

The Boston Globe

MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2021

Luxuries, rents rise for Cape Cod visitors

Concierge. Hot tub. Where's the masseuse?

By Beth Teitell
GLOBE STAFF

We'll get to today's version of the Cape Cod vacation rental scene in a moment — to personal concierges and wine refrigerators, to \$10,000 weekly rentals that aren't even waterfront, to streaming TVs in every room, and outdoor living rooms nicer than anything most people dream of indoors. To hot tubs.

But first let's pause to remember how things were, in some sepia-toned past, when a family vacation on the Cape meant bringing your own linens and no AC, and if you wanted a masseuse to come over — actually forget it, that's not even something that would have occurred to anyone on the Cape back then.

Not in the '70s say, when Dennis O'Keefe's parents packed a family of seven into a two-bedroom cabin where the roof leaked, and the loft where he and a brother slept got so hot that the boys spent many nights on chairs on the porch. "I can still

smell the must," he said wistfully.

Not in the '80s, when Nicole Sullo and her family were thrilled, on the occasions her dad was lucky enough to win an employee lottery, to spend a week in a one-room cabin with a shared bathroom.

"There were about four 'fancier' cottages," said Sullo, now a teacher at a Catholic school in Medford, "but they were only fancy because they had separate bedrooms and their own bathrooms."

The family brought sheets and a gas burner, and, one year, a TV. "We

\$4,900

Amid pandemic-fueled demand, the average price for a one-week rental has hit nearly five grand (\$4,900), according to Annie Blatz, president of the CCAOR. That's up from \$4,300 last year and \$3,800 in 2019.

\$900

Toss in taxes and fees (for cleaning, booking, linen rental), and tack on an average of \$900, Blatz said.

CAPE COD, Page A12

Netanyahu is ousted as leader of Israel

Eight-party coalition ends his 12-year rule

By Patrick Kingsley
and Richard Pérez-Peña
NEW YORK TIMES

JERUSALEM — The long and divisive reign of Benjamin Netanyahu, the dominant Israeli politician of the past generation, officially ended Sunday night, at least for the time being, as the country's parliament gave its vote of confidence to a precarious coalition government stitched together by widely disparate anti-Netanyahu forces.

Naftali Bennett, a 49-year-old former aide to Netanyahu who opposes a Palestinian state and is considered to the right of his old ally, replaced him as prime minister after winning by just a single vote. Yair Lapid, a centrist leader and the new foreign minister, is set to take Bennett's place after two years, if their government can hold together that long.

They lead a fragile eight-party alliance ranging from far left to hard right, from secular to religious, that few expect to last a full



Naftali Bennett takes the reins from Benjamin Netanyahu after a 60-59 vote in parliament.



ISRAEL, Page A6

'This is a hit. Everyone wants to see a home run or a grand slam. This is not a grand slam. This is a single. A significant step in the right direction.'

JIM WESSLER, CEO of the Alzheimer's Association's Massachusetts/New Hampshire chapter



KAYANA SZYMCAK/NEW YORK TIMES

A study participant received Aduhelm at Butler Hospital in Providence. The FDA's approval of the Alzheimer's drug sparked a mixed reaction.

New Alzheimer's drug presents challenge to families

Sifting through the questions, hope surrounding Aduhelm

By Felice J. Freyer
GLOBE STAFF

The Food and Drug Administration's approval of a new drug to treat Alzheimer's disease, Aduhelm, sparked reactions ranging from jubilation to dismay. Some cheered the approval of the first new Alzheimer's drug in nearly two decades. Others denounced the FDA decision as premature, based on insufficient evidence.

People with the illness and their loved ones may feel caught in the middle, unsure what to do next. Here are the key points to understand.

It's not clear whether Aduhelm will have a significant effect on the course of the illness — but it might. The FDA approved the drug because it reduces a sticky protein, amyloid beta, that clumps in the brains of people with Alzheimer's. It's logical to think that might help, because the disease worsens as more plaques develop. But it's not known whether the amyloid causes Alzheimer's — or is merely a sign of it. And the studies showed mixed results on the drug's effects on cognitive decline.

