

# Metro

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BRIAN MCGRORY

## An outside perspective



I'm sorry, but is there any city anywhere where people do self-loathing as completely and beautifully as your fellow Bostonians?

Visit Gary, Ind., and the good citizenry will look around at the belching smokestacks and the meteoric murder rate and declare: "We're on the way back!"

In Boston, forget about the major universities and world-class hospitals, the fact that the Cape and the mountains are a 90-minute drive, and a history richer than any other in America.

Raise these virtues with any local and what you get is an earful about weather, traffic, prices, crowds, politicians, development, taxes, regulations, the FBI, the ACC, and the fact that Friendly's isn't what it used to be.

This angst may be contagious. The rest of the nation despises our football franchise. They're not exactly embracing our former governor. They mock our health care reforms.

They still call us Taxachusetts. Jonathan Papelbon made fun of the fans who idolized him. Native son Jack Welch retired here, looked around, and high-tailed it back to New York.

Imagine a grand new slogan unveiled by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce: "Boston: Not as Bad as You (or We) Think."

Which is why I'd like to take a moment and offer a slightly different perspective, courtesy of a gentleman by the name of Brian Palmer, who heads a multibillion dollar division of General Electric once based in Nevada, with 13,000 employees spread all over the world.

Palmer's wife, Peg, and most of their six children were on vacation in Wellfleet a few years ago when the youngest son, Thomas, spiked a fever that wouldn't go away. Palmer was on a business trip to Asia. Doctors on the Cape told Peg to get her son into an ambulance and head to Children's Hospital Boston.

Things did not look good. Peg called Palmer and told him to get home. Interns, residents, and doctors poked and prodded, but Thomas was so feverish he was seeing things, and nothing worked in terms of cooling him down.

Which is when Dr. David Fulton made a diagnosis, a cardiovascular affliction called Kawasaki disease that is rare in the United States and is rarer still in a 12-year-old. Doctors launched into an intensive treatment.

"His fever went down in 24 hours," Palmer said, his tone still one of awe nearly four years later. "They kept him a few more days. They caught it so fast he hasn't had any problems since. They saved my son."

So when it was time to head back to Nevada, Brian Palmer didn't particularly want to go. From the Cape he could see the beauty of the region. From Children's he could see his brains. He knew firsthand of the health care. He had heard much about local schools and culture. Which is pretty much when he made the decision: This is where he wanted to live and work.

Last year, with little fanfare, Palmer moved the headquarters of GE Measurement and Control Solutions to Billerica, bringing along 50 members of the leadership team and hiring another 350 workers for a production facility. People immediately banged down the doors to work for him. Talented prospects are everywhere. Expansion is inevitable.

When he spoke to me recently, Palmer was on the phone from Dubai, at the end of a trip in which he had met the finance minister in Bahrain. "When I told him we were based around Boston, he lit up. He said he has two kids, one at Boston University, and one at Northeastern. This is good for business."

Palmer paused, then added, "Bostonians may love to be miserable about Boston, but the rest of the world doesn't feel that way."

The nerve of some people, all that optimism. What are the odds it will last?

Brian McGrory is a Globe columnist. He can be reached at mcgrory@globe.com.

### COLONY COLLAPSE THREATENS FOOD SUPPLY

New research found a common pesticide threatens to destroy bee colonies and harm a food supply dependent on bees for pollination.

#### We need bees

Without bees to pollinate blossoms, many area fruit trees would bear little or no fruit.

#### Honeybees dying

In 2006, US beekeepers became alarmed when honeybee colonies began dying suddenly. With losses of 30 to 90 percent reported, the break in the ecosystem could mean fewer food crops.

#### Colony collapse disorder

In affected colonies, worker bees left the hive and never returned, leaving only the egg-laying queen, larvae, and a few attendants.

#### Search for clues

The following theories were identified as potential causes:



#### Popular pesticide may kill bees

In the recent study, bee hives were exposed to a popular pesticide (imidacloprid) in doses typically found in the environment. In 15 of the 16 hives tested, the bees died.



