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	SECTIONS	 MY SAVED	
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ARTS 	BUSINESS 		
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LIFESTYLE 	MAGAZINE 		
TODAY'S PAPER 			
LOTTERY 	OBITUARIES 		
GLOBE NORTH 	GLOBE SOUTH 		
GLOBE WEST 	GETTING IN 		

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One man charged after Occupy Boston disturbance

Occupy group fears arrests

By **Martine Powers** | GLOBE STAFF DECEMBER 03, 2011

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DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Police presence at the site has risen. Captain Bernard O'Rourke and Superintendent Paul Joyce visited yesterday.

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The clash that erupted Thursday night when Occupy Boston members tried to bring an industrial-sized kitchen sink into their downtown camp has ratcheted up the tension between police and protesters.

Yesterday, Boston police stationed more officers in the encampment and protesters said they fear that authorities may be preparing for more arrests on their Dewey Square enclave.

In recent weeks, police have prevented protesters from bringing construction materials into the camp, telling them the supplies were “contraband.”

Thursday night, Occupy Boston supporters attempted to carry in a metal sink that had been reconfigured to include a

self-contained plumbing system. The sink was an effort to help the camp better comply with public health guidelines, protesters said.

When police attempted to confiscate the sink, a crowd of 75 to 100 protesters surrounded a police vehicle, Boston police spokeswoman Elaine Driscoll said.

“As a result of that troubling activity, numerous officers had to be called to the scene. The officers very successfully were able to gain crowd control, which resulted in one arrest,” she said.

The skirmish came hours after a Suffolk Superior Court hearing, where attorneys for the city argued that Occupy Boston protesters have created a hazardous encampment riddled with fire, sanitation, and safety violations.

The judge extended a temporary restraining order Thursday, barring officials from suddenly evicting the protesters. She will decide by Dec. 15 whether the city will have the right to carry out a surprise eviction.

On Thursday night, a 25-year-old Quincy man was arrested at the scene of the sink-confiscation after he allegedly pushed an officer, damaged a police radio, and ran out of the camp and into South Station.

Gary Williams was arraigned yesterday in Boston Municipal Court on charges of assault and battery on a public employee, resisting arrest, destruction of property, and disturbing the peace.

He was released on personal recognizance after appearing before Judge Mark Summerville, who also ordered Williams to stay away from the encampment at Dewey Square. Williams was slated to return to court Dec. 21, the Suffolk district attorney’s office said.

Mayor Thomas M. Menino said last evening that he is concerned about the health issues inside the encampment, and has been worried about the situation since the camp began two months ago. But if the city wins the court case, he does not know whether he will move to force the protesters out of the square.

“If [conditions] deteriorate, we’ll make our decision then. We’re not going to make our decision today,” Menino said. “We’ve been very patient with these individuals, and we’ll continue to work with them.”

In recent days, Menino has expressed exasperation with the protesters, saying that they have taken advantage of the city’s willingness to work with them.

“As mayor of the city, I represent 630,000 people,” he said. “I don’t represent just 200 people in Dewey Square.”

Protesters reported seeing about twice as many police officers as usual staking out the camp yesterday. Rather than standing along the perimeter of the camp, protesters said, police have been walking through it.

Some of the group's overnight campers, like Robert Bakoian, 36, said the altered patterns of police have made protesters anxious about what's to come. When he left his tent yesterday morning, he said, a police officer was standing right outside. That's never happened before, he said.

"I've never seen them inside the camp," Bakoian said. "They're here way more than they were before. . . . It makes me uneasy."

In preparation for a potential raid, protesters have been partaking in nonviolent resistance training. They are learning how to lay limp if a law enforcement officer tries to forcibly remove them from the camp, and how to protect themselves if police use pepper spray.

Martin, a protester who declined to give his last name to protect his employment, said he was nervous about the judge's decision - especially because it could come at any time, without warning.

"I'm walking on eggshells now," he said. "If the judge makes her decision after lunch and rules in favor of the city, the cops can raid us right away, just like that," he said.