In approving the treatment last week, the FDA didn't require the high level of evidence

that it usually does. Instead, it made its approval conditional on the completion of another clinical trial to prove the drug works, a process that will take years. Critics called this unusual approach reckless.

But Jim Wessler, CEO of the Alzheimer's Association's Massachusetts/New Hampshire chapter, pointed out the other side: "There is a bit of difference between some of the academically based specialists and the general public that are saying, 'Give me a chance here. I have a progressive degenerative disease.'"

ALZHEIMER'S, Page A9

In governor's race, history made in Mass.

Allen first Black woman to run in major party

By Emma Platoff
GLOBE STAFF

Harvard professor Danielle Allen will launch a historic campaign for governor on Tuesday, entering the Democratic field as the first Black woman to run for the executive office as part of a major party in Massachusetts at a time when women and people of color are breaking barriers in city and state government.

Allen, 49, joins what's likely to be a crowded primary with a hefty academic résumé but no experience holding elected office.

A MacArthur "Genius Grant" recipient and the head of Harvard's Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics since 2015, Allen says she is running to bring the lessons of her career as a political philosopher — that government must meet a high bar, serving all people — to Beacon Hill.



Danielle Allen is new to politics.

ALLEN, Page A9



Gray expectations

Monday: Cloudy, showers later
High: 70-75. Low: 62-67.

Tuesday: Cloudy, showers
Comics and Weather, **D4-5.**
Obituaries, **C11.**

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Family and friends of a Dedham teen who drowned on June 5 marched in his memory Sunday. B1.

World leaders at the G-7 summit agreed to back a global minimum tax, but did not set a timeline on climate goals. **A4.**

Ned Beatty, the versatile and prolific stage and screen actor, has died. He was 83. **Obituary, C11.**



Novak Djokovic rallied from a two-set deficit to win the French Open over Stefanos Tsitsipas and claim his 19th major title. **C6.**

Milton rallies around harassed couple

Support, sleuthing bring years of an unnerving campaign to an end

By Brian MacQuarrie
GLOBE STAFF

The harassment began arriving by mail five years ago, a mysterious string of 30 magazine subscriptions ordered under fake, homophobic names that were delivered to a gay married couple in Milton who had never asked for them.

LeeMichael McLean and Bryan Furze had a 2-year-old son, were making a mark in local government, and now faced an unnerving campaign of anonymous bigotry. "We were scared," Furze recalled. But five years later, the



ERIN CLARK/GLOBE STAFF

LeeMichael McLean (left) and Bryan Furze, with their son, Simon, at their Milton home. For years, someone had magazines sent to them subscribed under derogatory names.

couple's harassment has become a catalyst for an extraordinary show of community support, including the unsolicited help of a stranger with a knack for handwriting analysis.

After years of dead ends, police recently were led to a suspect, a neighbor who lives a few doors from the couple and had shared hellos, waves, and casual conversation with them. Now, Milton police are seeking a charge of criminal harassment against the man in Quincy District Court, according to Deputy Chief James O'Neil.

MILTON, Page A8



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THE BOSTON GLOBE MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2021 | BOSTONGLOBE.COM/BUSINESS

Struggling to pay your mortgage? More federal help is on the way, but time is of the essence

SEAN P. MURPHY
THE FINE PRINT

For anyone who is struggling to pay their mortgage due to loss of income during the pandemic, help may be on the way.

Over the next couple of months, \$180 million will begin flowing into Massachusetts to help homeowners pay their mortgages and avoid foreclosures, under a federal program called the Homeowner Assistance Fund.

Lewis Finfer, a longtime advocate with Massachusetts Communities Action Network, said most of the money

will be used to get mortgages current, but funds can also be used for back taxes and overdue utility bills, which also threaten homeownership.

Finfer said the money is contained in the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, passed by Congress and signed by President Biden in March. He said it could help tens of thousands of Massachusetts homeowners adversely affected by the pandemic.

But getting access to that money can be confusing, tedious, and time-consuming — especially for households already hustling to make ends meet.

