

# Dorchester Reporter

"The News and Values Around the Neighborhood"

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King Street native Bryan McPherson's guitar-driven "O.F.D." is one of fourteen new songs released this month on a new CD. The Dorchester resident performs locally at bars and clubs, mostly in Cambridge and New York and cultivates a growing fan base on the Internet.

## Dot roots resonate in OFDer's music

BY BILL FORRY  
MANAGING EDITOR

In conversation, Bryan McPherson is soft-spoken and understated, even a bit reserved.

Give him a guitar, a mic and a stage – or a few tiles of MBTA platform- and he's a house afire.

The 30 year-old singer-songwriter – whose latest CD project was launched at a release party earlier this month – spends much of his time lighting up the clubs and coffee houses on the other end of the Red Line. McPherson's lyrics, however, capture the street-corner sensibilities of his native neighborhood, which he spotlights in a new song, "O.F.D."

McPherson grew up on King Street and spent his childhood playing man-hunt and wiffle ball through the three-decker canyons on the slopes of Pope's Hill. Even before he graduated from Saint Mark's Grammar School in 1992, he had discovered a love for making music.

"I started playing keyboards when I was seven or eight years old," McPherson remembers. "I remember I was always making up my own stuff, because I hated practicing scales."

As a teenager, attending BC High, Archbishop Williams and finally Another Course to College, McPherson's antenna was tuned to one station: punk rock.

"Back in the day, everything else was a waste of my time," he says.

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## Delays dog Ronan fix-up

### Some youth programs on hold; opening set for July 6

BY DAVID BENOIT

SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

Just days before a glut of summer camps and youth programs are scheduled to start, renovations to Ronan Park – one of the neighborhood's critical public spaces scheduled to host day and night youth programs – remained incomplete and behind schedule this week.

The park, which is in the middle of a major renovation project, was originally set to re-open this Saturday, but this week the site was still populated by dirt piles, fencing, and construction equipment. The opening date has been pushed back to July 6, and while the city says it will be ready by that date, some community leaders are alarmed by the possibility that critical summer programs will be delayed.

The Bowdoin St. Health Center, the Boston Office for Youth and Families, the Dorchester Youth Collaborative, and St. Peters Teen Center all run summer programs at Ronan



The playground site at Ronan Park is definitely a work in progress. David Benoit photo

Park every day but Sunday, from the early morning to the late evening. From small children playing soccer to teens playing basketball, the park is supposed to be a bustling site of activity starting next week. With construction dragging

on, some groups are beginning to put their programs on hold, even as the city maintains that the work will not hamper any summer fun.

David Andelman, a staff member at the Bowdoin Street Health Center, is one of those

worried that summertime programming is going to take a hit from construction back-up.

"I have concerns about the shape of Ronan Park. It is supposedly being worked on

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## Connolly launches bid for comeback

BY PATRICK MCGROARTY  
NEWS EDITOR

Saying he would be a city councillor committed to "big ideas," John Connolly officially announced his candidacy for council at-large in Dorchester on Tuesday night at Florian Hall. It was the fifth such neighborhood-specific campaign kick-off that he has hosted across Boston to date.

Connolly has been considering another run at for at-large council since almost immediately after losing his first campaign for that body in 2005. Two years later, this year's race will be different in many ways: gone from the field are the son and daughter of two former Boston mayors (Ed Flynn and Patricia White)

who were on the ballot that year. All four incumbent at-large councillors are running for re-election, unlike 2005, when Maura Hennigan left her seat to challenge Mayor Thomas Menino; and there is no mayoral election to pique voter interest.

"John's biggest opponent is low voter turnout," said Matt O'Malley, who finished sixth in the general election in 2005 and now works for Suffolk County Sheriff Andrea Cabral. O'Malley endorsed Connolly at Florian Hall on Tuesday night, describing him as an old friend and the candidate best suited to serve on the council.

As he addressed the crowd, Connolly alluded to the mutually beneficial optimism driv-



John Connolly  
"Big ideas" his theme

ing O'Malley's endorsement. O'Malley and Connolly both have strong, overlapping bases in Rosindale and West Roxbury, making for a natural alliance if they chose to run alongside rather than against

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## Trooper hailed as 'one of the good guys'

BY MARTINE LEWIS  
REPORTER STAFF

State Trooper Leroy Keys was honored by the West Selden Street and Vicinity Neighborhood Association for his commitment to the community at last Wednesday's meeting of the Dorchester-Mattapan B-3 Neighborhood Council. Dozens came together to show appreciation for Keys' active participation in neighborhood meetings and his motivation to keep local streets safe as a member of the State Police community action team.

