

The Boston Globe

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MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024

Region's sky watchers eagerly await eclipse

People trek north to enjoy path of totality; closer to home, viewing parties planned

By John Hilliard
GLOBE STAFF

Well ahead of Monday's historic solar eclipse, Brian Mernoff wasn't taking any chances. He and his family booked their hotel room in Stowe, Vt., a year ago, and made the roughly 200-mile drive from Acton early Sunday morning.

Sure, if they stuck to Boston, they'd see a spectacular partial eclipse. But they wanted to see the

moon completely obscure the sun. Now, there is no way they'll miss it, said Mernoff, a 34-year-old science educator who manages MIT's AeroAstro Communication Lab.

"I just like exploring," he said. "A total solar eclipse is a very different way to see the sun and the moon."

The eclipse will plunge a huge swath of the continental United States — from Texas to Maine — into darkness along its path of totali-

ty. In New England, that path cutting across northern Vermont and New Hampshire, along with much of Maine, is drawing a crush of travelers to communities all along

►Couples to wed during event. B1.

the route.

Traffic wasn't reported to be so bad heading up north over the weekend. But getting back home to Massachusetts, settle in for a long ride.

"We've been told it's going to be like getting out of Gillette Stadium,"

said Chandra Adams who drove up to South Burlington, Vt., from Newton with her family. "It's going to be brutal, but we will deal."

AAA is comparing travel this week to Thanksgiving or Christmas, thanks in part to overlap with spring break vacationers. And hotels are booked solid. Many of those fortunate enough to get a place to stay had to pay at least a 50 percent mark-up, according to AAA.

But the eclipse also promises to turn New England into one heck of a party. Across the region, viewing

ECLIPSE, Page A10

Child-care funds dip, worrying providers

Grants are threatened due to greater-than-expected growth in popular program

By Samantha J. Gross
GLOBE STAFF

Jennifer Simpson was floored last month when she learned that the monthly check she gets from the state to help run her home child-care business was going to drop drastically.

"I am in panic mode," she said.

Come May, the \$1,100 check that Simpson receives every month from the Commonwealth Cares for Children program — known among providers as "C3 grants" — will plummet to as low as \$290 until the end of June, a nearly 74 percent drop.

"I could go elsewhere and make more than \$20 an hour," she said in an interview from her Southbridge home, where she has operated her eight-seat child-care business since 2014. "It's hard because I love what I do."

State officials say the drastic reductions in grants are being driven by "greater than expected growth" in the C3 program in recent months from providers that has stretched the existing pot of money too thin. While the overall funding for the

CHILD CARE, Page A10



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

Some former members allege they faced abusive practices while living in the Community of Jesus, seen from above in Orleans.

In secretive enclave, roots of trauma

Airman who self-immolated in protest grew up in Cape Cod compound

By Elizabeth Koh
GLOBE STAFF

ORLEANS — For more than 50 years the Community of Jesus has been a persistent, if little-known, fixture on the shores of Cape Cod Bay.

The Christian enclave casts itself as a haven for roughly 200 members who choose to live a monastic life, following Benedictine traditions of worship. They interact rarely with the public, save for occasional open services at their church or performances held by their community arts groups.

From the outside, the Community of Jesus seems a peaceful place, unmistakably centered on faith: a cluster of white Cape-style houses, many sporting Biblical names — Gethsemane, Jerusalem, Nazareth — with a soaring bell tower behind. On the lawn spelled out in large white capital letters, like a sort of corporate logo, is the word "cove-



NAUSET REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Aaron Bushnell, here in a yearbook photo, spent his youth in the religious community's insular environment.

nant."

It is a community that firmly stands apart from the seasonal bustle of Cape culture, but has a considerable history, not all of it comfortable to recall. Since the 1960s, the group has grown to encompass roughly 60 acres of family homes and church buildings — including a stone basilica — all assessed at more than \$60 million. Its influence has spread from the Cape compound to a Christian boarding school with which it was informally associated that operated for more than 30 years in Ontario, Canada.

But many former members say that behind the group's seemingly peaceful exterior is something else: a history of practices which the former members brand as abusive that have been going on for decades.

Though defectors have raised these concerns over many years, the allegations have mounted in the last decade, particularly after

BUSHNELL, Page A7

Israel pulls troops from key Gazan city

War enters seventh month; truce talks open in Cairo

By Adam Rasgon, Patrick Kingsley, and Ephrat Livni
NEW YORK TIMES

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military said Sunday it had withdrawn a division of ground troops from the southern Gaza Strip, as international mediators gathered with hopes of brokering a temporary cease-fire six months into a war that has now become the longest involving Israel since the 1980s.

Israel has significantly reduced the number of troops it has on the ground in Gaza over the past several months. Only a fraction of the soldiers that it deployed in the territory earlier in the war against Hamas remain.

Now, the last group of Israeli soldiers in the southern city of Khan Younis has left Gaza "to recuperate and prepare for future operations," the army said. The withdrawal of the soldiers, members of the 98th Division, means that no Israeli troops are actively maneuvering in southern Gaza, the Israeli news media reported.

But Israeli officials made it clear that the army

MIDEAST, Page A6



STEPH CHAMBERS/GETTY IMAGES

CHAMPS — The South Carolina Gamecocks took the 2024 NCAA women's basketball crown, beating the Iowa Hawkeyes, 87-75. C1.

A wall with posters of people taken hostage by Hamas, vandalized on March 17, was rededicated in Newton. B1.

A high-end water tumbler is selling out in stores. D1.

Moonday, moonday

Monday: Mostly sunny.

High 60-65, low 43-48.

Tuesday: Sunny but cooler.

High 52-57, low 38-43.

Sunrise: 6:14. Sunset: 7:18.

Comics and Weather, D5-6.

Obituaries, C8-9.

Individual migrants fill Boston's shelters

City-run, nonprofit facilities above capacity amid a surge in men

By Niki Griswold
GLOBE STAFF

When Mamadou Diallo arrived at Logan Airport in January, he didn't know a single person in Boston.

The 28-year-old, originally from the West African country of Guinea, had heard the city had resources to help migrants like himself get on their feet.

"I came here for a better future, better opportunities," Diallo told the Globe through a translator, adding he wants to find a job so he can send money home to his parents and five siblings. But with no connections and nowhere to stay, he's spent the past two months sleeping at the Pine Street Inn men's shelter.

And he's not the only one. While the headlines and political debate have focused on the wave of immigrant families, and the resultant strain on overwhelmed state-run shelters, individual migrants are exacting a similar toll on the system of city-run and



LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF

nonprofit shelters in Boston.

According to Boston officials, individual migrants now make up 25 percent to 30 percent of the people staying in city shelters, most of whom are men, and their added numbers have filled these shelters well beyond their capacity amid the ongoing housing crisis.

Currently, about 475 to 500 men are staying at the city-run shelter on South-

ampton Street every night, which has a capacity for 380, including in overflow spaces, according to the Boston Public Health Commission. To accommodate the extra residents, staff each night place mats on any available floor space that wouldn't pose a fire hazard, the Globe observed on a recent tour of the facility. Even then, dozens end up spending the night upright in hard plas-

MIGRANTS, Page A6

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