Questions About Water Quality Swirl as Muddy River Dredging Begins

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The Muddy Water Initiative (MWI) has raised funds to install a WaterGFoot netting to catch floating debris, that will be installed upstream from the Ipswich Street bridge near Fenway Studios. City and state approvals are nearly complete, and the Boston Conservation Commission voted to approve it on March 18. WaterGFoot is the brand name for a Florida manufacturer’s product that’s in use in five states. Round booms keep the net afloat; anchors secure it on both sides of the riverbank and can be locked in place. Fish and birds can easily dive beneath the net. MWI hopes to get it in the water early this summer.

MWI founder Caroline Reeves calls the Muddy River “the string on which the Emerald Necklace is strung.” Her advocacy in the last 18 months has created a partnership with the New England Grass Roots Environment Fund and also raised private funds. Last August, State Rep. Joe SanBio secured a $12,000 local earmark that will help pay for the environmental consultants required for the permitting process and for the Florida workers to install the device.

A professional waste-removal company will be hired for the first year of this three-year pilot program. The Muddy Water Initiative has brought together a professional advisory board that includes biologist Ellen Fauzenski of Boston University and Lucy Kumpf of the Charles River Watershed Association. MWI has also partnered with the Colleges of the Fenway, offering a spring sustainability course open to students from all five schools. The Colleges of the Fenway will also host a virtual Environmental Forum on April 14 in place of the in-person event.

WITH STUDENTS AWAY, THE TURKEYS WILL PLAY

Embroided by a deserted Northeastern campus and sparse traffic on Ruggles Street, a band of wild turkeys took command of a berm overlooking an NU parking lot next to Ruggles Station for some quality foraging. Despite warnings from elected officials, the fowl displayed a brazen disregard for social distancing.

New Group, Fenway Cares, Forms to Meet Virus Crisis

BY STEVE WOLF

oving at lightning speed to respond to the coronavirus emergency, six neighborhood groups have united to form a “hyperlocal” mutual aid network and information clearinghouse in the Fenway. Within a week, Fenway Cares completed its first project, working with District 8 City Councillor Kenzie Bok to get more than 300 boxes of fresh produce distributed to households across the neighborhood.

Ayer, community organizer at the Fenway CDC, said Fenway Cares will address both public health and economic impacts of the pandemic, helping to ensure that neighborhood residents, the network aims to serve as a resource for people needing help, looking for reliable information, or wanting to volunteer to help neighbors.

“We’re acting more as a conduit,” Ayer says, to connect residents with resources and each other. For example, it can direct a resident to specific City- or State-sponsored programs, provide updates on citywide initiatives, and direct volunteers to specific activities designed to help their neighbors. The founding groups hoped “to take advantage of connections we have in the community” combined with their knowledge of resources available to help residents ride out the pandemic.

Within a week of the initial organizing call on March 17, Fenway Cares volunteers jumped into action to help distribute produce provided through Fresh Truck. The mobile market typically travels to neighborhoods poorly served by supermarkets to sell fresh produce—in essence, it’s a farmstand on wheels. After restaurants closed for everything but take-out orders, wholesale distributor Katariouzas Brothers donated a substantial supply of its unsold produce. Physical-distancing requirements had forced Fresh Truck to suspend its regular schedule, and the governor’s shutdown of “non-essential” business further threatened operations. The deliveries on March 24 helped Fresh Truck win designation as an essential business that can keep working to deliver fresh food to distressed households during the pandemic.

In all, more than 190 households received 25 pounds of fresh produce each, and St. Cecilia took another 125 cartons, many of which went to Fenway households. Normally, each carton would cost $25, but the groups reduced the cost of the ones that didn’t go to St. Cecilia to $12. Volunteers followed public-health guidelines, wearing disposable gloves and staying six feet from each other and carton recipients.

In the launch week, the sponsors announced Fenway Cares’s formation to their networks, more than 275 people signed up. More than 200 households appear on the waiting list.

> Muddy River on page 4

> Fenway Cares on page 3
A March public meeting at the Tobin Community Center, convened by the Mayor’s Office to discuss Raíces on the Hill, a retail marijuana business proposed for 123 Terrace St., was possibly the last large gathering in Mission Hill for many months.

Mike Ross, a real estate lawyer and former city councilor, made a presentation for the business. Coincidentally, his firm, Prince Lobel Tye LLP, also represents the developers of a five-story rental project at 111 Terrace St., next door to the future cannabis store. The Boston Zoning Commission made cannabis establishments an accepted conditional use in 2018.

