

Slaying, the who and why remain

By Stephen Kurkjian and Ric Kahn
GLOBE STAFF

One month after Assistant Attorney General Paul R. McLaughlin was gunned down near a West Roxbury train station, investigators remain uncertain whether McLaughlin was assassinated because of a case he prosecuted or was the victim of a robbery attempt or other motive, Police Commissioner Paul F. Evans said yesterday.

Despite the frustrating lack of progress and leads in the investigation, however, Evans said he was optimistic that McLaughlin's murder will be solved.

"I remain as confident now as the day after Paul was killed that we will solve this crime," Evans said in an interview. "People are accustomed to TV shows where crimes are solved in 24 hours. They must understand that some of these cases take 20 years."

McLAUGHLIN, Page 24



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / WENDY MAEDA

SEASON OF THE WITCH — Four-year-old Brendon Low of Honolulu is dwarfed by an oversized Halloween display at the Children's Museum in Portsmouth, N.H.

More Metro News

■ **Cash for scholars:** Educators discuss pros and cons of cash-for-performance bonus system aimed at school improvement. Page 22.

■ **Ethics hearing:** Another challenge to the state's ethics law is set to begin today as Rep. Angelo M. Scaccia (D-Readville) fights charges that he accepted meals and golf from lobbyists. Page 22.

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Pigeon-proofing to a T

By Peter J. Howe
GLOBE STAFF

REVERE — Usually pigeons love few things more than brand-new MBTA stations, filled with inviting places for them to nest, forage for food scraps, and deposit droppings.

But ever since the gleaming new Revere Beach Blue Line station opened in June, the pigeons have steered clear, thanks to four ultrasonic devices whose loud and irritating emissions — inaudible to people — make the station a screeching hall of horrors for the birds.

So successful have the devices been at pigeon-proofing the

Revere Beach and Beachmont stops that T officials believe they could be the decisive weapon in the battle to shoo the pigeons and their disease-causing droppings out of ground-level stops across the system.

"It's been great," William T. Howell Jr., the T project manager in charge of the ongoing \$467 million Blue Line reconstruction, said yesterday. "They just have not been down here where we don't want them."

For the T, pigeons are not merely an aesthetic nuisance but a costly cleaning problem and a potential health threat to riders. More than 60 communicable diseases can be spread from bird droppings, according to health authorities.

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Ultrasound brings pigeon problem to a screeching halt

■ PIGEONS
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The ultrasonic devices, mounted on the pavilion ceilings at each end of the two Revere Beach and Beachmont platforms, emit up to 112 decibels — louder than a jet engine at takeoff — of sound pitched at between 22 and 30 kilohertz. That level is far above the 16 kilohertz maximum people are able to hear.

The sound is not merely deafening to bird ears but also highly annoying when set to “warble” up and down. Although the sound levels are intense, they fade out quickly. The manufacturer, Bird-X of Chicago, tells clients not to count on repelling birds beyond a 45-foot radius from the device.

Indeed, although T officials feared they might get some complaints from bird lovers about the machines, they have hardly scared birds out of the neighborhood. Pigeons still nest under street bridges just feet beyond either end of the Revere Beach station, and from the platform plenty of chirping finches and sparrows can be heard in trees along the streets above.

Howell said the sonic devices, which cost \$500 each and use negligible amounts of electricity, work much better than other tactics. Those include spraying a sticky repellent goo that birds hate on ledges and sites where they might nest, de-

ploying balloons that look to pigeons like predatory owls, and installing mesh coverings and metal devices that look like hundreds of pins pointing upward.

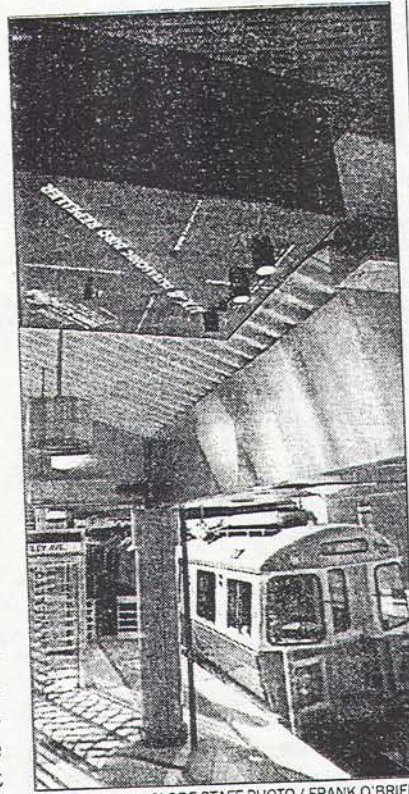
At Suffolk Downs and other stations, Howell said, “The pigeons just kept putting nesting material on it until they got above the height of the pins” and could comfortably roost.

As part of their anti-pigeon crusade, during construction of the new Orange Line Southwest Corridor extension in the 1980s, T officials ordered specially designed concrete overpasses above the tracks that leave no roosting sites available underneath.

Howell said the T is considering installing the sonic devices at other partially exposed rapid-transit stations, such as Orange Line stops outside downtown Boston and several Quincy and Dorchester Red Line stops.

However, they seem to work best on new or newly renovated stations that pigeons have not begun inhabiting. Sometimes pigeons’ homing and roosting instincts are so strong they will return to a place they call home, however noisy. Whether the devices could flush pigeons out of stations where they have roosted for years has yet to be tested.

One possible disadvantage to the devices is that seeing-eye dogs could be tormented by the sounds, accord-



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / FRANK O'BRIEN

Ultrasonic devices, which annoy birds with loud and irritating emissions but are inaudible to people, are being used to keep pigeons out of the MBTA's new Revere Beach Blue Line station.

ing to a Bird-X sales representative. But so far T officials say they have received no complaints along those lines.

And even though humans cannot hear the sounds, Bird-X recommends that people working within 10 feet of them for extended periods wear earplugs. Riders waiting for a train — even a delayed train — are not at risk, but prolonged exposure to the 112-decibel output at close range could damage hearing.

Dozens duped

■ IMMIGRANTS
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are proliferating as the cracks down on illegal a time when low-cost to immigrants are de

Immigration acti edge that some people becoming legal are n any means; some wi deception by lying ab ry or status. But ot believe that such “im sors” or attorneys a Because of bad advi an immigrant may e legitimate claims to

“It really is a ran said Beth Stickney the International I ton. “People are ge perate and these gu vantage of the clima

Complaint filed

Harvey Kaplan, committee on Unau of Immigration L: England chapter Immigration Lawy recently filed a c Chatelain with the al's office after Ro ian woman spoke complaints agains coming in droves.” inquiry several w torney general's w deny nor confirm der way.

Bill Gaugush,



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