

# THE Fenway News

FREE

COVERING THE FENWAY, AUDUBON CIRCLE, KENMORE SQUARE, UPPER BACK BAY, PRUDENTIAL, LONGWOOD, AND MISSION HILL SINCE 1974 • VOLUME 45, NUMBER 12 • DECEMBER 6, 2019 - JANUARY 3, 2020

## NU Proposes Returning Fenway Apartments If City OKs Dorm

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The Northeastern University Task Force, appointed by the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA), met on Nov. 7 at Northeastern Crossing in advance of the university's official Nov. 12 filing with the city for a new dorm project.

Few members attended, and complaints were made about short notice and multiple conflicts. Project manager Gerald Autler promised a second public meeting, which will take place Dec. 16 at 6pm in university's Alumni Center, 716 Columbus Ave.

At the Nov. 7 meeting, Northeastern's campus planners Kathy Spiegelman and Mau-

reen Hickey, as well as architect David Manfredi of Elkus Manfredi, presented plans for a 26-story tower on what is now a surface parking lot at Tremont Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard, across from Northeastern's Renaissance Garage near Ruggles Station.

Jason Wills from American Campus Communities, the private developer behind the project, spoke about his success with Lightview, the new apartment-style dorm on Burke Street in Lower Roxbury. Residents have individual leases with the company, not with the school, although all beds are rented to Northeastern students.

Spiegelman said the new dorm would have 946 beds. In a reciprocal deal, Northeastern would agree to return to the private market certain Fenway apartments it currently owns or master-leases. Beyond the fact that the university would turn over buildings chosen less frequently by students selecting housing, Spiegelman provided no additional information. Task force member Richard Giordano said, "The proposal could be a game changer."

Spiegelman did not say whether these buildings would be turned over to another institution, real estate developers, or to local nonprofits. She offered no timetable.

Task force member Bruce Bickerstaff added, "I'm a little giddy now, when do we get more details?" No answer.

The new dorm proposal sits in Roxbury on land that was cleared in the 1960s for



A rendering shows the 946-bed dorm Northeastern has proposed for Parcel 18. This is the view from Columbus Avenue.

ELKUS MANFREDI RENDERING COURTESY OF BPDA

### FRIENDS TO TOAST LORI FRANKIAN ON DEC. 7



West Fens resident Lori Frankian died early this year, leaving behind a wide network of friends. Some of them have planned a celebration in South Boston on Dec. 7 (Cambria Hotel, 6 W. Broadway, 7-11pm) to raise

funds for a memorial bench in Lori's honor at L Street Beach. If you can't attend but would like to donate, visit <https://www.plumfund.com/memorial-fund/loris-landing>.

the so-called Inner Belt highway, which was never built. The state promised a Parcel 18 task force, convened in the 1970s, economic development designed to benefit a community that had lost so much from teardowns and disinvestment carried out to clear the highway's route.

Decades later, Northeastern bought the property that made up nearly all of Parcel 18. It now contains International Village and the Renaissance Park office building and garage. Plans for a hotel on the surface lot never

came to fruition. Instead, the university plans a dorm with a design that Roxbury advocate Louis Elisa called a wall that "threatens and brutalizes the community."

On a side note, project manager Autler announced the BPDA is looking to recruit new task force members.

To see the filing, visit [www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/b1a35e9a-c801-4150-b72e-c3019681c05a](http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/b1a35e9a-c801-4150-b72e-c3019681c05a). The public comment period closes on Dec. 20.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

## New Americans Embrace Thanksgiving

BY ISAAC STEPHENS

Sitting around tables piled high with turkey, mashed potatoes, and cranberry sauce, most Americans ask themselves, "What am I thankful for?"

For many recent immigrants to the United States, the question is more complicated.

To some, Thanksgiving is an essential part of American identity and a chance to bond with family. Others celebrate with mixed emotions, hoping to retain the culture of their

home country—and recognizing that pecan pies aren't the only things being sugarcoated on Thanksgiving.

Leonel Martinez, a 30-year-old Uber driver from the Dominican Republic, says in his experience, immigrants to the United States have a lot to be thankful for.

"The American Dream is mostly just putting a plate on your table," Martinez says. He thinks many immigrants are better off here than in their home countries. "Every achievement they've done, [all the]

stuff they own—[they're] just thankful for being in this country and being able to work."

Martinez says he and his family enjoy the opportunity to take a break from work and spend time with each other.

Daniel Cuenca, a professor of Spanish and Portuguese language at Northeastern University, says he observed the impact of Thanksgiving while teaching English to immigrants and refugees at the International Language Institute of Massachusetts.

He says immigrants are often quick to adopt Thanksgiving traditions because the holiday is relatively accessible.

"It's so direct. It's just the family and the food," Cuenca says. Thanksgiving itself—setting aside the parades that precede it and the shopping sprees that follow—is non-commercial and largely secular.

Cuenca adds that the avowed message of the Thanksgiving story, when taken on its surface, is very welcoming to new Americans.

THANKSGIVING on page 2 >

## VOTE TOTALS FOR 2019 CITY COUNCIL RACES IN THE FENWAY AND MISSION HILL

The Fenway		UNOFFICIAL TOTALS BY WARD/PRECINCT						
VOTER TURNOUT								
	4/5	4/6	4/7	4/8	5/2	5/2a	5/10	21/1
	14.6%	16.3%	14%	13.6%	13%	13.3%	12%	9.6%

AT-LARGE CITY COUNCILOR								
Ward/Precinct	4/5	4/6	4/7	4/8	5/2	5/2a	5/10	21/1
MICHAEL FLAHERTY*	110	109	92	181	102	59	98	78
ALEJANDRA ST. GUILLEN†	93	105	65	20	83	59	83	70
MICHELLE WU*	158	177	146	113	146	100	161	133
JULIA MEJIA†	73	91	81	139	67	46	75	64
ERIN MURPHY	32	37	30	24	38	26	48	43
ALTHEA GARRISON	55	64	45	36	43	26	45	47
DAVID HALBERT	49	69	41	72	43	32	69	43
ANNISA ESSAIBI GEORGE*	106	102	90	77	98	67	101	97

DISTRICT 8 CITY COUNCILOR											
Ward/Precinct	4/6	4/7	5/2	5/2a	5/10	10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5	21/1
JENNIFER NASSOUR	208	54	49	26	52	39	25	24	51	38	42
KENZIE BOK*	314	157	137	110	157	158	113	91	272	143	127

Mission Hill		UNOFFICIAL TOTALS BY WARD/PRECINCT						
VOTER TURNOUT								
	10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/8	
	22%	15.7%	12.7%	18.9%	16.5%	10.8%	17.9%	

AT-LARGE CITY COUNCILOR							
Ward/Precinct	10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/8
MICHAEL FLAHERTY*	123	62	61	127	82	52	154
ALEJANDRA ST. GUILLEN†	71	58	68	142	88	70	171
MICHELLE WU*	106	96	78	198	126	109	260
JULIA MEJIA†	84	50	37	157	90	100	174
ERIN MURPHY	22	20	20	85	18	15	36
ALTHEA GARRISON	47	43	25	41	44	25	95
DAVID HALBERT	30	28	21	89	44	31	82
ANNISA ESSAIBI GEORGE*	98	64	62	93	107	68	185

DISTRICT 7 CITY COUNCILOR			
Ward/Precinct	4/5	4/8	
ROY OWENS, SR.	29	40	
KIM JANEY*	160	134	

TOTALS FROM CITY OF BOSTON ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT. THESE ARE UNOFFICIAL RESULTS. \* WINNING CANDIDATE. † FOLLOWING A RECOUNT, ST. GUILLEN TRAILED MEJIA BY FIVE VOTES IN THE RACE FOR THE FOURTH AT-LARGE SEAT; AT PRESS TIME, THE CITY HAD NOT CERTIFIED A WINNER.

# REVIEWERS QUESTION ONE KENMORE'S SCALE, NOVEL TRAFFIC PLAN

BY ALISON PULTINAS

At a sparsely attended meeting of a Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) subcommittee, consultant Jeff Speck and architect Wes Walker explained how the One Kenmore project would funnel Commonwealth Ave.'s eastbound vehicles to Beacon Street before they enter the Kenmore Square.

The site plan would create a new road between the Kenmore Tower apartments at 566 Comm. Ave. and the hotel.

However, because the city's transportation staff insisted on maintaining traffic flow, the road must be four lanes instead of three. In order to prevent delays to the route 57 bus, the design now includes a new westbound lane on Comm. Ave. and removes a crosswalk on Beacon Street.

Questions remain about whether eastbound cyclists on Comm. Ave. would choose to ride straight through the project's public plaza instead of using the new loop. Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) project manager Tim Czerwiński said the agency has commissioned Ruth Bonsignore of Flink Consulting to carry out a third-party review of the transportation plan.

