

ComfortZone

GET OUT



MICHAEL BAILEY/GLOBE STAFF

By Michael J. Bailey
GLOBE STAFF

Does being in a gym nowadays give your nerves more of a workout than your muscles?

Skip the Nautilus machines and treadmills. If you live in Boston and bike, there are scads of outdoor options that'll pump up your heart and clear out your head.

One top of the Hub spot for such a trek is Telegraph Hill in Southie, the sole remaining hill of Dorchester Heights, which played the starring role in kicking the Brits out of Boston in 1776 (yes, as with so many things Boston, you'll get a sprinkling of history along with your sweat).

The best workout heading up the hill is the long steady climb of Sixth Street. At the top, veer to the right of old South Boston High and onto Thomas Park, a semicircle around the hill. Lock your bike at Thomas and Old Harbor Street and climb the 55 stairs to a National Park Service site atop the hill.

A brisk walk around the park is quick — it's only a smidge over 5 acres. But there's plenty of space for stretches, pushups, and crunches, and, with some imagination, plyometrics.

Unfortunately, the stairwell up the 115-foot white marble tower commemorating that 1776 victory, General George Washington's first, has long been closed. And the Park Service is overdue for repairs on several sections of stairs and side-walks.

Social distancing is presently not an issue. At high noon on sunny Wednesday, dogs outnumbered folks five to four, with one person lying on a towel and soaking up the sun.

What you'll also soak up is one of the best panoramic views south of Boston. To the north is the city's skyline, to the west, upper Roxbury, and the south offers fingers from Dorchester Bay, the urban beauty of Corita Kent's gas tank, and the Blue Hills.

If you need any more inspiration to keep the sweat flowing,

then soak up the history of this spot as well. It's one of the most remarkable stories of the Revolution: In the dead of winter, a group of Patriots sledded 60 tons of cannons and other armaments 300 miles from Fort Ticonderoga through dense wilderness and Berkshire mountains. They were led by a most improbable commander still awaiting his commission: Henry Knox, a portly Bostonian bookstore owner who had little military experience but became a genius in artillery and logistics from poring over military history books.

Hop back on your saddle, follow Thomas Park, and turn right on G Street, which becomes one of the most exhilarating rides in Boston. It feels like a 45 degree incline when ripping down it, although it's more like 20 or so.

If it's high tide, end your workout with a dip at the beach at G street.

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BUNDLE OF JOY

In a new reading box, two R.I. thrillers, a candle, and chocolate

By Diti Kohli
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Ink Fish Books' new Rhody Reader Box bundles what some would call required reading with trinkets inspired by the Ocean State.

The September box includes a signed copy of best-selling author Vanessa Lillie's newest book, "For The Best," in which a murder suspect tries to prove her innocence through a vlog. Also inside is a copy of her earlier release, "Little Voices," an Aster Ocean State candle, whiskey-infused chocolate from Aura's Chocolate Bar, and a handmade paper flower crafted by a local librarian. Ten percent of the sales from the boxes, each priced at \$44.99, will go to the Rhode Island Writers Colony, which supports writers of color in residency programs.

Lisa Valentino, who founded Ink Fish in Warren last year, said the box is a way of highlighting women-owned small businesses and celebrating the state she loves. "It's a unique opportunity for us to showcase Rhode Island and the talent we have here," she said.

The items themselves relate to Lillie's thrillers, which both take place in the small state. A Providence resident herself, Lillie identifies deeply with the stage from her novels.

"Even though I think Rhode Island is the coolest place, there's not a lot of books based here," she said. "And people like reading thrillers about their home — they can spot the houses and the real places."

When patrons buy a Rhody Reader Box, they also gain access to an exclusive book club chat with Lillie to discuss "For The Best." Readers can add a signed copy of "Little Voices" to the box if they choose.

Whether the boxes become a regular offering is still uncertain, said Valentino.

Orders can be placed by visiting www.inkfish-books.com or by calling 401-368-6827. The boxes can be shipped nationwide or picked up curbside at the store in Warren.

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DAILY DISTRACTION

manager George Terpilowski in a statement. "Since its opening in 1912, the hotel has been a symbol of Boston's rich history and elegance, and its storied hallways haven't been the same without our friends, family, and community. As we collectively celebrate the hotel's reopening and birthday, we're also looking ahead to its bright future."

The \$108 flash sale ends Aug. 9, but a number of other deals will be offered past that day. For example, guests can use the Stay Close package until Aug. 22 to get a buy one, get one free deal for booking consecutive nights. And

Massachusetts residents can get 15 percent off and a room upgrade all year. Residents looking for a venue can also opt for the Minimony package to host small, one-hour gatherings for up to 10 people in one of the regal ballrooms. Prices start at \$1,000.

Originally opened in 1912, the Copley hotel at the former site of the Museum of Fine Arts has a long history in the city. It has seven floors and was designed by Henry Janeway Hardenbergh, also the architect behind The Plaza in New York.

