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VOLUME 275
NUMBER 92

Suggested retail price
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\$1.00 outside of
Greater Boston

The Boston Globe

ON LITTLE CAT FEET

TODAY: Early fog, rain, drizzle.
High 58-63. Low 44-49.
TOMORROW: Cooler, rain.
High 51-56. Low 43-48.
HIGH TIDE: 4:53 a.m. 5:41 p.m.
SUNRISE: 6:25 a.m. SUNSET: 7:11 p.m.
FULL REPORT: PAGE B15

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2009

In the news



The Justice Department sought to overturn the conviction of former senator Ted Stevens of Alaska because prosecutors withheld evidence in his corruption trial. Stevens was voted out of office after being found guilty. **A2.**

Suspected US missiles killed 14 people in Pakistan's border region in an attack aimed at a Taliban militant who has threatened the United States. **A3.**

Guidelines on mental disorders were written largely by psychiatrists with financial ties to drug companies and focus heavily on medication, Boston researchers said. **B1.**

Filene's Basement struggled to satisfy more than a dozen vendors that have not been paid for months and could push the retailer into bankruptcy. **B7.**

Hundreds of medical records from Acton will be destroyed without patients' knowledge and without rules that would let a state board call a halt. **B1.**

A judge granted President Obama's aunt 10 more months to fight deportation, a delay that was called typical for the backlogged court. **B1.**

The Senate rejected a Republican plan to freeze spending on domestic programs as work continued on a \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint. **A10.**

Israel's new foreign minister spoke out against concessions to the Palestinians, stirring concern over peace efforts. **A6.**

Secretary of State William F. Galvin sued a company that steered funds to Ponzi schemer Bernard L. Madoff, saying the firm failed in its oversight. **B7.**

The Supreme Court dealt a blow to environmentalists by ruling that cost can be a factor in deciding whether power plants must protect fish. **A4.**

Have a news tip? E-mail newstip@globe.com or call 617-929-TIPS (8477). Other contact information, **B2.**

POINT OF VIEW:
JOAN VENNOCHI

"Now that we don't have Marian Walsh to kick around anymore, how about kicking around the larger issue of secretive state agencies stocked with richly paid executives who answer to practically no one?"

Opinion, A15.

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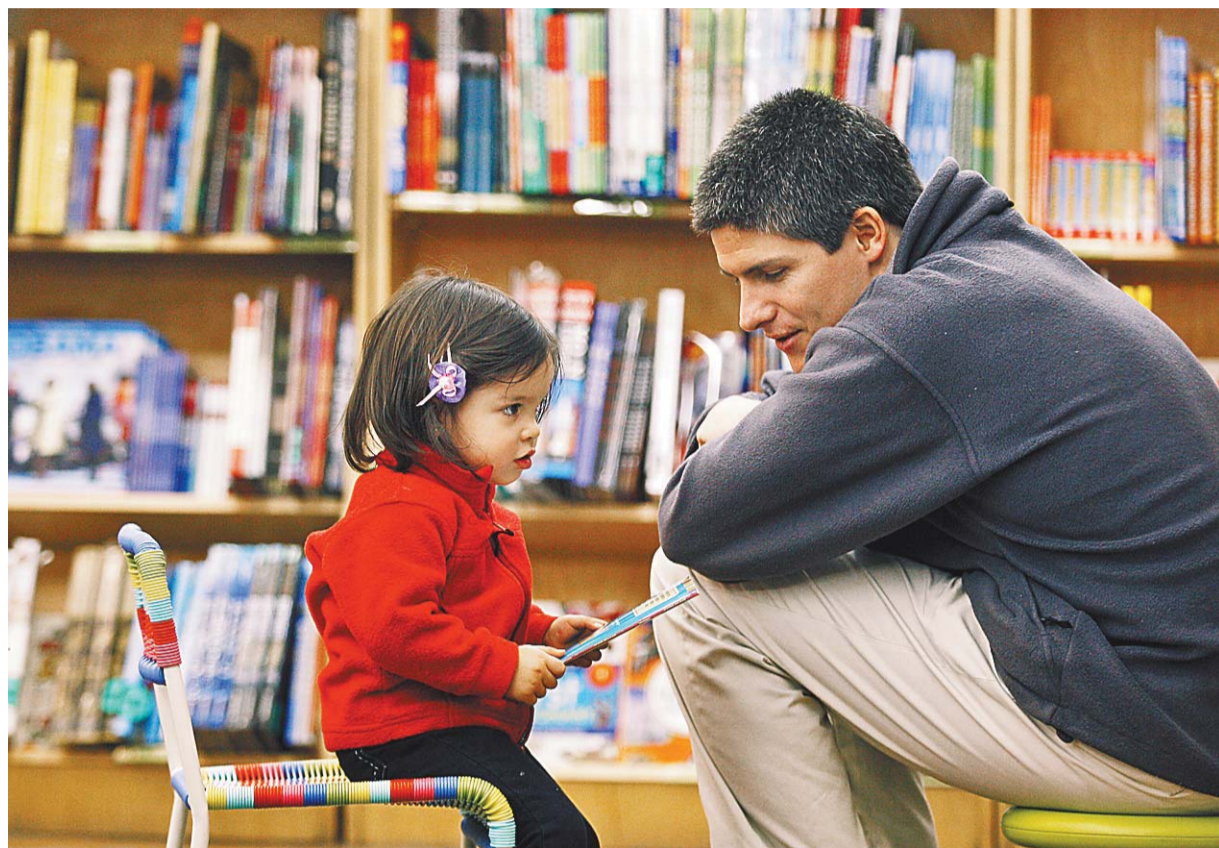
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'I like the idea of supporting a local store. It doesn't feel like a McDonald's when you walk in.'