Near the end of the Oct. 22 meeting, Chair Andrea Leers asked about changing the footprint of the hotel—either narrowing it or moving it toward Beacon Street. The concern is both for the view from Comm. Ave. looking east toward Back Bay and the alignment or setback of the new building as compared with buildings to its west. Leers would prefer the hotel to align



STUDIO GANG RENDERING COURTESY OF BPDA  
Members of the Civic Design Commission expressed concerns about One Kenmore's alignment along Comm. Ave. and its effect on views to Back Bay.

Czerwiński has previously said that a cooperation agreement, including language about plaza maintenance and programming, will be part of the memo submitted for the Dec. 12 board vote. Chaviano said he has begun discussions with Boston University about potentially sharing some responsibilities for the plaza.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

with its neighbors.

Damian Chaviano from proponent Mark Development responded that One Kenmore would lose too many "keys" (rooms) with a size reduction. BCDC Commissioner David Hacin, of architecture firm Hacin + Associates, said Comm. Ave. could arguably be Boston's most important corridor.

Leers emphasized that the alignment concern has to do with the whole city and the views east and west. She said the design doesn't fit the street wall; pedestrians would bump into the building if they walk in a straight path.

Walker said if the new road could drop to three lanes wide instead of four, then moving the building might work, but the Boston Transportation Department wasn't comfortable with three lanes.

The project was scheduled for a vote at the November BCDC meeting, but it was crossed off the agenda at the last minute and moved to Dec. 3. Consequently, the public hearing was rescheduled for the Dec. 12 BPDA board meeting.

## Honk If You Love Y's Thanksgiving Feast



PHOTO COURTESY OF EILEEN MACRIEL  
JP Honk Band members Dan Codiga, Wyatt Posig, Matt Morin, Marsha Turin, Doug Spalding, Cathleen Finn, Tom Mason, Duanne Reade, and Kirk Israel serenaded the Huntington YMCA's annual Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 27. The YMCA served more than 100 meals to men, women, and families in need.

## College Convenience Joins Retailers' Protest of Menthol Ban

On Nov. 6, College Convenience, at 281 Huntington Ave., closed in protest of a proposed state ban on menthol tobacco products. In a letter posted on its door, the store's management argued that banning menthol products would lead to racial inequality. It also said that stores rely on menthol sales to stay afloat and a ban could increase food insecurity and crime if it forced some stores to close. Retailers' opposition didn't stop the bill, however; on Nov. 21, lawmakers approved a ban on flavored tobacco products, including vaping products and menthol cigarettes. On Nov. 27, Gov. Charlie Baker signed the bill. He argued that the ban represents a reasonable way to reduce the appeal of smoking to children and teenagers, who often choose fruit- and menthol-flavored products to mask the taste and harshness of tobacco.



## REI INTRODUCES NEW RECYCLING OPTION



PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS  
Even the best recyclers run into obstacles—like what to do with the plastic from individual wrapped protein and energy bars. Instead of dropping them in the trash, you can now dispose of them—and the guilt—at a new bin located inside the entrance to the REI store at 401 Park.

> THANKSGIVING from page 1

"I usually call Thanksgiving... 'National Day of Welcoming Immigrants,'" he says. "It's celebrating the bounty of established and new citizens."

Damaris Velasquez, director of programs and co-founder of Agencia ALPHA, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of immigrant communities, says she centers some lessons on Thanksgiving when helping people prepare for the United States citizenship exam. She says that beyond the fact that it hits multiple test questions — holidays, history, genocide — the holiday is instructive because it helps immigrants understand American culture.

"It's part of what they need to learn in the American history if they want to be part of the society," Velasquez says.

When she left Guatemala at 17, Velasquez says, she wasn't very receptive to the idea of Thanksgiving. But she realized quickly that she wanted to make herself seem more outwardly American, and she began celebrating wholeheartedly.

Now, at age 47, Velasquez says she's found a happy medium.

"You realize, 'Wait a minute! I can be part of this nation, I can be part of this whole society, and I can keep being who I am,'" she says. "That's the beauty of this nation."

Ximena Narvaez, an immigrant from Ecuador, experienced a similar shift in attitude. She wasn't in a very thankful mood at her first Thanksgiving: She didn't understand the holiday, hadn't settled into a new home, and couldn't, in her view, take part in the American Dream.

"Yes, there is a lot of opportunities in this country," she says. "But there is a lot of a struggle as well."

For many years, Narvaez and her husband were

less successful, professionally speaking, than they were in Ecuador. When they first moved here, she says, the language barrier prevented them from taking advantage of opportunity. Today, Narvaez works with Agencia ALPHA to help other immigrants integrate into American culture and avoid the same experience.

Now that her kids are older — her first child was less than a month old at her first Thanksgiving — Narvaez celebrates and is glad for the opportunity to share a meal with family. She partakes at arm's length, acknowledging the history of Native American genocide associated with the holiday, but says she thinks it's important that her children participate in American culture as well as Ecuadorian.

Martinez says his family strikes a balance between Dominican and American cultural pressures by eating a larger variety of foods. In addition to turkey, his family serves pork, tuna salad, empanadas and rice. For dessert, they eat tres leches, or "three milk" cake.

Cuenca says this cultural commingling is reflective of shifting attitudes. The definition of "American," he says, is changing.

"In a way, I think that Thanksgiving actually brings out the whole spectrum of all these possibilities," he says. "If the way that they feel is 'Hey, you know what, we're just going to extract something [from] it,' or 'I do it because I just want to feel more integrated,' or 'I love turkey,'" it is a valid interpretation of the holiday, he says.

Velasquez also emphasizes the importance of balance when negotiating identity as an immigrant.

"Be happy with the fact that [you can eat] black beans and rice and tortillas and at the same time [you] can go to McDonald's and have a hamburger," she says.

Isaac Stephens is a journalism student at Northeastern University.

## MHS Series Takes a Deep Dive into Boston's Public Housing

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

In a series of four panel discussions, the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS) has attempted to document the complicated issue of public and affordable housing in Boston. The first three presentations focused on history, and the last examined the future of affordable housing in Boston.

According to notes from MHS, public housing began as a remedy to urban slums and a way to give a leg up to the “deserving” poor. The apartments were highly coveted and seen as a stepping stone to a middle-class life. However, the developments were often built by clearing entire neighborhoods (the West End comes to mind), and people from these neighborhoods were often not able to move into the new development.

In response to the Civil Rights movement, the 1960s brought a greater emphasis on the government's housing the neediest citizens, but this became coupled with neglect of the sites. Boston mirrored this trend, and by the late 1960s the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) was involved in litigation with residents who sued it over discrimination, corruption, and neglect. In 1979, Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr. ordered the BHA into receivership. Following this low point, the BHA has rebuilt its reputation through redevelopment, sometimes in partnership with private developers.

At the fourth panel on Nov. 20, panelist Kate Bennett, acting administrator of the BHA, talked about improvements in public housing. Bennett said that the BHA supervises 10,495 units, making it the city's largest landlord, with 800 employees. She and other speakers noted that housing projects are always underfunded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Bennett cited Mission Main in Mission Hill and Orchard Park in Roxbury as early transformations that tried to address dysfunction by offering a different type of housing.

Orchard Park, built in 1941 and former home of Bobby Brown and the other members of the New Edition singing group, was a notorious housing project. In 1996, through

HOPE VI, a HUD program that revitalizes housing projects, an application for Orchard Park was submitted. At this point, Orchard Park was considered one of the most distressed developments in the BHA portfolio, its buildings dilapidated, its name synonymous with crime, and its residents isolated. In 1998, the buildings were demolished and 331 high-quality housing units were created that better reflected neighborhood standards. The site was reorganized to create a typical family housing neighborhood and remove the institutional feel. A similar reorganization took place at Mission Main.

More recent transformations have included Old Colony in South Boston, Washington Beech in Roslindale, and Franklin Hill in Dorchester. The BHA's Bennett said all were very distressed physically. The BHA undertook a one-to-one replacement of every

unit on site. At Whittier Street in Roxbury, the BHA is also building a park and revitalizing a nearby school. And in Charlestown and South Boston, the new plan is to add market-rate units to create revenue that will stabilize and rehab existing affordable units.

Soni Gupta, director of neighborhoods and housing at The Boston Foundation, pointed out that zoning regulations written in the 1900s have perpetuated red-lining and other problems, and fueled housing segregation. Her agency focuses on displacement and grassroots efforts to modify zoning. Gupta said that it is important to support a bill allowing for multi-family housing in the suburbs. She said, “We're all looking at the shortage of housing in a booming economy.”

Sandra Henriquez, former administrator of the BHA and now executive director of

the Detroit Housing Commission, compared Boston to Detroit and other cities. Henriquez said that the mayor's support is important and that Boston has made more progress than other cities.

The final speaker, Lawrence Vale, associate dean of the MIT School of Architecture and Planning, insisted that there is a good reason to be optimistic, especially in Boston. Vale explained that Boston has done much more than other cities to preserve housing. Although certain policies have sustained segregation, many residents have waged fights against these policies. “Low-income people need and deserve housing,” Vale said. “Affordability is a slippery concept. We'd like to see affordable housing a high national priority.”