Nonprofit housing groups are beginning to train their ground-level troops

on how to reach homeowners who are in distress, and how to guide them through a bureaucratic and technical process.

“The biggest hurdle may be finding the help you need, because these things can be complicated,” said Andrea Bopp Stark, staff attorney with the Boston-based National Consumer Law Center.

The worst mistake for anyone having trouble paying their mortgage would be to do nothing, Stark said.

To those who are struggling, Stark offers two pieces of advice: Call your mortgage servicer — today, if possible — and enlist help from a housing counselor who is trained and certified by the

US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Services provided by HUD’s housing counselors are free to those in need.

More than 40 housing counseling agencies in Massachusetts are listed online.

About 3 million homeowners are behind on their mortgages, but about 2 million of them have forbearance, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Forbearance is the legal term for lender-approved suspension of your mortgage payments. It gives homeowners temporary protection from foreclosure, ruined credit, and late fees while

they skip payments.

But forbearance does not go on indefinitely. For the many homeowners who were approved for forbearance last summer, their period of suspended payments may be ending in the next few months.

Missed payments are not waived, forgiven, or erased. They have to be made up somehow. And it’s up to the homeowner to negotiate a plan with the mortgage servicer.

Yet mortgage servicers are about to be inundated with requests for extensions of forbearance or approval of repayment plans. That’s why it’s a good

THE FINE PRINT, Page D3



PHOTOS BY SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

A play space for grown-ups

Level99 goes beyond hip bowling: It’s high-end food and high-intensity activity



By Janelle Nanos and Tim Logan
GLOBE STAFF

NATICK — The biggest challenge at Level99, a new entertainment complex for grown-ups opening at the Natick Mall on Monday, might be describing exactly what it is.

It was dreamed up by brains from Panera, Disney, Eastern Standard, and Night Shift Brewing, but even they struggle to define what goes on inside this vast sensory fun house of apocalyptic obstacle courses, mind-melting puzzles, and “crushable” IPAs.

“What it is, is unique and creative and different,” said Ron Shaich, Panera’s founder, who funneled \$12 million into the project. “I still can’t find the right words to describe it,” said restaurateur Andrew Holden, an Eastern Standard alum who’s in charge of a menu that includes slow-cooked short rib and “umami-bomb” salmon.

Level99 is the latest entrant in a growing category of venues that go beyond the hip bowling alley or urbane game room. It’s high-end food and high-intensity activity. One company calls it “competitive socializing” — and Level99 is Greater Boston’s most audacious effort yet.

Even Matt DuPlessie, the MIT-trained engineer who said he conceived of Level99 in a dream, acknowledges the challenge of describing his new venue in a sentence. “You have your work cut out for you,” he told a reporter while offering a tour of the space.

Challenge accepted: Level99 is what would happen if you held a MENSA meeting on an “American Ninja Warrior” course in what used to be a Sears store.

It’s 48,000 square feet, with a ninja room, an Aztec temple, and a ropes course traversing LED lava, among other challenges both physical and mental. It has fancy cocktails, lamb meatballs, and Detroit-style pizza for when you need a break to strategize.

And perhaps most importantly, Level99 is an entertainment concept that might be uniquely suited to this moment.

The pandemic has decimated brick-and-mortar retailers, leaving massive holes in suburban malls where anchor department stores used to thrive. Now, entrepreneurs are moving into those spaces with concepts intended to serve people craving new activities both for social and corporate events.

“We’re seeing it with shuffleboard. We’re seeing it with darts. Even Ping-Pong,” said Su-

LEVEL99, Page D2

Above, the entrance to Level99, funded by Panera founder Ron Shaich and featuring beer from Night Shift and food from the former Eastern Standard. At left is an arena game area and one of the challenge rooms at Level99.

CVS Health launches a \$100m fund

Pandemic’s effect on health care a factor

By Erin Brodwin
STAT

CVS Health recently expanded its investing efforts by launching the CVS Venture Fund, a \$100 million vehicle to provide promising upstarts with access to the Woonsocket, R.I., company’s wealth of financial and strategic expertise and generous physical footprint.