PAUL TOOMEY, lounging and reading at Brookline Booksmith



Amanada Springmuller, 18 months, talked about a book with her father, Daniel, at Brookline Booksmith.

UNCHAINED SUCCESS

Independent bookstores holding up vs. big rivals

By Irene Sege
GLOBE STAFF

BROOKLINE — Signs on the doors of two Coolidge Corner bookstores told a tale challenging the conventional wisdom. The one at Barnes & Noble said "Closed." The one on the independent Brookline Booksmith welcomed the chain's customers and solicited their suggestions. Now, three months after Barnes & Noble departed, Booksmith savors modest growth in the midst of a recession that is battering most retailers.

"I do think there's a swing back to valuing local and independent," said Booksmith manager Dana Brigham. "Small and local can be good places to do business and very healthy for your community."

Shelf life in the US

Independent bookstores:
2,200

Chains:

1 2 3 4 1,899

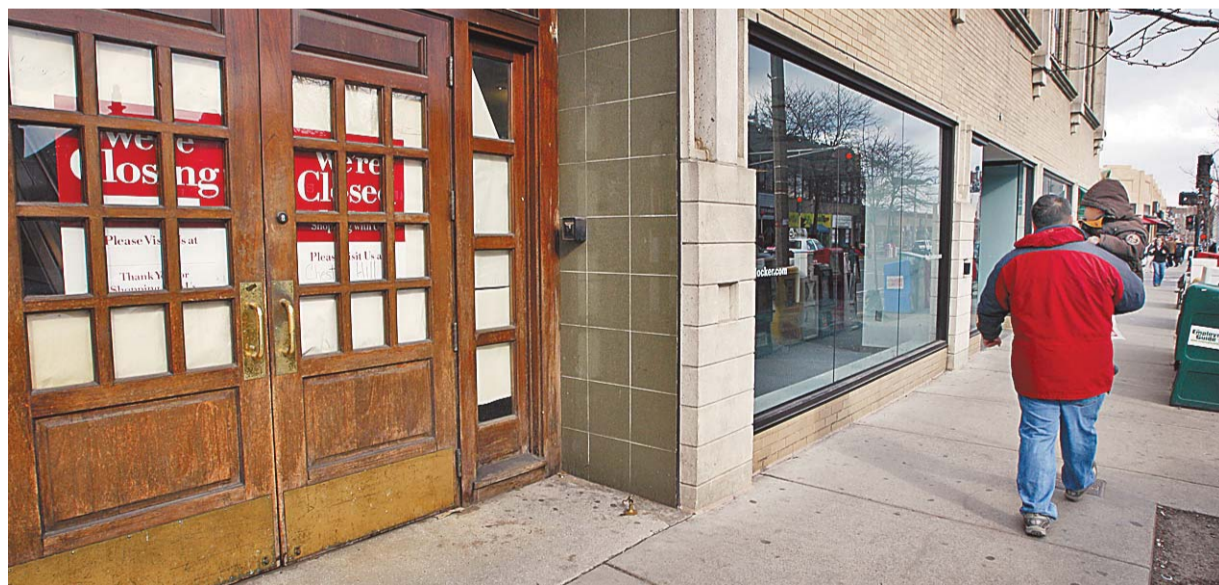
1. Barnes & Noble: 778
2. Borders: 515
3. Waldenbooks: 386
4. Books-A-Million: 220

SOURCES: American Booksellers Association; Barnes & Noble; Borders Group

Booksmith is not the only independent bookstore proving surprisingly sturdy in a stormy economy. Other small booksellers are withstanding the downturn with the same combination of community involvement, personalized service, events, e-commerce, and such extras as cafés or gifts or used books, that enabled them to survive the onset of megachains and Amazon.com.