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens. Visit [masshist.org](http://masshist.org) for other MHS programs.

## 123 PROPOSALS, FIVE OF THEM LOCAL, VIE FOR \$25M IN CPA FUNDS

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The latest round of applications for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds, submitted in September, includes 123 projects with a total ask of \$85,325,389.

The appointed committee will sift through the list, debating the merits of each application in order to bring the distribution closer to \$25 million, the amount raised through Boston's property tax surcharge in 2019. The committee met twice in November and will convene five more times before a final vote in January.

The first few meetings focus on the affordable housing applications, including the Department of Neighborhood Development's citywide programs. The CPA meetings are public and posted on the city's website. The Dec. 9 meeting, taking place at 5pm,

will start with a straw poll on open space and historic preservation applications. Four come from the Fenway and one from Mission Hill.

The Fenway proposals include two historic preservation projects — Chabad House at 491 Comm. Ave. and the Huntington Theatre's million-dollar request for facade restoration and streetscape upgrades to supplement its capital campaign. Fenway Civic Association applied for \$43,500 for an irrigation system for Harry Ellis Dickson Park at Westland Ave. and Edgerly Rd., and the Museum of Fine Arts asked for \$500,000 for an interactive play structure to be designed and built by an “internationally renowned artist.”

In Mission Hill, Landmark Senior Living at 63 Parker Hill Ave. applied for \$280,000 for exterior repairs, including 460 windows.

The CPA Committee has set

targets for itself to both diversify funding and to use the process as a tool for equity across the city. With historic preservation, it seeks input from the Boston Landmarks Commission, with the overall goal of preserving the ten most important historic properties in every neighborhood. After legal consultation with state CPA staff, the committee has determined that grants can only be used for exterior work. Open space projects need to be “shovel ready”; grants cannot be used just for design. The upper limit for historic preservation and open space projects is \$500,000.

More than half of the requests, \$44,500,000, are for affordable housing projects. In the historic preservation category, there are 16 applications from religious organizations.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

## Holiday Open House

Celebrate the holiday season with students, colleagues, neighbors, and friends. Connect and enjoy music, food, and holiday spirit!

December 12, 2019

4:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Northeastern Crossing

1175 Tremont St, Roxbury

More info:

617-373-2555

[northeastern.edu/crossing](http://northeastern.edu/crossing)

[communityaffairs@northeastern.edu](mailto:communityaffairs@northeastern.edu)



Northeastern University  
City and Community Affairs

## Why I Signed the Climate Emergency Warning

BY MARIA ABATE

On Nov. 5, a “climate emergency” was declared. This was not an overnight parking ban in Boston after a snow emergency. This climate emergency covers our entire earth. Eleven thousand scientists, including myself, from 153 countries declared this emergency, as signatories of a report entitled “World Scientists’ Warning of a Climate Emergency.”

This sobering but straightforward report was published in the journal *Bioscience* and is available to all at <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biz088>. Written by five experts in ecology and climate science, the article provides

### GUEST OPINION

a set of graphs showing human activities over the past 40 years that affect greenhouse gases (GHGs) and indicators of climate over that time.

Besides burning fossil fuels and other human activities that directly affect the environment, the report is especially telling because it includes socioeconomic factors (e.g. world gross domestic product) that ultimately influence GHGs.

At normal levels the three main GHGs — carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide — trap energy in the earth’s atmosphere and keep our planet at a habitable temperature. However, the report unequivocally shows the human activities that increase GHG emissions are still going up too much and too fast, while our activities that decrease them are lagging too far behind, with corresponding alarming increases in GHGs, surface temperature, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events.

Many scientists from a variety of fields who signed the report have observed firsthand the negative effects of climate change on ecosystems, species populations and public health. After 40 years and many warnings since the First World Climate Conference, we humans have received our report card on climate change; and Mother Earth is not pleased, because we are failing.

Why have individuals been so reluctant to heed previous warnings about climate change and taken “climate procrastination” to such dangerous levels? Like other organisms we are adapted to recognize threats to our local environment and to focus our efforts on what is most important in our immediate surroundings. While we have evolved technologically with wide-reaching effects, our awareness outside of our immediate sphere has lagged behind. In the past, we have acted to stop another atmospheric threat, the ozone hole, which we could see grow with satellite sensors. We watched it shrink over time after banning our ozone-depleting chemicals (e.g., halocarbon refrigerants and aerosols). In contrast, carbon dioxide, the biggest contributor to global warming, is itself long-lasting, odorless, and colorless, which makes our daily recognition of this global threat challenging.

The earth’s warming has finally manifested itself as a variety of frequent weather and weather-related disasters that we can observe — heat waves, droughts, and wildfires; heavy downpours and floods; strong winds and hurricanes, typhoons, and tornadoes; glaciers melting and sea levels rising; and even polar-like air masses inducing frigid temperatures and unseasonable snowfall. Extreme weather events have

increased by more than 40 percent every decade for the past 40 years. Every region of the world, including Boston and New England, has experienced at least a couple of these types of events more frequently in recent years and, as temperatures rise, becomes more susceptible to others. Recently people, especially young people, have begun to take notice of these events and voiced their concerns for the planet’s and their futures with protests around the world. The vital signs of climate change reported in the World Scientists’ Warning are tangible, solid evidence we can use to improve our broader awareness of our environment.

The latest United Nations *Emissions Gap Report*, released last month, stated that we must decrease GHG emissions by 7.5 percent annually for the next decade and more after that to avoid a dangerous four-degrees Fahrenheit increase to a tipping point of severe climate effects. Meeting this goal will require a major culture shift, because GHGs have increased 1.5 percent annually over the past decade.

To help policymakers create systems to meet this goal, the authors of the World Scientists’ Warning provided six broad policy proposals, including making a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, reducing short-lived climate pollutants, protecting ecosystems, reducing GHG-producing livestock and food waste, shifting from a short-term focus on gross domestic product to a long-term sustainable economy, and stabilizing population growth with family planning and the human rights to an education and economic equality.

This crisis is an opportunity to create an education renaissance by teaching not only about climate change but also sustainability. Recently, Italy’s education minister announced that lessons on climate change and sustainability will soon be mandatory in every grade. In the United States, science education standards vary widely among states, with some still hostile to teaching evolution, the basis of all biology. Others include evolution, but not human-induced climate change. Formal training of teachers on the subject of climate change is also not widespread. In Massachusetts, climate change is included in the state’s science education curriculum. The concept of sustainable natural resources is introduced in high school.

Even with our education efforts, the idea that we lose economically when we sustain our planet is entrenched in our culture. However, billions of dollars are lost from extreme weather. In some cases, parts of local populations have been displaced permanently; and the most vulnerable people are hurt the most. Climate change also threatens crop production, and fisheries have been further depleted in warming seas.

Sustainability of our resources and a prosperous long-term economy go hand-in-hand, as they are connected by evidence-based science, new technologies, and improving socioeconomic status. It’s time we embraced these connections and formally learned about sustainability and its broad benefits to increase our awareness of our enviro-economic wellbeing and earn that better report card to fight this climate crisis.

*Maria Abate is an assistant professor of biology at Simmons University.*

### IN MEMORIAM

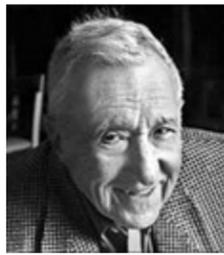
#### Fred Taylor

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

Fred Taylor, a long-time resident of Kenmore Square, died on Oct. 26 at the age of 90. Taylor was well known on the local jazz scene and nurtured the careers of many jazz musicians who performed in Boston.

In the mid-1960s until 1978, he helped run the jazz clubs Paul’s Mall and the Jazz Workshop on Boylston Street in the Back Bay, where Taylor booked world-famous musicians, including Duke Ellington, Cannonball Adderley, and Sonny Rollins. Taylor also booked acts at Scullers Jazz Club in Cambridge for 26 years.

Born in Boston, Taylor grew up in Newton, graduated from Boston University, and initially worked in his family’s business



selling mattresses. In 1961, he launched HT Productions, producing concerts until 2017, and was entertainment director at Scullers Jazz Club until the end of 2016. His condo in Kenmore Square was a museum of jazz memorabilia.

His many honors included JazzBoston’s Roy Haynes award in 2014 and the George Wein Impresario award from Berklee College in 2015.

Taylor left no immediate family. A memorial service was held on Oct. 30 at the Levine Chapels in Brookline. Remembrances may be made to the Fred Taylor Endowed Scholarship Fund at Berklee College of Music.

*Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.*

### Timely Coverage of Monarchs

TO THE EDITOR:

I wanted to thank you on behalf of our pollinators and everyone in our gardening community—members, neighbors, friends, supporters, and visitors.

We received a number of calls in response to your beautiful piece on the Monarch project (in the November issue of the paper). We are so excited to have this opportunity to engage individuals and groups on pollinators and talk about this magical place in the Fenway!