While CVS had backed more than 20 upstarts through a partnership between CVS Pharmacy and Aetna Ventures, it was spurred to create the new fund after seeing how the pandemic had changed health care delivery, including the rise of digital pharmacies and increasing interest in at-home testing and treatment, said Josh Flum, CVS’s executive vice president of enterprise strategy and digital.

In addition to the rise in virtual care, Flum is closely watching the proliferation of value-based care arrangements, the prioritization of more holistic forms of care that address factors including mental health, transportation, and housing, and the increasing power of the consumer to dictate their health care journey.

Flum spoke with STAT about his ambitions for the fund. This interview has been edited and condensed for length and clarity.

■ You already had a venture investment vehicle. Why did you create this new one?

We wanted the ability to have a dedicated effort that let us be more focused as we embark on more digital innovation. We wanted to more deeply connect to the venture community and to better understand innovation. So this will be a team under me that brings together people’s experience within CVS but also on the investment, banking, and finance side. We wanted to bring our knowledge of the venture world and combine that with people who understand our strategy. This allows us to connect the dots between CVS and the venture world.

This fund is a place where, as we look at the world, it’ll serve to help us see where there are new innovations, for example: How does care delivery evolve as we’re looking at virtual home care? Where are there innovative start-ups that connect with what we’re doing?

STAT, Page D3



GENE J. PUSKAR/ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE 2017

INSIDE

CYBERSECURITY

Computer networks targeted at US water, power plants. D2.



PHOTOS BY SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Two of the challenge rooms at Level99. At \$29.99 for two hours, Level99 is more affordable than many theme parks.

Level99, a play space for adults, debuts at Natick Mall

► **LEVEL99**
Continued from Page D1

san Walmesley, chief marketing officer at Puttshack, “an upscale, tech-infused mini-golf experience” that will open next year in Boston’s Seaport. “More and more people want to be doing something when they go out, not just having a drink.”

Previous waves of large-format entertainment-oriented retail have come and gone, from arcades to laser tag to the food halls and movie theaters that anchored big new developments all over Boston before the pandemic.

And the latest round of projects requires unproven businesses to take out long-term leases on big, expensive, spaces that could be difficult to afford if the novelty wears off.

Shaich said he’s convinced the market for Level99 is there, and he’s confident enough that he now owns half the business. He compared Level99 to Panera, saying it’s another unique concept that will define an entirely new category. Fast-casual dining, to which Panera was an early entrant, is now a \$60 billion industry.

“It’s not Chuck E. Cheese on steroids, and it’s definitely not Dave & Buster’s,” he said (although it is physically next-door

to one of the arcade’s franchises). You can play video games at Dave & Busters. You feel like you’re inside one at Level99.

And unlike a trampoline park or an escape room, Level99’s challenges will keep changing.

Level99 backers hope working with Night Shift and alums from Eastern Standard will draw suburbanites who used to live downtown — even if the business is in a mall mere steps from a Sbarro.

There are more experiments like this coming, predicted Mike Kelleher, head of specialty leasing at Federal Realty Investment Trust, which owns Assembly Row in Somerville.

“People got very imaginative during the pandemic,” he said. “These kind of venues can be really interesting for shopping centers. We’re going to see a lot more come out.”

Puttshack, for instance, recently leased roughly 25,000 square feet at the Echelon complex in the Seaport. That’s enough for four indoor mini-golf courses, plus a large bar that will serve fancier food than your typical putt-putt snack bar.

On a slightly smaller scale, there’s PKL Boston, the brainchild of a pair of enthusiasts of pickleball, a fast-growing sport that fans compare to badminton



The Night Shift Brewing Taproom at Level99, a 48,000-square-foot entertainment complex with a variety of challenging activities both physical and mental.

with a Wiffle ball, or Ping-Pong on a tennis court.

They’re opening a pop-up at Assembly Row this summer and have leased 21,000 square feet for a permanent location at an as-yet-undisclosed spot in South Boston, to open next year.

“It’s where the competition of sports meets your favorite hang-

out with your crew,” she said. “Just good vibes, good food, and good drinks.”

