

Americans air out political frustrations with Boston Tea Party re-enactment

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Visitors to the Boston Tea Party Museum throw replicas of historic tea containers into Boston Harbor from aboard a replica of the vessel *Beaver*. AP

BOSTON — Americans are venting their frustrations with the current political climate by chucking tea into Boston Harbor. Sound familiar?

The Boston Tea Party Museum has been encouraging Americans to send them loose tea leaves to toss into Boston's waters this Saturday as part of its fifth annual re-enactment of the historic act of defiance that preceded the Revolutionary War.

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The museum received more than 200 tea submissions as part of the new campaign.

Roughly 30 percent came from people who said they're dissatisfied with today's political climate, museum spokeswoman Stephanie Loeber said.

"I would love to have this tea dumped on the U.S. Congress," wrote Olivia from Waltham in the Boston suburbs.

"I participate in this act of protest to register my resistance to the anti-immigrant, anti-environment and anti-health care policies of Donald J. Trump," wrote Janet of Reading.

Loeber stressed the re-enactment isn't meant to be political: the majority of letters the museum received were nonpolitical, from history buffs to those "just wanting to send in tea to participate."



Maintenance worker Luis Cardona, of Revere, Mass., top, applies wood stain to replicas of historic tea containers as containers holding tea, foreground, rest on the floor in a workshop at the Boston Tea Party Museum, in Boston. AP

Joanne from Holliston was among a number of participants who submitted tea in honor of her ancestors. She said her great, great, great, great grandfather participated in the original Tea Party.

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Third-graders at Balch Elementary School in Norwood said they were excited to have their tea dumped in the harbor because they're currently learning about colonial America and the events leading up to the Revolution.

"We are so grateful to live in Massachusetts where we can visit so many historical sites from this time period!" the class wrote.

The London-based East India Company even donated more than 200 pounds (90 kilograms) of expired tea for the occasion, Loeber said.

The Boston Tea Party Museum is located near where the actual Tea Party took place on Dec. 16, 1773. It features two replica ships where patrons get to toss fake cargo boxes of tea into the water.

Saturday's commemoration opens with actors recreating the fiery debate at Boston's Old South Meeting House over the unpopular Tea Act of 1773. A procession led by fife and drummers then marches from the historic meeting house to the nearby waterfront.

There, re-enactors will show how members of the Sons of Liberty — clad in Native American garb — boarded East India Company ships moored at the harbor and dumped their valuable haul into the murky waters.

The protest prompted Britain to impose military rule and other sanctions on Massachusetts, galvanizing American opposition to colonial rule.