I talked to a few visitors at the ofrenda the Parks Department staged in Copley Square for Día de Muertos. I was pleasantly surprised by how many people knew this holiday coincides with the return of the eastern migrating Monarchs to the mountains of Mexico. How wonderful that the article coincided with this important event!

Thank you, again, for your support of the Fenway Victory Gardens!

**ELIZABETH BERTOLOZZI, PRESIDENT  
FENWAY GARDEN SOCIETY**

## Fenway News

Serving the Fenway, Kenmore Square, Audubon Circle, upper Back Bay, lower Roxbury, Prudential, Mission Hill, and Longwood since 1974

**FENWAY NEWS ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Mary Ann Brogan • Steve Chase • Helen Cox  
Ruth Khowais • Alison Pultinas • Steve Wolf

**EDITOR:** Kelsey Bruun

**DESIGN/PRODUCTION MANAGER:** Steve Wolf

**WRITERS:** Alison Barnet, Mary Ann Brogan, Will Brownsberger, Helen Cox, Tracey Cusick, Jose da Silva, Taylor Driscoll, John Engstrom, Stan Everett, Lisa Fay, Marie Fukuda, Elizabeth Gillis, Katherine Greenough, Steve Harnish, Parker James, Shradha Kakade, Ruth Khowais, Shirley Kressel, Kristen Lauerman, Joanne McKenna, Jiancheng Mo, Letta Neely, Susan Povak, Michael Prentky, Camille Platt, Alison Pultinas, Mallory Rohrig, Matti Kniva Spencer, Susannah Sudborough, Mat Thall, Chris Viveiros, Steve Wolf

**PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Steve Chase, Patrick O’Connor, Matti Kniva Spencer, Steve Wolf

**CALENDAR:** Ruth Khowais, Alison Pultinas, Steve Wolf

**PROOFREADERS:** Steve Chase, Ruth Khowais, Alison Pultinas

**BUSINESS MANAGER:** Janet Malone

**DISTRIBUTION:** Della Gelzer, Aqilla Manna, Lauren Dewey Platt, Reggie Wynn

The Fenway News is published monthly by the Fenway News Association, Inc., a community-owned corporation dedicated to community journalism. If you would like to volunteer to write, edit, photograph, lay out, distribute, or sell advertising on commission, please contact us at

**The Fenway News,  
PO Box 230277, Astor Station  
Boston, MA 02123  
fenwaynews@gmail.com  
www.fenwaynews.org**

Subscriptions \$30/year  
(\$20 for limited income)  
©2019 FENWAY NEWS ASSOCIATION, INC.

### “Comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.”

The founders of The Fenway News adopted this motto to express their mission of exposing and opposing the dangers the neighborhood faced in the early 1970s—rampant arson, predatory landlords, and a destructive urban renewal plan. If the original motto no longer fits today’s Fenway, we remain committed to its spirit of identifying problems and making our neighborhood a better and safer place to live.

#### ► FREQUENCY ◀

The Fenway News reaches distribution sites on the Friday closest to the first of each month. Our next issue will appear **Friday, January 3.**

#### ► DEADLINE ◀

The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is **Friday, December 27.**

## HUNTINGTON WINE & SPIRITS

UNIQUE WINES • BOUTIQUE BEERS • EXOTIC SPIRITS

Celebrating our 83rd year!  
**Thank you, Boston,** for letting us  
serve all your beverage needs since 1936!

Enjoy our year-long wine sale.  
**Take 20% off any 6 bottles of wine**  
(sale items excluded).



DELIVERY AVAILABLE • 617-536-0164  
301 HUNTINGTON AVENUE  
Across from the YMCA and just steps from the Green Line

## WHEN YOU’RE LOCKED OUT, CALL US.

**Mass Ave Lock**  
125 St. Botolph St.  
**617-247-9779**

FAMILY-OWNED AND -OPERATED.  
40 YEARS AND COUNTING.

Lockouts ★ Master Key Systems  
High-Security Key Systems  
Mailbox Keys ★ Keys Made by Code  
Door Closers ★ Deadbolts

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A LOT HAPPENED IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE THE LAST ISSUE, INCLUDING...

You might remember a question on last month's election ballot asking how you feel about changing *Dudley Square*—named for a 17th-century governor who facilitated slaveholding in Massachusetts—to *Nubian Square*, to honor the empire and culture of a large section of the Nile Valley. Citywide, voters opposed the idea roughly 46% to 54% [for/against], but the *Globe* calculated that the precincts closest to the square endorsed the idea, 67% to 33%. **Spooked by the sale of the building that houses Machine, their home base for 25 years, fringe-y theater troupe The Gold Dust Orphans announced that they'll relocate to the Lithuanian Club in South Boston (who knew?). They began performances of their Christmas-themed show there on Dec. 5.** **MGM Resorts bought naming rights to the planned concert venue on Ipswich Street, the groundbreaking for which took place last month. We'll [i call it] theory, anyway** "MGM Music Hall at Fenway." So there's that to look forward to. **Stan Kozak, longtime head of horticulture at the Gardner Museum, died of cancer at the beginning of the month. Although only 67, he had worked at the museum for an improbably long 50 years, having started there in his late teens.** **Oprah's still got it!** Eastern Standard Provisions, an offshoot of Kenmore Square's Eastern Standard restaurant, got a big boost—to the tune of thousands of online orders per hour—when *Oprah* magazine included ESP's pretzels on the Queen of All Media's annual list of favorite things, released in early November [Christmas shopping, amiright?]. CEO Bill Deacon called the selection "sort of a crazy moment for our company," which only launched last February.



## DASHBOARD

### → TRASH & RECYCLING PICK-UP

- **BACK BAY:** Trash and recycling on Monday and Thursday
- **FENWAY:** Trash and recycling on Tuesday and Friday
- **MISSION HILL:** Trash and recycling on Tuesday and Friday

## COMMUNITY meetings

**MON, DEC. 9** Monthly community dinner. All are welcome! 6-7pm, Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral, 165 Park Drive, Boston. To learn more contact Helen Murphy at [hmurphy@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:hmurphy@fenwaycdc.org), (617) 267-4637 x21.

**TUE, DEC. 10** Symphony United Neighbors (SUN) meeting. 320 Huntington Ave., Room 208E. 6:30-7:45pm.

**WED, DEC. 11** Fenway Fair Foods, 3-5pm, Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral, 165 Park Dr. Get a bag of fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables for \$2. Everyone welcome! To learn more, contact Helen Murphy, [hmurphy@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:hmurphy@fenwaycdc.org), (617) 267-4637 x21.

**THU, DEC. 12 & 19** Free One-to-One Financial Coaching, 1-5pm, Fenway CDC conference room, 70 Burbank Street. To schedule an appointment, contact Kris Anderson at [kanderson@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:kanderson@fenwaycdc.org) or (617) 267-4637 x29.

#### MON, DEC. 16

- Northeastern University Task Force meeting. Discussion of proposed institutional master plan amendment and proposed high-rise dorm (with American Campus Communities). 6-8pm. Alumni Center, 716 Columbus Ave. Contact

Gerald Autler at [Gerald.Autler@Boston.gov](mailto:Gerald.Autler@Boston.gov) or (617) 918-4438 with any questions.

- Fenway Center Phase 2. BPDA public meeting to discuss proposed changes in Phase 2. 5:30-7:30pm at BU Sargent College, 635 Comm. Ave., Room 101. For more info, contact Tim Czerwienski at [Tim.Czerwienski@boston.gov](mailto:Tim.Czerwienski@boston.gov) or (617) 918-5303.

**TUE, DEC. 17** Public presentation of the master plan design for the Kenmore Square section of the Commonwealth Mall, sponsored by the Friends of the Public Garden, the Parks Dept. and four neighborhood groups. 565 Commonwealth Ave., 6-8pm.

## CORRECTION

The credit for the Robert Burns statue photos in our November issue wasn't legible. Photographer Joe Brooks took the photos. We regret that his name was hard to read.

## Neighborhood Newsline

### Repair of Ruggles Elevators Will Last Through the Summer

While it replaces the elevators at Ruggles Station, the MBTA will take them out of service through next summer and provide shuttle buses to Jackson Square for those that need elevators to access the Orange Line. See an MBTA employee or use station call boxes to request a ride. Riders who need an elevator and typically exit the Orange Line at Ruggles should instead exit at Jackson Square, where shuttle buses in the busway adjacent to the station entrance mezzanine will take riders to Ruggles. An accessible van is also available to riders on Forsyth Street near Ruggles and can also transport customers directly to Jackson Square on request.

### ZBA Defers Hearing on Burney St. Plan That Worries Neighbors

At the Oct. 29 Zoning Board of Appeals, Attorney Bud Shadrawy requested a deferral for the controversial 9-11 Burney St. residential project, a 24-apartment compact-living building. Nearby neighbors have voiced concerns about the proposed height, small unit sizes, lack of parking, and variances the owners have requested for adjacent properties on Tremont St. that raise questions about parking and loading for the project's first-floor restaurants. The new date for the hearing is Jan. 14 at 11:30am.