Good vibes are great. But Level99 has even bigger aims.

DuPlessie’s resume includes a stint doing billion-dollar theme park build-outs at Disney’s Animal Kingdom hotel and Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge.

Now his Norwood company, Box Fort, builds interactives for museums and theater productions. They also conceived each of the challenge rooms and whittled 2,000 original ideas to the 43 that made the cut.

The rooms are designed to be difficult — and yes, they’re both frustrating and fun — and would

take over 30 hours to complete.

At \$29.99 for two hours, Level99 is more affordable than many theme parks, and more hands-on than a museum. There’s also beer. And lots of technology. RFID bracelets give visitors access to rooms and keep track of their points. That data also inform designers what challenges are the most difficult and the most entertaining.

“We really think about Level99 as a data company that’s trying to figure out what fun is,” DuPlessie said.

He and Shaich hope their Natick location will be the first of many, a chance to create and shuffle challenge rooms from one venue to another to keep the experience fresh.

“I just love to make environments that feel magical. You have the chance to do things that maybe you’ve watched on TV or you’ve played in a video game, but feel like they couldn’t possibly be real,” he said. “And I like to make them real.”

Janelle Nanos can be reached at janelle.nanos@globe.com. Follow her on Twitter @janellelanos. Tim Logan can be reached at timothy.logan@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter at @bytimlogan.

Despite years of threats, water and power grids still insecure

By **Kartikay Mehrotra**
BLOOMBERG NEWS

When the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power was hacked in 2018, it took a mere six hours.

Early this year, an intruder lurked in hundreds of computers related to water systems across the United States.

In Portland, Ore., burglars installed malicious computers onto a grid providing power to a chunk of the Northwest.

Two of those cases — L.A. and Portland — were tests. The water threat was real, discovered by the cybersecurity firm Dragos.

All three drive home a point long known but, until recently, little appreciated: The digital security of US computer networks controlling the machines that produce and distribute water and power is woefully inadequate, a low priority for operators and regulators — posing a terrifying national threat.

“If we have a new world war tomorrow and have to worry about protecting infrastructure against a cyberattack from Russia or China, then no, I don’t think we’re where we’d like to be,” said Andrea Carcano, a co-founder of Nozomi Networks, a control system security company.

Hackers working for profit and espionage have long threatened US information systems. But in the last six months, they have targeted companies running operational networks like the Colonial Pipeline fuel system, with greater persistence. These are the systems where water can be contaminated, a gas line can spring a leak, or a substation can explode.

The threat has been around for at least a decade — and the fears about it for a generation — but cost and indifference posed obstacles to action.

It isn’t entirely clear why ransomware hackers — those who

use malicious software to block access to a computer system until a sum of money has been paid — have recently moved from small-scale universities, banks, and local governments to energy companies, meatpacking plants, and utilities. Experts suspect increased competition and bigger payouts, as well as foreign government involvement. The shift is finally drawing serious attention to the problem.

The US government began taking small steps to defend cybersecurity in 1998, when the Clinton administration identified 14 private sectors as critical infrastructure, including chemicals, defense, energy, and financial services. This triggered regulation in finance and power. Other industries were slower to protect their computers, including the oil and gas sector, said Rob Lee, the founder of Dragos.

One of the reasons is the operational and financial burden of pausing production and installing new tools.

Much of the infrastructure running technology systems is too old for sophisticated cybersecurity tools. Ripping out and replacing hardware is costly, as are service outages. Network administrators fear doing the job piecemeal may be worse because it could increase a network’s exposure to hackers, said Nozomi’s Carcano.

Although the Biden administration’s budget includes \$20 billion to upgrade the country’s grid, this comes after a history of shoulder shrugging by federal and local authorities.

Even where companies in underregulated sectors like oil and gas have prioritized cybersecurity, they’ve been met with little support.

Take the case of ONE Gas Inc. in Tulsa, Okla.

Niyo Little Thunder Pearson was oversecured cybersecurity there in January 2020 when his



MARK KAUZLARICH/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Hackers have long threatened US information systems; now they are turning to large utilities.

team was alerted to malware trying to enter its operational system — the side that controls natural gas traffic across Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas.