"There's a standard line that the independents are collapsing and they're all going to disappear soon. I think that's a little dated," said John Mutter, editor of the online newsletter Shelf Awareness, which tracks the book industry. "Most of the independents that are left are much stronger than the group as a whole before."

INDEPENDENTS, Page A8



Just up the street from the Booksmith is the former Barnes & Noble bookstore that closed New Year's Eve.

Illegal police parking unabated

Officers still using spaces reserved for handicapped

By Emily K. Williams and Casey Ramsdell
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

In February, when the Globe detailed widespread parking violations by officers outside the Boston police headquarters, department officials vowed a swift and certain crackdown. The violations, including the routine use of handicapped-designated parking, were deemed "unacceptable."

By last week, the department seemed a little more accepting. The crackdown had yet to come. In fact, Elaine Driscoll, department spokeswoman, declared the problem to be "chronic."

Since mid-February, the illegal parking has continued unabated and largely unsanctioned. Department employees regularly leave their private cars and unmarked police vehicles in 11 spaces marked for the handicapped and in other tow zones outside the Tremont Street headquarters, according to periodic observations by Globe



A Boston police cruiser was parked yesterday in a space reserved for MBTA buses

correspondents. The Globe saw no evidence that violators are being ticketed.

Not so, Driscoll said. For weeks now, she said, a police officer has been assigned daily to write tickets at headquarters.

PARKING, Page A9

Lobbyists under scrutiny linked to Capuano donors

Earmarks went to Mass. clients

By Alan Wirzbicki
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON — US Representative Michael E. Capuano, Democrat of Somerville, received more than \$60,000 in campaign contributions from donors associated with a high-powered lobbying firm at the center of an FBI investigation, and inserted earmarks for three of the firm's Massachusetts clients into recent defense spending bills.

The firm, the PMA Group, is reportedly under federal scrutiny for using straw donors to funnel illegal campaign contributions to

dozens of lawmakers. In an interview with the Globe, Capuano said that he has no way of knowing if the donations his campaign received were made illegally, but that he has given \$60,500 in donations from the firm's employees and its political action committee to Boston-area charities to "hold myself to a higher standard."

He said he has not been contacted by the FBI. Capuano received the 10th-most donations from PMA of any lawmaker, according to an analysis by the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics of the firm's giving since 1989.

Capuano said his earmarks to **CAPUANO, Page A10**

Menino says city won't back Tall Ships

Defiant Sail Boston insists event will go on

By Michael Levenson
GLOBE STAFF

Brushing aside a deadline set last month by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Sail Boston officials failed yesterday to deliver a plan to pay the city for an estimated \$2 million in public safety costs for its tall ships festival this summer. But in a rare show of defiance, Sail Boston said the ships would come anyway.

The declaration incensed the mayor, who said he would withhold all city services for the nautical extravaganza — no police officers, no cleanup crews — even though nearly 1 million people are projected to descend on the city to witness the spectacle of 50 tall ships from 20 countries parading across the harbor.

"Then it's a public safety crisis, because we're not going to be there," a visibly angry Menino said. "When you plan an event of this magnitude, I would think you'd have the finances in hand before you make a commitment, and we were never brought into the financial piece for the last nine months."

Sail Boston said it was still working on a finance plan. But the showdown cast the mayor in the unusual role of fighting against, instead of welcoming, a major tourist attraction to his city. It also threatened to cast a pall over one of the city's most widely anticipated spectacles.

City officials said yesterday that they were **TALL SHIPS, Page A13**

US and Russia to begin talks on arms cuts

By Michael D. Shear and Scott Wilson
WASHINGTON POST

LONDON — President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced the start of negotiations yesterday on a new strategic arms-control treaty that would cut each nation's long-range nuclear arsenal further than previous agreements, inaugurating what both men indicated would be a more pragmatic relationship than the one pursued by their predecessors.

The 70-minute meeting, held at the residence of the US ambassador to Britain, produced a joint statement pledging cooperation on issues including Afghanistan, Iran's nuclear program, nuclear proliferation and reviving the global economy. It also noted that differences remain over US plans to deploy a missile-defense shield in Eastern Europe, Russia's war with Georgia last year, and NATO's planned expansion deeper into what Russia considers its traditional sphere of influence.

Speaking to reporters from a sitting area over **OBAMA, Page A12**

Illegal parking by police unabated

► **PARKING**
Continued from Page A1

But from mid-February to last week, just 20 were written, Driscoll said.

On one March day alone, there were 25 vehicles illegally parked in spots marked as a tow zone in front of headquarters.