### Does the West Fens Have the Priciest Apartments in the U.S.?

Number-crunching by Apartment Guide, a list-happy apartment-rentals website, identified the 02215 ZIP Code (aka the West Fens) as the most expensive place to rent a one-bedroom apartment in the United States. Averaging asking rents for all apartments listed on ApartmentGuide.com and Rent.com, owned by the same company, the site pegged 02215's average one-bedroom price at \$5,035.

### Old Kenmore Post Office Finds New Home in Audubon Circle

The recently closed Kenmore Square post office has found a new home. The storefront at 506-512 Park Dr. near Buswell Street will likely become the replacement post office; the owner filed with Boston's Inspectional Services Department for renovations and the new use in October. A zoning hearing is anticipated. *The Daily Free Press*, B.U.'s student newspaper, got the scoop, although its headline read "Closed Kenmore Post Office to be Relocated to South Campus." Actual residents refer to the neighborhood as Audubon Circle.

### Link Bus Holds Annual Meeting in Mission Hill

The Mission Hill Link board held a well-attended annual meeting on Nov. 21 at the Parker Hill Branch library. City Councilor Michelle Wu, State Rep. Nika Elugardo, and residents gathered to hear from board members Mary Ann Nelson, Maggie Cohn, John Jackson, Alice Diggs, and Cindy Diggs. Established in the 1970s, the Link is a community bus service open to anyone. The route begins in the Stop & Shop parking lot at Brigham Circle, loops around the Mission Main and Alice Taylor developments, then heads up the hill to New England Baptist Hospital (NEBH). Fares are reasonable, stops aren't fixed, and anyone can flag the van down. The bus makes 11 daily trips, Monday through Friday. Smartphone owners can use a tracker to locate the bus in real time. The board contracts with TransAction Corporate Shuttles to run the Link. The financial report shows funding from NEBH, the MBTA, the Back of the Hill CDC, and a providential earmark from the 2018 state budget. Elugardo said the Link isn't a charity but an investment in the Mission Hill neighborhood, a community with a high population of seniors. Wu spoke passionately about transit justice and making MBTA buses free (one of her policy goals). Both Elugardo and Wu support the Link as an example of community empowerment.



## Public Meeting

# Fenway Center Phase 2

Monday, December 16

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

BU Sargent College

Room 101

635 Commonwealth Avenue

Boston, MA 02215

### Project Description:

CSP Fenway Center Development, LLC proposes changes to the previously approved Fenway Center Phase 2 project. The revised program consists of 692,000 square feet of lab space, which includes associated office and support spaces, along with 48,400 square feet of ground floor retail space. The Proponent proposes to construct approximately 501 parking spaces as a component of Phase 2, for a total of 790 Project parking spaces. The Project Change will therefore reduce the overall project parking count by approximately 550 spaces as compared to the previously approved project.

In addition to this meeting, a public meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee will be held in January 2020.

mail to: **Tim Czerwienski**  
Boston Planning & Development Agency  
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor  
Boston, MA 02201  
phone: 617.918.5303  
email: [tim.czerwienski@boston.gov](mailto:tim.czerwienski@boston.gov)

**Close of Comment Period:**  
1/18/2020

FENWAY HEALTH

Your Care, Your Community



Looking for a convenient, neighborhood pharmacy? We've got you covered.

FENWAY HEALTH | 1340 Boylston Street | Boston, MA 02215  
617.267.0900 | [fenwayhealth.org](http://fenwayhealth.org)

BostonPlans.org | @BostonPlans  
Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

# Earning a Name With Top-Notch Revivals of Neglected Operas

BY JOHN ENGSTROM

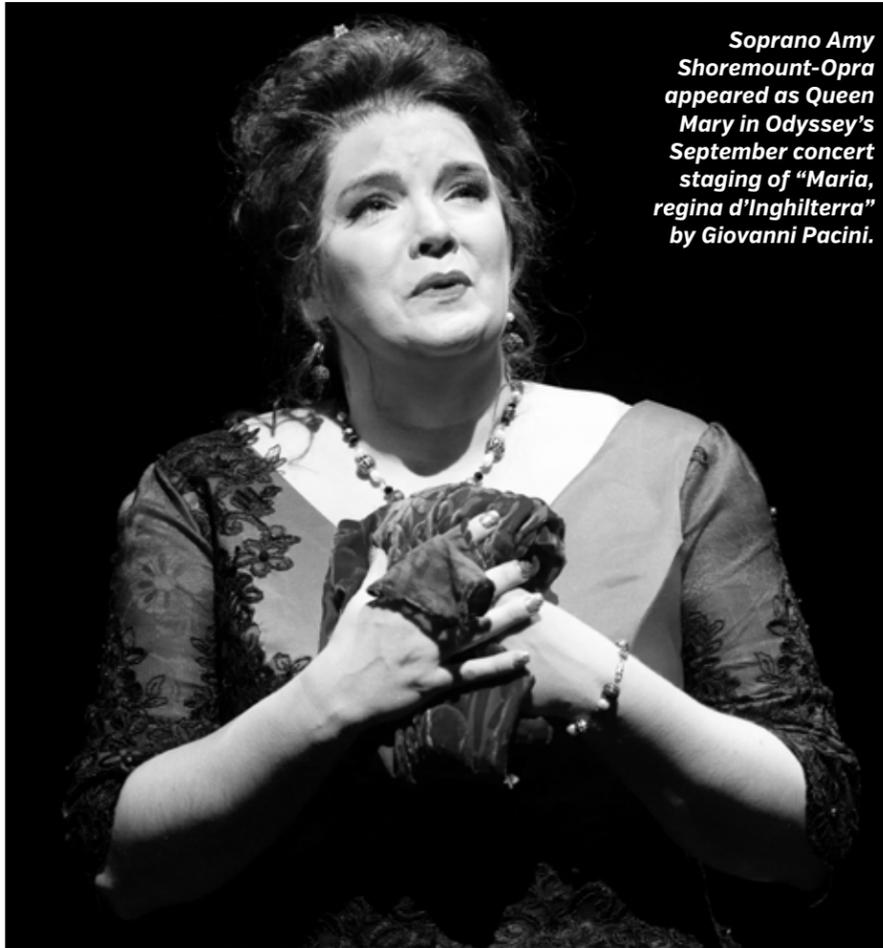
Odyssey Opera's full-dress production on Nov. 1 and 3, at the Huntington Avenue Theatre, of a little-known 19th-century opera called *Maria, regina d'Inghilterra* (Mary, Queen of England) was praised in advance by *The New York Times*, WBUR-FM, and *The Boston Globe* as "one of the must-see classical events of the fall season."

Such a shout-out from reputable sources simply confirms what intelligent, informed concert-goers and opera fans in these parts have known for years: that Odyssey is a jewel in the crown of Boston's classical music scene.

Since 2013 — when the group debuted with a bang-up concert performance of a seldom-heard Wagner opera called *Rienzi* — Odyssey has "done its thing" with distinction, musicality, and brilliance, not to mention expert help from an enormous pool of operatic talent in this country and abroad, and the enlightened, energetic musical direction of conductor Gil Rose.

Odyssey's unusual mission is to shine a light on operas by major and unknown composers that might otherwise languish in obscurity, providing these works with an audience through concert presentations (most at Jordan Hall) and full productions (most at the Huntington Avenue Theatre). Their programs often (though not always) sell out, and the company's reputation grows and broadens with each new exposure. Odyssey's new recording of *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by American composer Tobias Picker, which the group presented in 2014, has been nominated for a best-opera recording Grammy Award.

PHOTO: KATHY WITTMAN



Soprano Amy Shoremount-Opra appeared as Queen Mary in Odyssey's September concert staging of "*Maria, regina d'Inghilterra*" by Giovanni Pacini.

In recent years, Odyssey Opera has adopted a fruitful and innovative policy of organizing its seasons around operas that are linked by a theme or a person. We have had a season of works inspired by or reflecting the writings of Oscar Wilde, and series devoted

to the historical figure of Joan of Arc, and the legendary siren of Greek myth, Helen of Troy.

For the 2019-2020 season, Gil Rose and his partners in musical art-making decided to plug into the English and American public's insatiable fascination with royal personalities

and melodramas. The result is a "Tudor season" of six operas — in French, Italian and English — about the volatile, back-stabbing English dynasty that gave us such larger-than-life monarchs as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

The series kicked off in September with a well-received concert presentation at Jordan Hall of *Henry VIII* by French composer Camille Saint-Saens, whose sensual *Samson et Dalila* is part of the standard operatic repertory. *Maria, regina d'Inghilterra* by Giovanni Pacini followed in November with a full production stage-directed by Steven Maler, artistic head of the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, who exclaimed in a program note that the opera "has such modernity that it feels nearly ripped from the headlines."

