within the time limit.

Rubio's staff and the National Archives both say Rubio surrendered his acting gig on Dec. 4, just within the 300-day limit. Senator Tammy Duckworth, in a previously unreported letter, last week

RUBIO, Page A4

All pleasantries aside

Wednesday: Stormy, windy. High 66-71, low 35-40.

Thursday: Much cooler. High 39-44, low 34-39.

Weather and comics, G6-7.

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The Supreme Court ruling against a Colorado law banning conversion therapy for LGBTQ+ minors could affect similar laws in New England. B1.

A judge ordered the halting of construction on President Trump's White House ballroom, saying Congress must first approve, then oversee, the work. A5.

The United States has secured the skies over Iran and sent lumbering B-52s into the attack. A3.

For the Boston area real estate market, problems are three-fold: Sales, inventory, and prices are all tumbling. B5.

Opponents of the rebuilding of White Stadium are enlisting artificial intelligence to help promote their position. B1.

Clover will close its plant-centric restaurant chain this spring if it does not find a buyer. B5.

For breaking news, updated stories, and more, visit our website: BostonGlobe.com

FINEST IN FOOD AND DRINKS

The 2026 James Beard finalists feature several New England establishments, including LOMA in Providence in the New Bar category. G1.



LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF