

boston.com

Sign In | Register now

Home Delivery The Boston Globe

Local Search Site Search

GO

FREE SHIPPING
No Sales Tax (except in CA)

WOMENS MENS boys girls

SKECHERS

SHOP NOW

- HOME
 - TODAY'S GLOBE
 - NEWS
 - BUSINESS
 - SPORTS
 - LIFESTYLE
 - A&E
 - THINGS TO DO
 - TRAVEL
 - CARS
 - JOBS
 - HOMES
 - LOCAL
- Local National World Politics Business Education Health Science Green Obituaries Special reports Traffic Weather Lottery

BOSTON & BEYOND. NOW.

METRODESK



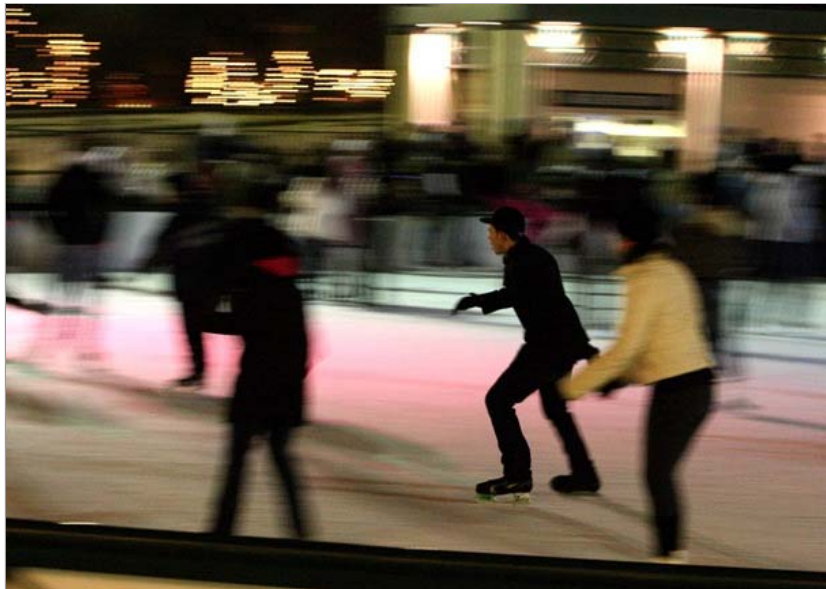
< Back to front page

Text size - +

Urban Diary: Skating under the stars, cares of city melt away

February 12, 2010 07:00 AM

E-mail | Link | Comments (2)



Globe staff photo/Essdras M Suarez

First in an occasional series of on-line essays capturing city scenes.

By James Sullivan, Globe Correspondent

Sure, the sound system squawks with hip hop beats and outdated new wave hits, and when a skater tumbles, a cellphone usually skitters across the ice. Besides the obvious modern touches, however, skating at Frog Pond still feels like a trip back in time to an old New England winter.

Here in the basin of the Boston Common, down the slope from the ridge of Beacon Street, the city sounds are muffled. Couples talk softly. Other than the music, which dissipates into the cold night air, the dominant sound is the rasp of blades on the ice.

On a clear night, the floodlights make the rink glow. A steady stream of red tail lights travel along the near horizon toward the State House. Soft blue Christmas lights line the roofs of

On The Beat

Reporter **Peter Schworm** talked with residents of Patrick Kennedy's Rhode Island district. [Read more](#)



TALK TO US

breakingnews@globe.com | Twitter | 617-929-3100

2010 CADILLAC CTS LUXURY COLLECTION
LOW MILEAGE LEASE FOR QUALIFIED LESSEES WITH A LEASE ENDING 8/31/10

\$369 PER MONTH* **39** MONTHS **\$4,844** DUE AT LEASE SIGNING AFTER ALLOWANCE

INCLUDES SECURITY DEPOSIT, TAX, TITLE, LICENSE AND DEALER FEES EXTRA. MILEAGE CHARGE OF \$.20 PER MILE OVER 38,000 MILES. AT PARTICIPATING DEALERS ONLY. RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS APPLY.



LOCATE A DEALER VIEW ALL OFFERS EXPLORE THE CTS
ROLLOVER FOR IMPORTANT DETAILS

Recent stories from the MetroDesk

- Report: Kennedy says father's death led to 'soul-searching'
- Some key dates in Patrick Kennedy's life
- Jurors told to set aside sympathy in South Boston murder trial
- Bello's Morning Blotter
- Boy, 5, reunited with parents in Somerville

STORM CENTRAL
NEW ENGLAND SNOW

Plows at the ready for winter storm



Plows at the ready for winter storm



Burst of snow starts to stick to roads l...



Messy commute ahead for parts of New Eng...

Prev Next

Features



Inside Scoop

the Frog Pond's maintenance buildings.

Parents come with young children, some of whom cling to the boards with legs like spaghetti. Former hockey players weave through the crowd, imagining a breakaway; a few would-be figure skaters solemnly practice their form as they make the rounds.

Mostly, though, skating is a means to a social end: spending quality time with a friend, a family member, a partner, or a crush.