The second of Odyssey's "royal procession" of operas, *Maria*, introduced local opera lovers and musicians to a composer few have heard of outside Italy or the confines of a music scholar's desk. In his lifetime (1796-1867), Pacini was one of the most successful and popular makers of opera who ever lived. Born into a musical family in Sicily, he wrote 70 operas and had them produced all over Italy—Milan, Naples, Florence, Venice, Bologna, Palermo, and Rome were just some of the cities that embraced his work. According to the composer's interesting, candid book, *My Artistic Memoirs*, written a few years before his death, the people of Milan were so fond of him and his works that they made up a saying about him. "If a tempest should bring us misfortune, Pacini is always there to save the day."

Pacini was a firm believer in melody as

**ODYSSEY OPERA** next page >

## NEW LEADERS HEAD NEIGHBORHOOD INSTITUTIONS

### BPL: Karen Gallagher

BY KELSEY BRUUN

Karen Gallagher, who formerly worked at the Dudley Branch of the Boston Public Library as a children's librarian, has been the Parker Hill Branch librarian since mid-summer.

"I'm a former children's librarian so it's a shift, but a wonderful challenge," said Gallagher. "Although Dudley is right down the street, it feels very different."

She explained that the most exciting part of the position is meeting neighborhood residents. "We have really great patrons here. Some come in every day, and I'm getting to know them," she said. "Everyone has been really friendly and opening."

Gallagher explained that her primary role is to increase library traffic and make sure the space is inviting and programs are compelling.

Some programs she highlighted include ESL classes, play reading workshops, and a book discussion group.

"It's a place to study but also a place to meet," Gallagher explained. "It can be a very social place. There's a lot more than coming in to study."

Gallagher said that library branches will work together to fine-tune programming when it makes sense, but that some programs are only successful in certain areas.

"You look at the needs of the community," she explained. "Certain programs work well in certain communities because of the population. I think it really reflects on the neighborhood needs."

At Parker Hill, one of the most successful programs is a yoga class for older adults, held every Saturday.

While programming is definitely integral to Parker Hill, as a neighborhood library, books are still the focus. "I'm always happy to see readers;

I just love libraries," said Gallagher. "You just get to take home these free books. It's still about the books and the freeness of it. You could read a book a week, and it doesn't cost you anything."

For young people, it really doesn't cost anything—on Nov. 1, all Boston Public Library locations eliminated overdue balances for library card holders under the age of 18.

According to a press release from Mayor Marty Walsh, while youth cardholders will still be required to return any overdue books in order to check out additional materials, they will no longer face fines for late returns.

"We believe this will encourage more young people to take advantage of the educational resources our libraries provide," Walsh stated in the release.

While this development might increase the number of young people using the library, Gallagher explained that she also plans to develop programming that is attractive to young people and is "trying to figure out what teens really like."

On Dec. 12, from 4pm to 7pm, Gallagher, her staff, and the Friends of the Parker Hill Branch Library, will engage with residents of all ages at the library's annual open house.

Highlights include a book sale, hosted by the Friends of the Parker Hill Branch Library, live holiday music from the New England Conservatory, henna tattoos, crafts, and refreshments.

"I will walk up and down Tremont Street to make sure everyone knows we're having this huge open house," Gallagher said. "It will be nice to meet everyone. I am thrilled to be a part of Mission Hill. What a wonderful neighborhood."

Kelsey Bruun is the editor of *The Fenway News*.

### YMCA: Eileen MacNeil

PHOTO COURTESY OF EILEEN MACNEIL



BY ALISON BARNET

Here we are at a table in the lobby of the Huntington Avenue YMCA after our exercise class, drinking coffee and talking, when the new executive director comes out of her office, introduces herself, encourages us to let her know if we have any issues or suggestions, and gives everyone her card.

Eileen MacNeil became the Huntington Y's new director in late July. Previously, she was executive director of South Boston's Paraclete, an after-school program for fourth- to eighth-grade students that offers academic help and enrichment programs. A South Boston resident and the mother of two teenagers, MacNeil is originally from New Rochelle, New York.

"Welcoming all"—young and old, homeless and immigrant—is one of MacNeil's goals at the Y, as well as being "a source of strength for

the community." She uses the word strength a lot, which, in a way, is a play on words since most Y members come to work out, hoping to gain strength.

Even though I've been a Y member for many years, I learned through MacNeil about the large number of programs the Y offers beyond treadmills and the swimming pool. They include diabetes awareness and prevention; Child Watch for those with family memberships; Junior Celtics; a program for children and adults who never learned to swim; a Boston park clean-up by volunteers; Livestrong for people with cancer, and, recently, a Thanksgiving meal for more than a hundred—including formerly homeless people who live upstairs in the building and those who live at the Charlestown Y.

And then there's the raffle to raise money for youth development programming, offering prize packages for a \$25 donation. Here's a sample of what you can win: "Fitness Buff: 3 PT sessions and Fitness Tracker;" "Aqua Warrior: A Swim Lesson and 3 Months of Towel Service;" "Membership Mania: 3 months Membership and Free Parking;" "Book Worm: Kindle, \$100 Barnes & Noble gift certificate and a bottle of Sauvignon Blanc." This is only four of them.

We enjoy our coffee, courtesy of the Y, and hope MacNeil will come out of her large office off the lobby, the one with all the windows, and sit with us for awhile. At the same time, we all recognize she's got work to do. MacNeil herself sometimes thinks she'd better move to a quieter office, becoming a little less welcoming and accessible.

Alison Barnet lives in the South End.

# The Arts

> **ODYSSEY OPERA** from previous page the basis of operatic writing. He wrote that, “Music...that is without melody and without connections between ideas, will always be a jumble of notes, and nothing more.” As one city after another took up his works, the composer offered stiff competition to the “Big Three” of Italian opera of that era: Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini. (Verdi hadn’t come along yet.) Pacini’s first big operatic splash was a piece based on ancient Greek

featured romantic entanglements and made-up characters. Pacini liked what he read and proceeded to compose *Maria, regina d’Inghilterra*, his 53rd opera, for a theater in Palermo, where it debuted in 1843.

Writers of opera through the ages have not been eager to focus on Queen Mary, a staunch Catholic who reigned over England with an iron fist from 1553 until her death in 1558. Composers have found her remarkable younger sister, Elizabeth I, more attractive as a subject for an opera. The daughter of King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, Mary is famous today for little other than being called “Bloody Mary” because of her Stalin-like purges of Protestant dissidents, in which hundreds suffered at the stake. There is no mention of this in the opera, set in 1553 in London. Other than a reference to Philip of Spain, who became Mary’s husband in 1556, the amount of historical fact in Pacini’s treatment is almost zero.

A large and unsettling portrait of the monarch—made in 1554 by Dutch painter Antonis Mor, who made her look like a “dragon lady”—hangs today in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

The world premiere of *Maria* was even more successful than that of *Saffo*. Pacini was adulated by the audience and delighted in being crowned with a laurel wreath. Later in the run, however, there was some kind of public disturbance in the theater where *Maria* was playing. The riot took place during the opera’s second act, in which political intrigue and romantic yearning boil over into musical melodrama.

Odyssey Opera’s production of *Maria* was lively and entertaining, performed superbly by a 36-piece orchestra, a cast of eight principal singers and a 16-voice chorus in robust form. The opera was a long sit at three hours with one intermission, but the minutes seemed to race along because of the ensemble cohesion of the participants, led by maestro Rose.

The company’s achievement was still more impressive, in that *Maria* isn’t just any old opera. It is an example of “bel canto opera,” a kind of guidebook for singers that emphasizes the long-breathed vocal line, intense concentration on the words of the libretto, flourishes of coloratura, trills, octave drops and other vocal “special effects.” The format flourished throughout Italy in the 19th century but fell into decline until the 1950s, when such singers as Maria Callas and Joan Sutherland began to mine the bel canto works of Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini (but not Pacini) for their vocal and dramatic riches.



PHOTO: KATHY WITTMAN

**In Odyssey’s “Maria,” soprano Alisa Jordheim sang as Clotilde Talbot, a noblewoman fallen on hard times. The character never existed — Pacini built the opera on a libretto grounded in little historical fact.**

literature called *Saffo*, which had a wildly successful premiere at Naples in 1842. After the following night’s performance, the ecstatic audience escorted the composer home in a torch-lit parade.