Globe correspondent Matt Rocheleau and Martin Finucane of the Globe staff contributed to this report.

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Firefighters evacuate Chinatown building due to structural integrity concerns

Boston firefighters who responded to a false alarm at a 5-story brick apartment building in Chinatown today evacuated at least 20 residents after finding issues with the structure's integrity. Fire crews arrived at 25 Harrison Ave. around 3:25 p.m. but found no fire in the building, fire department spokesman Steve MacDonald said. While investigating the call, some firefighters raised concerns about "structural issues" with beams and framing, he said. Floors one and two were vacant, but fire personnel evacuated between 20 and 30 residents from the third, fourth and fifth floors, MacDonald said.

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Ex-Newton teacher charged with assaulting girl he babysat

A former elementary teacher who is already facing child pornography charges is now being charged with sexually assaulting a child he was hired to babysit.

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Woburn man charged with luring boys over Skype

A Woburn Little League coach allegedly contacted teenaged boys over the Internet and then engaged in mutual sexual activity using a webcam.

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DeLeo rejects Patrick's tax proposals

House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo will not support Governor Deval Patrick's proposal to raise \$260 million with various taxes and fees, including a tax on candy and soda.

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Woburn man faces attempted murder charge after arrest in Wakefield

A Woburn man was arrested in Wakefield after he fled from the scene of an assault on Elm Street in Woburn. Thomas Ponte, 41, will face charges of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, attempted murder, and kidnapping while armed. Just after 4 p.m. Tuesday, Woburn police issued a "be on the lookout" alert for the suspect's car after receiving a call from a woman who said she was assaulted by the suspect. "We received information regarding a car the suspect may be in and a possible location he may be heading to," Woburn detective Ralph Coakley said.

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Wayward dolphin rescued on Wellfleet beach; stranding total rises to 147

On the 28th day of the largest single-species stranding event on record in the northeastern United States, the International Fund for Animal Welfare said one more dolphin stranded itself in Wellfleet, bringing the total to 147 common dolphins. Michael Booth, spokesman for the animal welfare organization, said crews rescued the dolphin from the banks of Herring River in Wellfleet this morning. Two others were seen swimming in the area and workers tried to herd them out of the area.

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Scott Brown pushes Irish immigration bill

US Senator Scott Brown, who hopes to garner reelection support from the state's large Irish-American population, has become a central player in a battle to allow more Irish workers to come to America. Brown's efforts to break a logjam in the Senate over a bill that would allow an additional 10,500 skilled Irish workers to gain work visas every year have attracted significant attention in the Irish press and are being watched closely by activists around the US.

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Boston officer credited with breaking fall of woman who fell headfirst from Dorchester rooftop

A Boston police officer is winning praise for breaking the fall of a woman who fell headfirst from a rooftop in Dorchester early this morning, police said. Officers responded to a report at 3:45 a.m. of a distraught female threatening to jump from the roof of a Wilbert Road residence, police said in a statement.

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No say for some who would be casinos' neighbors

The new casino bill gives tremendous power to local residents to decide if a casino will be built in their community, but residents in neighboring towns are not so fortunate.

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Longfellow Bridge loses outbound car lane in new design

As part of a new design, the rebuilt Longfellow Bridge will shrink to a single lane bound for Cambridge and gain wider bike lanes and sidewalks.

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Senator seeks Chelsea inquiry

Charles Grassley of Iowa wants an explanation for why the Chelsea Housing Authority permits managers to live in public housing almost rent-free.

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Giving voice to slain social worker

Stephanie Moulton's parents have been ensnared in a labyrinth of legal procedure and government bureaucracy in the year since a mental health patient killed their daughter.

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Proposal would set standards for dementia care

A proposed law would require the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to establish minimum standards for facilities with dementia care units.

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2 ex-state workers get probation in pool fatality

Two former state workers who oversaw a Fall River pool where a woman drowned last year were sentenced yesterday to a year of probation.

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Residents turn to towns for help battling coyotes

In Brookline, Newton, and Belmont, where coyote sightings have become more frequent, residents are urging town officials to take steps to control the population.

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