For two days, his team was in a dogfight with the hackers, who moved laterally across the network. Ultimately, Pearson’s team managed to expel the intruders.

When Richard Robinson at Cynalytica fed the corrupted files into his own identification program, ONE Gas learned it was dealing with malware capable of executing ransomware, exploiting industrial control systems, and harvesting user credentials. At its core were digital footprints found in some of the most malicious code of the last decade.

Pearson tried to bring the data to the FBI, but it would accept it only on a compact disc, he said. His system couldn’t burn the data onto a CD. When he alerted the Department of Homeland Security and sent it through a secure portal, he never heard back.

Robinson was convinced a nation-state operator had just attacked a regional natural gas provider. So he gave a presentation to the DHS, the departments of Energy and Defense,

and the intelligence community on a conference call. He never heard back from them, either.

“We got zero, and that was what was really surprising,” he said. “Not a single individual reached back out to find out more about what happened to ONE Gas.”

The agencies did not respond to requests for comment.

Such official indifference — even hostility — hasn’t been uncommon.

The 2018 break-in to the L.A. water and power system was another example.

These weren’t criminals but hackers for hire, paid to break into the system to help it improve security.

After the initial intrusion, the city’s security team asked the hackers to assume the original source of compromise had been fixed (it hadn’t) while hunting for a new one. They found many. From the end of 2018 through most of 2019, the hired hackers discovered 33 compromised paths, according to a person familiar with the test who wasn’t authorized to speak publicly.

Bloomberg News reviewed a report produced by the hackers for Mayor Eric Garcetti’s office. It described 10 vulnerabilities

‘We’ve got to make sure the bad guys understand there will be consequences.’

TOM FANNING
Southern Co.

found during their own test, along with 23 problems researchers had discovered as early as 2008. (Bloomberg News won’t publish information that hackers could use to attack the utility.) The person familiar with the operation discovered that few, if any, of the 33 security gaps have been fixed since the report’s submission in September 2019.

It gets worse.

Soon after the hackers produced the report, Garcetti terminated their contract, according to a preliminary legal claim filed by the hackers, hired from Ardent Technology Solutions in March 2020. The company alleges the mayor fired the hackers as a “retaliatory measure” for the scathing report.

Ellen Cheng, a utility spokeswoman, acknowledged that Ardent’s contract was terminated but said it had nothing to do with the report’s substance.

She said the utility frequently partners with public agencies to improve security, including scanning for potential cyber threats.

“We want to assure our customers and stakeholders that cybersecurity is of the utmost importance to LADWP and that appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that our cybersecurity is compliant with all applicable laws and security standards,” Cheng said in a statement.

Garcetti’s office did not respond to a request for comment.

The case of the Oregon network, the Bonneville Power Administration, is no more encouraging. The testing went on for years, beginning in 2014, and involved an almost shocking level of intrusion, followed by a pair of public reports. One published in 2017 admonished the agency for repeatedly failing to take action.

By 2020, two-thirds of the more than 100 flaws identified by the Department of Energy and the utility’s own security team had not been resolved, according to interviews with more than a dozen former and current Bonneville security personnel and contractors and former members of the Department of Energy cyber team, in addition to documents, some accessed via Freedom of Information Act requests.

Doug Johnson, a spokesperson for Bonneville, said a team reviewed the security reports in mid-2019 and that efforts to remediate those are ongoing. The utility acknowledged hackers were able to breach certain BPA systems in those test hacks, but Johnson said “at no time were they able to gain access to any of the BPA systems that monitor or control the power grid.”

Dragos estimated in its 2020 cybersecurity report that 90 percent of its new customers had “extremely limited to no visibility” in their industrial control systems. That means that once inside, hackers have free rein to collect sensitive data, investigate system configurations, and choose the right time to wage an attack.

The industry is finally focused on fighting back.

“If the bad guys come after us, there has to be an eye-for-an-eye, or better,” said Tom Fanning, chief executive of Southern Co. “We’ve got to make sure the bad guys understand there will be consequences.”