At a carnival in Naples a year later, a lawyer named Leopoldo Tarantini handed Pacini a libretto he had created that was based on English history—not real history, but 19th-century romantic notions of history. The protagonist and title character was Mary Tudor, England’s first queen regnant. Tarantini’s source text was a largely fictional drama by Victor Hugo, which

## MUSEUM SCHOOL GRADS GET AN MFA SHOW

PHOTO: JARED CHARNEY, TUFTS UNIVERSITY



**The MFA has opened a show of mixed media work by four recent graduates of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA) at Tufts University. “SMFA at Tufts: Juried Student Exhibition 2019-2020,” will remain on view through April 12 in the Edward H. Linde Gallery. Shown here is Perla Mabel’s “Destroyed a Perfectly Good Body,” currently on display at the exhibit.**

## Kaji Aso Artists Deck Pru’s Halls

PHOTO: SMIT SHERESTHA



**Kaji Aso Studio hosted its annual group art show, “A Spot of Beauty,” at the Prudential Center last month. The exhibition ran through Nov. 16, with an opening reception on Nov. 2. Here, Monita Rajbanshi stands with her paintings. The Japanese consulate in Boston helped sponsor the exhibit, organized by the studio, located on St. Stephen Street in the East Fens.**

Boston can claim a bit of reflected bel canto glory of its own because of the late soprano Beverly Sills, who with Sarah Caldwell’s Opera Company of Boston in the 1960s and 1970s performed Bellini’s *Norma* — a vocal Mount Everest — and other technically bracing roles by Rossini and Donizetti. Local bel canto buffs will be interested to know that Boston Lyric Opera plans to mount *Norma* (March 13-22), followed in May by Handel’s *Giulio Cesare*, which also trafficks heavily in vocal pyrotechnics.

The protagonists of bel canto works tend to be female: in *Maria*, soprano Amy Shoremount-Opra (stupendous) played the Queen, and the invented role of Clotilde Talbot, a noblewoman fallen on hard times, was sung by soprano Alisa Jordheim (so astonishing she made your jaw drop).

Actress Kathleen Turner, who played a speaking part in a Donizetti opera at the Met last season, complained volubly in an interview about the “terrible” acting in opera today. But the acting in Odyssey’s *Maria* needed no apology; Steven Maler inspired the singers to an intensity and concentration that reflected his experience as a Shakespeare director. Baritone James Demler brought chilling presence to his portrayal of the villainous Lord Chancellor of England. Tenor Kameron Lopreore sounded vocally taxed as the duplicitous Riccardo Fenimore, a Scottish nobleman who runs afoul of Mary, but the part as written originally by Pacini was a vehicle for tenor Nicola Ivanoff, whose tessitura (median vocal range) was unusually high.

Odyssey’s *Maria* was a mixed bag visually, with abstract scenery designed by Jeffrey Allen Petersen that added little and inflicted a visual eyesore on the audience—a towering, hideous ornamental panel at the back of Mary’s reception hall—in Act Two. The lighting, by Jorge Arroyo, got the job done effectively and scored a visual tour de force in the third act: the condemned Fenimore mounting a steep flight of steps to the scaffold against a backdrop of searing red.

Costume designer Brooke Stanton gave Shoremount-Opra the most glamorous apparel, which owed more to *Vogue* than Hans Holbein. The singer wore a glittering tiara, a red bodice trimmed with silver, and huge, flaring red skirts. The red of Mary’s costume and of the trench coats of her guards was the only strong color accent in the show, with the other costumes in muted tones.

Odyssey’s “Tudor” proceedings include, on Feb. 1, a world premiere: *The Chronicle of Nine* by the late Arnold Rosner, an American composer noted for eclecticism, originality, and defiance toward the mainstream. *Chronicle* is an operatic treatment of the nine-day ascension of Lady Jane Grey, a Tudor noblewoman and great-granddaughter of Henry VII, who, at age 17 in 1537, ended her life on the executioner’s block in the Tower of London.

Two very different operas about the legendary and beloved Elizabeth I — the bel canto romance *Elisabetta, regina d’Inghilterra* by Gioachino Rossini (March 13, 15) and the 20th-century *Gloriana* by Benjamin Britten (April 11) — continue the Odyssey exploration, which ends June 5 and 7 with the comic operetta *Merrie England* by English composer Edward German, a contemporary of Sir Arthur Sullivan.

*John Engstrom lives in the West Fens.*

## LAST CALL

**Don’t just sit there—catch these exhibits in the Fenway before they close this month:**

- **ENDS 12/12—REDACTED: THE WORK OF ALLIE BARTLETT** Mixed-media on paper, artist books, and a jewelry series based on the collection of the library (part of the MFA) and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society’s archives. Horticulture Hall, 300 Mass. Ave.

- **Ends 12/15—VIEWPOINTS: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE HOWARD GREENBERG COLLECTION** A photographer himself, Greenberg assembled a stellar collection of masterpieces from the first half of the 20th century, when photography morphed from workaday craft to fine art. The show includes works by Berenice Abbott, Margaret Bourke-White, Walker Evans, Gordon Parks, and Weegee. Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Ave.

# December

## CALENDAR

**+** THIS SYMBOL INDICATES A FREE EVENT.

### arts+ ENTERTAINMENT

Now **⇒ Sun, 12/8**

**GLORY DENIED**, a fully orchestrated opera, recounts the poignant saga of America during the Vietnam War. At the Boston Conservatory Theater, 31 Hemenway St. Thu-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Tickets \$15/\$20, with discounts available. Get tickets at the box office or at [bostonconservatory.berklee.edu/events](http://bostonconservatory.berklee.edu/events).

Now **⇒ Fri, 12/20**

In **THE PAINTED PLACE**, Artist Mia Cross explores color, the human figure, and narrative. Her oil paintings, particularly her portraiture, demonstrate a fascination with pattern and skin. When painting, Cross pays special care to creating engaging color relationships, sometimes harmonious and sometimes dissonant. Simmons Trustman **+** Art Gallery, 300 the Fenway. Opening reception, Thu, 11/8, at 5pm. FREE

Now **⇒ Sun, 12/24**

Sing along to your favorite carols during the **HOLIDAY POPS**. Kids' matinees—shorter programs with no intermission—are on the schedule, and for the first time, the Pops will host a sensory-friendly holiday concert on Dec. 7. At Symphony Hall. Showtimes vary, and tickets range from \$25 to \$162. Buy tickets and find details and times at [www.bso.org/Performance/Listing?brands=6425](http://www.bso.org/Performance/Listing?brands=6425)

Now **⇒ Mon, 1/20**

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is celebrating the living history of artists at the museum with the show **25 YEARS OF ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE**. The exhibit features seven artists who have held a residency at the museum as well as participatory artwork, performances, storytelling, and live portrait drawing. 25 Evans Way. For more info, visit [gardnermuseum.org](http://gardnermuseum.org).

Fri, 12/6 **⇒ Sun, 12/8**

Huntington Theater Company sets Octavio Solis's poetic new adaptation of *Don Quixote* in a 20th-century Texas border town. **QUIXOTE NUEVO** may have reimagined the setting and the obstacles facing this classic character, but his heart and comic eccentricity remain unchanged. Huntington Avenue Theatre, 264 Huntington Ave. Tickets \$55-109 (\$20 for students under 25; \$30 for people under 35). Fri-Sat, 8pm; Sat-Sun, 2pm. Details and tickets at [HuntingtonTheatre.org](http://HuntingtonTheatre.org).

Sat, 12/7

- For the 24th year, the **MAYOR'S ENCHANTED TROLLEY TOUR** continues the tradition of spreading holiday cheer to across Boston. The event comes to Mission Hill today and includes visits with Santa, performances, a tree lighting, and more. 3:30pm. One Brigham Circle. FREE **+**

## SENIOR EVENTS

Events take place at the Peterborough Senior Center or Fenway Community Center. Find the Senior Center entrance by walking into the alley between 100 and 108 Jersey St. and looking left. For more information, call 617-536-7154.

- Tue, 12/10 at 1pm: "How to Live Your Best Life Now!" with Penina Adelman
- Thu, 12/12 at 12pm: *It's a Wonderful Life* movie with hot cocoa, coffee, or tea
- Tue, 12/17 at 12pm: Holiday dessert potluck—bring your favorite cake, pie, cookies, or other treat to share!

- The **CITY-WIDE FRIENDS OF THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY** hold a book (and CD and DVD) sale just in time for holiday shopping. Pay by cash, check, credit or debit card; all proceeds benefit the library. 10am-4pm, Central Library in Copley Square, McKim Building, conference room B (enter from **+** Dartmouth Street). Details at [citywidefriendsbpl.org](http://citywidefriendsbpl.org).

- The **NEW ENGLAND PHILHARMONIC** presents a program geared to kids and built around the theme of "story-telling," featuring works by Elgar, Britten (*The Young Person's guide to the Orchestra*), Christopher Rouse, and Bernard Hoffer. Guests include Joyce Kulhawick, as narrator; awarded-winning young cellist Fionn O'Conner; and the Westborough H.S. Women's Chorale. Tickets \$10-35, with discounts for students, youth, and seniors (kids under 10 free). BU's Tsai Performance Center, 685 Comm. Ave. Tickets and details at [nephilharmonic.org](http://nephilharmonic.org)

Sat, 12/7 & Sun, 12/8

**THE HANDEL + HAYDN SOCIETY** returns to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum to perform a Gardner favorite: Johann Sebastian Bach's complete *Brandenburg Concertos* (1721) to conclude the Museum's winter Weekend Concert Series. Both concerts 1:30-3pm. \$15-\$36. 25 Evans Way.

