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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

'Twas days before Allston Christmas

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 27, 2012 04:26 PM

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From Allston Christmas 2011, a chair and a T-shirt-topped microwave sit on a Commonwealth Avenue sidewalk below a sign that reads: "Free Things."

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The following is a Boston.com homage to "Allston Christmas," an unofficial holiday in the Boston neighborhood that falls on the days before and after Sept. 1, when thousands of apartments change hands. Amid the upheaval, countless household possessions – from TVs to furniture – are left curbside as trash, but many of the items are snatched up and reused by other residents:

'Twas days before Allston Christmas, when all through Gardner, Ashford & Pratt,
Every creature was stirring, many a rat.
Packed boxes were left by the door without care,
In hopes that a rental truck soon would be there.

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Each student was restless on a creaky, old futon,
With visions of free stuff -- furniture redistribution.
And workers for UHaul, Budget, Penske and Hertz,
Knew they were in store for a long September first.

Out on sidewalks and lawns will rise much clutter,
Tenants will spring from their bed to see what to plunder.
Away out the door they'll fly with a flash,
Tearing through piles of someone else's trash.

The bright sun beaming on fallen possessions,
Giving them luster of newness shone down from the heavens,
When, what to wondering eyes should appear,

But a used microwave, and a six-pack of stale beer.



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Though a city garbage truck driver rounds the streets in a cinch,
Snatching up items, he's the Allston Christmas Grinch.
More rapid each year the sanitation crew has come,
They'll whistle, and shout, and call out each street by name.

"Now Park Vale! now, Glenville! now, Harvard and Linden!
On, Cambridge! On, Highgate! on Comm. Ave. and Brighton!
Clean up that porch! Tidy up this sprawl!
Take the trash away! Trash away! Trash away all!"

They warn that from the refuse trouble could fly,
When that nuisance makes a new home, it may multiply.
So bright orange stickers warn residents to avoid the debris,
The rubbish could be full of bedbugs, even a flea.

But still there are those who ignore what crews advise,
For they are desperately in need of cheap, new supplies.
They'll poke their head in whatever's around,
Down the streets and alleys they will abound.

They'll be drenched all in sweat, from head to foot,
And their clothes will be tarnished with stains and soot.
A sofa or mattress flung over their back,
They might look like a sad sight, but misery they lack.

Their eyes -- how they'll twinkle! Their dimples how merry!
For each has just become a proud beneficiary.
A new table, TV, even a guitar,
They'll have saved some bucks to spend at the bar.

The roads will be clogged, drivers gritting their teeth,
They'll be honking in traffic, no matter the street.
Moving trucks idling and parked wherever,
As pedestrians cross with trash and treasure.

Parents will visit for a day to help out,
When the moving is done they're likely to pout.
They're sad to leave their children behind,
Especially in a place so unrefined.

This time of year, there is chaos nearby,
Mission Hill, Fenway and Camberville all apply.
But there is no place quite as anarchic in Boston,
As the 'Rock City' village, the neighborhood of Allston.

So for those with no move or dumpster-diving plan,
Retreat from here soon, while you still can.
But for those preparing to partake in this local rite,
"Merry Allston Christmas to all, and to all a good-plight!"

To see photos from last year's Allston Christmas, click [here](#) and [here](#).

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