SOURCES: US Department of Agriculture Research Service; Colony Collapse Disorder Working Group; Department of Environmental Health, Harvard School of Public Health; JAMES ABUNDIS/GLOBE STAFF

## Study links pesticide to bee deaths

Harvard scientists make case

By David Abel

A common pesticide used increasingly in recent years for crops such as corn and soybeans is the probable culprit in the destruction of honeybee colonies around the world, a study released Thursday by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health has found.

The researchers said they found convincing evidence of the link between the pesticide known as imidacloprid and honeybees abandoning their hives, or colony collapse disorder, which they say began occurring in 2006 on a scale and scope never seen before in the history of the beekeeping industry.

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## Honor or payback when a batter is hit?

Attitudes on baseball's moral code studied

By Carolyn Y. Johnson

To Boston baseball fans, Thursday was the long-awaited start of the season. To psychologists interested in understanding the building blocks of human morality, each pitch was another potential data point.

The baseball diamond may seem an unusual venue for a serious experiment on moral reasoning, but the game provides a unique research opportunity, thanks to the practice of intentionally hitting an opposing player with a pitch.

Under baseball's moral code, pitchers routinely seek payback for a teammate being hit by a pitch by hitting someone on the opposing team, though usually not the offend-

ing pitcher. "You hit my shortstop, I'll hit your shortstop," as former Red Sox first baseman Doug Mientkiewicz is quoted as saying in a new paper by a Brown University-led research team. This intrigued psychologists because in modern western culture, most people would not find it acceptable to seek revenge for wrongdoing by hurting someone else who is not

BASEBALL, Page B4

### A GROWING FAMILY —

Nebbie, a ring-tailed lemur, gave her newborn baby a piggyback ride Thursday under the watchful eye of one of the baby's twin siblings, a 1-year-old male, at the Franklin Park Zoo. Nebbie gave birth to the baby, whose sex is not yet known, on March 19, zoo officials announced. "Our visitors take such delight in watching these charismatic animals," said John Linehan, Zoo New England president and chief executive.



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

## Lottery profits could rival '06 record

Earnings of \$936m projected for agency

By Peter Schworm

While millions saw their dreams of riches dashed last week, the Massachusetts State Lottery, which sends its profits to cities and towns, had a windfall.

Buoyed by runaway sales of the Mega Millions tickets, the lottery is on pace to turn a \$936 million profit this fiscal year, approaching its 2006 record of \$951 million.

"We've had a banner year so far," said Jon Carlisle, a spokesman for the state treasurer's office, which oversees the lottery.

With three months left in the fiscal year, profits are \$42 million above projections, officials announced Thursday. Profits from the lottery, which was created in 1972, generally go to local aid for cities and towns.

The record \$656 million Mega Millions jackpot spurred unprecedented sales, drawing lines of customers to convenience stores across the state. In Massachusetts alone, players spent more than \$19 million in the three days before the March 30 drawing. Overall sales for the jackpot were nearly \$40 million.

Lottery officials also credited a warmer winter "that encouraged people to venture out and play," creative promotions, and an array of new games for increased sales.

"This newly anticipated profit is a result of the innovative approaches

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## Adventurer Priebatsch dies in fall during hike

By J.M. Lawrence

Light snow fell Sunday afternoon on the southeast side of Mount Washington as Boston entrepreneur Norman Priebatsch and his son Seth hiked icy Tuckerman Ravine, an alpine ski mecca in New Hampshire.

Mr. Priebatsch, 67, an adventurer born in South Africa who had skied the ravine many times, declared the sport too dangerous that day with the early thaw. Instead, he led Seth, a 23-year-old wunderkind who had founded social gaming companies, and two of his son's friends on a hike. Gazing out over the White Mountains, his companions asked him what was the most spectacular place he had ever seen on his worldwide



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