Tue, 12/10

- The Musical Theatre Orchestra, a 25-instrument Berklee student ensemble with a quartet of conductors, pays tribute to **THE GOLDEN AGE OF BROADWAY** with selections from a range of classic shows, including *An American in Paris*, *Evita*, and *Miss Saigon*. Berklee Performance Center, 136 Mass. Ave. 8pm. Tickets \$10 advance/\$15 day of. Details and tickets at [berklee.edu/BPC/calendar](http://berklee.edu/BPC/calendar).
- **FACES / FENWAY ALLIANCE CELEBRATES EXCEPTIONAL SPIRIT**, honoring Northeastern University President Joseph E. Aoun. All proceeds support the Alliances Opening Our Doors event held each October. 6-9pm. Tickets \$150 at [eventbrite.com/e/facesfenway-alliance-celebrates-exceptional-spirit-tickets-80127677039](http://eventbrite.com/e/facesfenway-alliance-celebrates-exceptional-spirit-tickets-80127677039). 291 St. Botolph St.

Tue, 12/10 & Wed, 12/11

One of the earliest stars of the a capella revival of the early 2000s was **PENTATONIX**, a California-based group whose constantly shifting roster of singers delivered big and complex harmonies. Touring in support of an album of greatest Christmas hits, the group heads to BU's Agganis Arena for two shows that will include a posthumous collaboration with Whitey Houston. 7:30 pm. Tickets \$45.50-\$225.50 from the box office or [agganisarena.com](http://agganisarena.com).

Tue, 12/10 & Fri, 12/13

Boston Conservatory at Berklee's **STUDENT CHAMBER ENSEMBLES** perform repertory ranging from the baroque to the modern eras. Tue, 8pm, Richard Ortner Studio Building, 132 Ipswich Street, room 106; Fri, 11am and 8pm, Seully Hall, 8 The Fenway. [bostonconservatory.berklee.edu/events/music](http://bostonconservatory.berklee.edu/events/music). FREE. **+**

Wed, 12/11 **⇒ Sun, 12/15**

- See the acclaimed gospel-music documentary **SAY AMEN, SOMEBODY** at the Museum of Fine Arts. Various times. Tickets \$10 member/\$13 nonmember. Details at [mfa.org/event/film/](http://mfa.org/event/film/).
- In **...AND JESUS MOONWALKS THE MISSISSIPPI**, playwright Marcus Gardley reworks the mythic story of Demeter and Persephone, setting it on the banks of the Mississippi in the middle of the Civil War. Wed-Thu, 7:30pm; Fri-Sat, 8pm; Sat-Sun, 2pm. Tickets \$15 general/ \$10 BU alums/ free with BU ID. Booth Theatre, 820 Comm. Ave. Details and tickets at [bu.edu/cfa/theatre/season-2/](http://bu.edu/cfa/theatre/season-2/).

### Double Coens = Double Cinematic Fun

Put holiday shopping on hold for the MFA'S MONTHLONG SALUTE TO THE FILMMAKING COEN BROTHERS. From *The Big Lebowski* to *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* to *Fargo* (right), has anyone worked so comfortably in so many Hollywood genres or done a better job of blurring the line between art and commerce? Don't miss some of the lesser-known delights on offer, like *The Hudsucker Proxy*, a modern spin on screwball comedies, and *Hail, Caesar!*, a wry take on movie studios' television-induced panic in the 1950s. Tickets \$10 member/\$13 nonmember, except *Raising Arizona* on Fri, 12/6, which is free. Details at [www.mfa.org/series/the-coen-brothers](http://www.mfa.org/series/the-coen-brothers). Films run through Dec. 29.



PICK OF THE MONTH

Thu, 12/12

Join the Parker Hill Branch Library staff and the Friends of the Parker Hill Branch Library for food, live music, crafts, a book sale, and socializing at their **ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE**. Highlights include a book sale, hosted by the Friends of the Parker Hill Branch Library, live holiday music from the New England Conservatory, henna tattoos, crafts, and refreshments. Open house 4-7pm; from 5:45 to 7pm, the Mission Hill Artists present the Mission Hill

**+** Community Art Expo., 1497 Tremont St. FREE

Sat, 12/14

- Annual **POP-UP HOLIDAY BAZAAR** at the Fenway Community Center. Local artists and craftspeople exhibit and sell their **+** creations. From 11am to 4pm. Fenway Community Center, 1282 Boylston St. at Jersey St. FREE

- **LEGACIES OF 1619: CITIZENSHIP AND BELONGING** panel discussion. For 400 years, African Americans carved out a distinctive culture for themselves even as they sought equal rights in American society. This program will consider how African Americans struggled to gain equal access to political and social rights, all while making the American experience their own. At the Mass. Historical Society, 1154 Boylston St. 3:30pm reception; 4:00 panel. FREE but **+** online registration required at [masshist.org/events](http://masshist.org/events).

Sun, 12/15

**A LIGHT THROUGH THE AGES**, a celebration of Chanukah in story, song, and light. This beloved holiday tradition in its 11th year welcomes people of all faiths, offering a unique opportunity for the Boston community to experience the inspiration and broader significance of the Festival of Lights. 4-6pm.

**+** Central Reform Temple of Boston, 15 Newbury Street. FREE

Sun, 12/15 **⇒ Sun, 12/22**

How can you *not* save a spot on your holiday schedule for a concert called **A SUPER GAY CHRISTMAS**? It's the Boston Gay Men's Chorus's holiday spectacular, with everything from *O Magnum Mysterium* to *Jingle Bell Rock*—plus a disco Santa. 12/15, 3pm & 7pm; 12/20-12/22, 8pm. All performances at NEC's Jordan Hall. Tickets \$25-100 from the box office or [bgmc.org](http://bgmc.org)

Mon, 12/16

Jazz guitarist and mandolinist Jason Anick joins Berklee's World Strings for **A GYPSY JAZZ AND BRAZILIAN SOLISTICE**, an "original program of swinging music from Europe and Brazil." Berklee Performance Center, 136 Mass. Ave. 8pm. Tickets \$10 advance/\$15 day of. Details and tickets at [berklee.edu/BPC/calendar](http://berklee.edu/BPC/calendar).

Wed, 12/18

The MFA joins forces with **JEWISH ARTS COLLABORATIVE** to present a free community

celebration to mark the first night of Hanukkah. Tour the museum's collection of Judaica, make artwork, take in concerts and dance performances, a story slam, and a glow-in-the-dark menorah. 4:30-10pm, throughout the museum. Entry after 4pm **+** is free. Details at [mfa.org/programs/community-celebrations](http://mfa.org/programs/community-celebrations). FREE.

Thu, 12/19 & Sun, 12/22

**Handel + Haydn Society** dives into the 17th and 18th centuries for a holiday concert featuring works by Vivaldi, Telemann, Charpentier, and others. 12/19, 7:30pm; 12/22, 3pm (but limited tickets available). At NEC's Jordan Hall. Tickets \$25-\$107 at the box office or from <https://handelandhaydn.org>

Sat, 12/21 **⇒ Tue, 12/24**

**TANGLEWOOD MARIONETTES** presents two shows at the Puppet Showplace in Brookline Village (next to the Green Line stop). *The Fairy Circus* combines fairies and enchanted animals doing stunts, playing music, and performing acrobatics. *Cinderella* excavates the original folk tale for a 12-marionette cast that leaves the Disney version in the dust. *Circus*: Sat-Sun, 1pm & 3pm; *Cinderella*: Mon-Tue, 10:30am & 3pm. Tickets \$16/\$12 (members). Details and tickets at [puppetshowplace.org](http://puppetshowplace.org) (choose the Calendar tab under the Performances dropdown menu).

Thu, 12/26 **⇒ Sun, 12/29**

Local faves **THE MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES** bring their annual party-time celebration to the House of Blues on Lansdowne Street. Tickets \$27-46. Thu 12/26 and Fri 12/27, 8pm (doors at 7pm); Sun 12/29, 5pm (doors at 4pm). Tickets at the box office or at [houseofblues.com/boston](http://houseofblues.com/boston).

## @ THE CENTER

These highlights from the Fenway Community Center's calendar are free unless otherwise noted. Visit the Center at 1282 Boylston or check out the full calendar at [www.fenwaycommunitycenter.org/calendar](http://www.fenwaycommunitycenter.org/calendar)

- Fri, 12/13 at 4pm: **KIDS' COOKIE WORKSHOP**. Let the kids bake, decorate, and make a mess in FCC's kitchen instead of yours!
- Thu, 12/16 at 6:30pm: **HEALTHY THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS COOKING CLASS**. Join holistic nutritionist Kristen Ciccolini in making three healthy, whole-food recipes for your holiday gathering
- Fri, 12/20 at 4pm: **WINTER SOLSTICE PARTY**. Ring in the longest night of the year with refreshments, music, and art activities. For all ages; free and open to all.