Described as soft-spoken but stern and extremely approachable, Keys has made a lasting impression on the communities he serves. Keys works from the State Police barracks office on Columbia Point- and his work takes him across the city's neighborhoods. But, Mattapan residents say he has been a frequent presence at local events in their neighbor-

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## Bayside outlines plans at meeting

BY PATRICK MCGROARTY  
NEWS EDITOR

Corcoran Jernison Companies hosted the first public meeting for residents last week to discuss plans to redevelop nearly 30 acres of land on Columbia Point into a mixed-

use retail and residential project that could represent a \$1 billion investment.

The site is currently home to the Bayside Expo Center, a conference facility whose business has been impacted drastically since last sum-

mer, when a change in state law allowed the new Boston Convention and Exhibition Center in South Boston to host the regional trade shows that provided Bayside with its most lucrative clients.

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## Dorchester roots resonate in OFDer's music

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McPherson started playing semi-professionally in 2001. As he discusses on his website, his first steps into the music business came at a time of turmoil in his personal life.

"Basically I was strung out on dope. At the same time that my life was falling apart, I started writing songs. I eventually began performing at Club Passim at the open mic night and an art gallery in Cambridge called Out of the Blue, as well as the usual street

corners and parties in Dorchester," McPherson wrote.

After a hiatus to get clean, McPherson returned to live performances in 2003 and hooked up with an independent label, Indecent Music, which has backed his latest release, *Fourteen Stories*.

One of the 14, O.F.D., started innocently as a one-verse idea. Tinkering with the song during a gig in Jamaica Plain, the song matured into a

anthem.

"I don't write intentionally," McPherson says. "I was playing in a show in Jamaica Plain and I'd written one part of this song, 'O.F.D.' A few of my good friends from growing up were there and it just kind of came together," he says.

The piece includes a chorus line that pretty well sums up the sentiment behind the familiar yellow bumper sticker: "Now matter where I go, now matter where I'll be, I'm always O.F.D.," McPherson sings.

Now living in the Boston Street area, McPherson is rediscovering his native neighborhood from a new vantage point. He works as a laborer and landscaper when he's not booking gigs, most of them in New York's East Village and Cambridge.

You can check for his next performance- and take a listen at some of his latest songs, including "O.F.D." at his website, <http://www.myspace.com/bryannmcpherson>



Brian McPherson savors a contemplative moment.

## Teens press for law targeting diesel pollution

By PRISCILLA YEON  
STATE HOUSE  
NEWS SERVICE

Saying they were fed up with pollution from diesel engines, five local teenagers on Monday urged lawmakers to pass a bill requiring state-owned vehicles and municipal garbage trucks to be equipped with special filters that reduce emissions by 90 percent.

Jonathan Collado, 17, of East Boston, said he suffers from asthma and told the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture members that the legislation's passage would improve air quality in his neighborhood.

"When those trucks pass by my house it becomes hard for me to breathe and I need to go back to the house and get my inhaler," said Collado, who said diesel pollution "hurts all of us."

Tineshia Cureton, 15, of Dorchester also suffers from asthma and urged lawmakers to pass legislation "so I can breathe easier." "I also lost a lot of school days because of asthma," she added.

Filed by Sen. Jack Hart (D-South Boston) and Rep. Cheryl Coakley-Rivera (D-Springfield), the proposal calls for all state-owned, leased and contracted diesel-operated vehicles to install pollution retrofits by 2011. The legislation also requires municipal garbage and recycling trucks to install retrofits by 2012 and calls for the establishment of a "diesel emissions reduction

fund" that would give out grants to companies to retrofit private fleets.

Rebecca Kelly, 16, of Chelsea said she used to walk to school and be exposed to fumes from trucks traveling on the nearby roads. "It was so strange because I just couldn't breathe," said Kelly. "I know all those trucks going by had something to do with it." Kelly acknowledged she is fortunate to not have asthma, but said many of her peers have difficulties breathing. "My generation is suffering and we are the future of the state," she said.

A coalition of state and local groups, called The Diesel Pollution Solution, turned out to testify in favor of the bill. According to the coalition, diesel pollution in the state is responsible for 9,900 asthma attacks annually, 700 non-fatal heart attacks, 13,000 respirator symptoms in children and 60,000 work loss days. The Boston metro area has the third highest risk from diesel pollution in the country, according to the coalition.

Supporters of the bill said it emulates similar initiatives passed in California, New Jersey and New York. The cost of retrofitting vehicles to reduce diesel pollution can range from \$1,200 to \$7,500 and testifiers called the proposed requirements "cost-effective" because each vehicle could reduce its diesel pollution by 90 percent or more.

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