On a recent weekday evening, a hundred or more skaters from all corners of the city (and some from far beyond) waited patiently for the Zamboni to chug off the ice. They clustered in pairs and groups on the benches in front of the snack bar.

A female voice wafted over the loudspeaker, offering instructions:

"You'll be going to the left, to the left, like Beyonce says."

Solo and in pairs, they filed out onto the glistening ice. One couple soon started giggling as they pulled each other around the rink, fancying themselves in a skating competition. She wore leggings and denim shorts; his glasses had hip white frames.

Another young couple, somewhat less skilled, shuffled around the ice deep in conversation, oblivious to the other skaters -- he in a leather coat and a scally cap, she in a Little Red Riding Hood jacket.

A group of 20 or so students sat by the rental window, joking as they made repeated trips to the counter to request better-fitting skates. They were from a private high school in Houston, they said, in town for the Model United Nations weekend sponsored by Harvard University at the Sheraton Boston.

Each year, participants from the senior class at Awty International School, many of them the sons and daughters of diplomats and oil industry executives, come to Boston for the Model UN conference. It's tradition, said 18-year-old Marcella Lunn, bundled in an emerald green wool coat, for the group to come to the Frog Pond to skate on their first night in Boston.

"You're going to skate, no matter how bad you are," her classmate, Thomas Grandjouan, said with a laugh.

Over at the snack bar, Fenway resident Vito DiGregorio bought a bottled water and sat down on a bench for a breather. In a red hoodie, a BU hockey jersey, and a pair of clear goggles, he'd been skating to break a sweat.

He has been to the rink for a workout several times this winter, said the 50-year-old schoolteacher and part-time attorney. "I got sick of running," he explained.

As closing time approached, one couple clambered off the rink grinning broadly. He'd just taken a good spill, slapping down hard on the ice.

Still laughing, they returned their skates and walked toward the exit gate. Asked whether they were boyfriend and girlfriend, the young man, Kayel Tran, his dark hair pulled back in a ponytail, said, "No, just friends."

What brought them out to the Frog Pond? "It's just something new," said Kaisha Ramirez, who recently graduated from beauty school. "Something different for a first date, instead of him just taking me out to eat or something."

So they *are* dating?

Mmm-hmmm, Tran admitted with a bashful nod.

On the way out of the park, they stopped at the frog statue outside the rink. Ramirez leaned

The story behind the story



Lives

Dispatches from the death beat



Teddy's Take

The photo of the day



The Quad

What's up at area colleges



Viewpoints

Quote them on it



Political Circuit

Editor's Choice



A learning oasis in Haiti

Amid devastation caused by quake, the brother of Bank America's chief executive presses on with school.



Patrick returns to his roots

As he prepares for a tough re-election fight, the governor is trying to revive and rebuild his network of supporters.

MORE

- [Outcry threatens Lawrence bailout](#)
- [In Cambridge, concerns about diversity](#)
- [Striving to prevent suicide by train](#)
- [Behind domestic violence, economic stress](#)

From Today's Globe

- [Boston area short on black, Hispanic professors](#)
- [Ex-chief sees flaws in investigation of 1986 shooting of Amy Bishop's brother](#)
- [Local boaters find crafty way to live cheaply](#)
- [Those facing sex addiction get help, understanding](#)
- [Homeless in high school](#)

[MORE METRO STORIES](#)

MORE BLOGS



White Coat Notes

Overweight men with prostate cancer have a higher risk of dying

Men who are overweight when they have locally advanced prostate...



Articles of Faith

A farewell, to beat and blog This is my last blog post as religion reporter for...

WORLDLY BOSTON

Dr. Paul Farmer offers Haiti diagnosis Dr. Paul Farmer, the global health campaigner who has worked...

The Green Blog

Eating local food during the winter months One way to reduce your carbon footprint is to eat...

Get Updates

against the chubby bronze figure, and Tran snapped her picture with his cellphone.

-  Comment
-  Permalink
-  E-mail
- ShareThis
-  Yahoo!
Buzz

PREVIOUS STORY
[Farmer hopes quake leads to long-term Haiti renewal](#)



NEXT STORY
[Boy, 5, reunited with parents in Somerville](#)



READER COMMENTS »
[View reader comments \(2\) »](#) [Comment on this story »](#)

RSS Feeds

- [Learn about RSS](#)

Archives

Select a month

LOCAL RESOURCES

- [Boston crime blog](#)
- [Brookline crime blog](#)
- [Mass. DOT traffic cameras](#)
- [Mass. DOT road conditions](#)
- [MBTA service alerts](#)
- [National Weather Service at Taunton](#)
- [Massachusetts sex offenders](#)
- [Boston Public Schools blog](#)
- [Massachusetts abandoned property](#)
- [Search for MCAS results](#)

LOCAL BLOGS

BOSTON AREA [Universal Hub](#)

A collection of writing from hundreds of Boston-area bloggers.

[The Chinatown Blog](#)

Stories and events related to Boston's Chinatown and the Asian American community in Massachusetts

[CommonWealth Magazine](#)

Politics, ideas, and civic life in Massachusetts

[Red Mass Group](#)

News and commentary about Massachusetts and beyond