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PARENTING



MAKI

Sale away

The pandemic has given us time to look around the house and realize that as the kids get older, we just have too much stuff

By Bo Smolka
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

My teenage son, Matt, watches me hopscotch Legos scattered across the basement carpet and shoehorn a puzzle into a cabinet crammed with art kits. The coronavirus pandemic has given us plenty of time to look around the house (watch out for Legos), assess the changing stage of our lives, and realize that we just have too much stuff. As Matt spies the army men at the bottom of the cabinet, dutifully obeying stay-at-home orders, he utters a thought that hits me like a ton of building blocks: "We should have a garage sale."

Ah, the garage sale, that All-American rite of summer where materialism, capitalism, and kitsch collide, where one person's trash is another's treasure — "treasure" being something that can be negotiated down to a buck and a quarter.

I'm no Marie Kondo, whose passion for decluttering took Netflix by storm, but I did hold a garage sale years ago. I was about to get married, and as some married men know, once the ring happens, her stuff becomes our stuff and your stuff becomes gone.

My main objective at that sale was to unload a pair of couches, and I arranged the merchandise so prospective buyers couldn't see the hole a mouse had chewed in the back of one of them.

I got that tip from a friend who often borrowed my pickup truck for garage sales just in case he bought something large, such as a couch without a mouse hole in the back.

He would take my truck, and I would take his car, which happened to be a royal-blue Mazda Miata convertible. I always had more errands to run when I had the keys to a royal-blue Mazda Miata convertible.

This time around, we don't have couches to sell, but we do have stuffed animals. Over the course of two decades, my children, now 18 and 13, have accumulated stuffed otters, and dinosaurs, and lions and tigers and bears, oh my. The next time we have a flood, forget the sandbags. We can line the house with Beanie Babies.

I'm already imagining the discussion I'll have with my daughter, Katie, about culling this herd, yet I don't exactly have a paw to stand on; I still own a stuffed bear I got on my first birthday.

We also have cars. There's no royal-blue Mazda Miata convertible, but we have a Corvette, a Mustang, and about 50 other Matchbox cars. There's a little wear on the tires, but they still handle well.

And, of course, we have army men. No longer performing maneuvers in the living room or mounting a beach offensive in the sandbox, they are encamped at the bottom of the cabinet.

They need a new captain.

Then there are the books. These are not the books in the kids' bedrooms or the living room, the ones we read often or want guests to think we read often. These are the books that, sometime before our last move, we boxed up because I insisted on keeping them. In the past eight years, they have moved exactly zero inches.

As I contemplate unloading these books, I already know how this will go. I will open a box of books, pick one out . . . and four hours later, dinner will be ready. In a time of so much uncertainty and so few social opportunities, it's comforting to sit down with an old friend, even when that's a character in a book.

I know it's past time for this housecleaning, but parting is such sweet sorrow. I ached when I packed up baby clothes or shoes the kids had outgrown. When I see that bin full of cars, I see a toddler's hands racing them around the family room, the sound of a motor sputtering from little lips. I blinked, and now that toddler is driving his own car. Those Matchbox cars traveled miles I can't get back; can I just keep two, or six, or 10?

Indeed, this garage sale business involves some tough decisions. I envision my family sitting like an ancient tribunal, prepared to render thumbs-up or thumbs-down verdicts as toys and games are called to judgment on our ping-pong table (definitely not for sale). I expect intense, UN-type negotiations, and I wonder what the kids will say if I propose veto power.

Certain things are off limits, though. We aren't selling the doll crib my brother made, or the kids stove I built for Katie. They could end up under the next generation's Christmas tree.

We have considered holding a garage sale before, but for the past decade we have been held captive on weekends by another slice of Americana: Youth Sports. Soccer season merged into basketball season merged into baseball or softball season. My wife and I spent our weekends shuffling two kids to three fields for four games in a car that is about as far as you can get from a royal-blue Mazda Miata convertible.

But Matt goes to college this fall, and Katie's games are now on Sundays. The Saturday calendar is as blank as the whiteboard easel that, yes, will be for sale. It's as if the earth has shifted on its axis.

Whenever this pandemic subsides and we can safely have people in our driveway again, we will be ready to dust off sports gear, bring army men out of retirement, and give that Matchbox Corvette another spin.

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Fairmont Copley Plaza reopens in time for its birthday

By Diti Kohli
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

The historic Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel and its attached restaurant, OAK Long Bar + Kitchen, will start to welcome guests again on Aug. 7 after being closed for four months — just one day before the 108th anniversary of its original opening. And it's being celebrated with a weekend "Birthday Flash Sale," where anyone can book a night at the hotel through March 2021 for just \$108. (Nights at the Plaza usually run between \$400 to \$500.)

"We are overjoyed to reopen the hotel on this particularly momentous occasion, as it falls on the hotel's 108th birthday," said general



GLOBE STAFF FILE

The Copley Plaza turns 108 this week.