Late yesterday, there were another 25 cars parked illegally outside headquarters. That included four in spots reserved for the handicapped, one blocking a hydrant, and two parked in the MBTA bus stop.

The practice extends beyond headquarters to many precinct houses:

In East Boston, officers park their personal cars or police cruisers in two MBTA bus stops across the street from one another outside the district station on narrow Meridian Street, according to reporters' observations over several days. When buses stop, so does traffic.

Near the downtown district station on New Sudbury Street at Government Center, many Boston police officers park their private cars wherever they please, including, one day last week, next to four fire hydrants within a stone's throw of the station.

Top city officials were reluctant to take a position on the situation.

Police Commissioner Edward F. Davis declined to be interviewed. Mayor Thomas M. Menino, approached by a reporter, refused to answer any questions. Dot Joyce, the mayor's spokeswoman, said the city does not condone illegal parking by police officers and expects the Police Department to get its officers to obey traffic regulations.

But Joyce said: "The number one priority for police officers is fighting crime. Writing tickets is not their number one job priority."

Added Driscoll: "We could have an officer write tickets all day long. But that's not the most efficient use of his time."

Myra Berloff, director of the Massachusetts Office on Disability, said in an interview that she was saddened to learn that police have done little since February to solve the problem, especially the illegal use of parking spots set aside for the handicapped.

"Simply saying they're out fighting crime doesn't give them carte blanche to break the law," Berloff said.

Compounding the problem is the fact that the Transportation Department's 190 traffic enforcement officers, who write tickets for a living, are barred from venturing near police stations. Last week, Transportation Commissioner Thomas J. Tinlin insisted anew that the police are responsible for solving what Tinlin called their "curbside management" problem.

Curbside at police headquarters, not much has changed. In February, the Globe reported that after nearly two months of regular visits scores of officers entering and leaving the headquarters every day paid no heed to department scofflaws who parked in the 11 handicapped-designated spots, as well as spaces reserved for MBTA buses or posted as tow zones because of hydrants and crosswalks. Some parked on sidewalks. Every now and then, a car would have a ticket on the windshield, placed there by the car's owner to signal immunity from real ticketing.

The day Driscoll said the illegal parking would be stopped, there were six cars illegally parked in spaces designated for the handicapped.

Over the course of 12 days in late February and March, Globe reporters observed 50 vehicles parked illegally in spots marked for the handicapped, some of them repeat violators. None had been ticketed. In other designated tow zones, the violations have continued.

That comes as no surprise to Jeffrey W. Conley, executive director of the Boston Finance Commission, a state-appointed watchdog agency. Boston police officers, Conley said, know they are immune from parking tickets no matter where they go in Boston.

"Even if they are out for dinner," he said, "they put their ticket books or other police identifiers on car dashboards, and they know they won't be ticketed."

Conley added: "Maybe it's time for Commissioner Davis to put his foot down and insist that his own officers obey traffic laws."

At the downtown station, the department appears to have en-

abled illegal parking, issuing 200 blue windshield stickers labeled Alpha-1 to officers so they can park their private autos under signs that read, "Tow Zone. Reserved for permitted police vehicles only." The personal autos of officers, Police Superintendent Daniel Linskey said, are considered "permitted police vehicles."

There are no more than 50 such parking spots, leaving many other officers to park by

hydrants, in handicapped spots, on corners, and under signs that read, "Tow Zone. No Parking. Reserved for Boston Police marked A-1 cruisers."

With private cars jammed into spots reserved for cruisers, the officers driving the cruisers often double park outside the station. So do some police officers who cannot find anywhere else to put their personal cars.

Each time Globe reporters vis-

ited the downtown station, there was an officer's personal auto parked in an angled spot that partially blocks an exit lane from the adjacent Government Center Parking Garage, where civilians who commute by car pay \$350 a month.

Linskey, who heads the Bureau of Field Services, said he has met with all the area commanders and ordered them to crack down on illegal parking.

As for East Boston, he said he contacted the commander and ordered that officers cease using the MBTA stops.

He said that many of the officers who have free parking downtown need to have spaces because they keep their riot gear in their cars.

Linskey said, however, that he will not condone police officers parking at hydrants and the like. To help, Linskey asked members of the public who see "outlandish" cases of illegal parking by police officers to call his office at 617-343-4300.

In addition to Williams and Ramsdell, this article was reported by Colby Cremins, Jennifer Skala, Emma Johnson, Anne Baker, and Danielle Capalbo for a course in investigative reporting at Northeastern University. Their work was overseen, and this article was edited by Northeastern journalism professor Walter V. Robinson, former editor of the Globe Spotlight Team. He can be reached at wrobinson@globe.com. Confidential messages can be left at 617-929-3334.

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