Incorporation filings with the state indicate that the current owners for Raíces on the Hill are former State Rep. Jeffrey Sanchez and Robert H. Hoffman, both of whom are financial operations director at Prince Lobel Tye. Hoffman is also listed as manager for Mission Hill Invest LLC, formed last year “for the purpose of acquiring equity in other businesses.”

Ross explained that Sanchez and Alex Oliver-Dávila, executive director of Sociedad Latina, will own 51 percent of the company, and that an additional 20 to 25 investors have, in his words, “a chunk of tens of thousands” already invested.

More than 100 community members attended the meeting at the Tobin. Opposition was muted, and attendees were primarily concerned with safety and traffic impacts.

Rafael Ruiz, who will lead the security staff at Raíces, said the facility will add lighting and bring activity to the street. However, as of now, marijuana customers typically pay for the product with cash or a debit card because federal prohibitions against cannabis operations preclude the use of credit cards. Will walking to the business from Roxbury Crossing or Jackson Square feel safe?

Ross conceded that date could prove optimistic, the target date for opening is May 2021, but, Ross said, “We are early, we’ve taken a major leap and we are committed.”

The key community benefit from Raíces is the promise of 10 percent of net annual profits distributed to local nonprofits. The target date for opening is May 2021, but, Ross conceded that date could prove optimistic, given the length of time expected for state and city review.

Matthew O’Hara of South Boston owns 123 Terrace St. and multiple other properties on the street. Ross said his client would try to keep Diablo Glass Studio, temporarily closed since December, to avoid having a new business become Raíces’ tenant with a below-market rent. The glassblowing studio was initially founded by Anne Sasser, who now owns the Stubbycock Metal Arts studio in Jamaica Plain. Later, local resident and real estate entrepreneur Sean P. Clarke took charge of the studio.

However, it wasn’t explained how or who would pay for the CrossFit on the Hill gym, which opened in 2012, to be converted to house the glassblowing studio. Gym patrons will be the losers; their space is already on a month-to-month lease. Some members have transferred to a new CrossFit franchise on Melnea Cass Blvd., opened last year by former CrossFit on the Hill coaches.

Uses on Terrace Street have always been a mix; except for busy traffic, present conditions are not so terribly different from the era of breweries, stables, and wood-frame houses. Today, there are two auto body shops, Boston Building Resources, a nonprofit for new and used home improvement supplies; Diablo, CrossFit on the Hill, and architecture and contractor offices at 901 Terrace St. Approximately 75 apartments are scattered in between, 62 of them at the Oliver Lofts in the former Highland Spring building near New Heath Street. The wood-frame houses at Terrace Place and the three-unit buildings at 124 and 126 Terrace St. are archaic remnants from a different era. Other parcels are vacant because of fires in the 1970s. The original 1867 Highland Spring brewery at 165 Terrace St. was demolished in 1981 and now serves as New England Baptist Hospital’s large emergency parking.

Terrace Street was labeled a manufactur- ing strip in the 1979 Southwest Corridor plan, which subdivided the parcels as too narrow for major development. Between the difficult TERRACE STREET on next page

Responding to virus-control measures, the Trust has extended the deadline for proposals from organizations seeking funding for projects and programs intended to serve residents of the Mission Hill and Fenway neighborhoods.

Please visit www.missionhillfenway.org, for our on-line application.

Proposals must be submitted no later than midnight on April 30, 2020. Please email hello@missionhillfenway.org with any questions.

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MISSION HILL ---

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> TERRACE STREET from facing page
topography and the train tracks, there just wasn’t enough land. The slope between Parker Street and Terrace Street is very steep, a 60- 
foot grade difference. The three-way stop at the Cedar Street intersection, which residents complained about at the meeting, is a product of the Southwest Corridor. The new bridge was intended as an east-west connection to replace other closed streets. However, the vol- 
une of traffic using Terrace Street to bypass Columbus Avenue or Parker Street was prob-
ably not expected 40 years ago.

Businesses have come and gone on the street: warehouses, light manufacturers and 19th-century breweries—Rueter and Alley’s Highland Spring, James Kenney’s Park Brewery and the Union Brewery, where Jim Lewis later opened Mississippi Foods. In the first decade of the 20th century, the Donovan family had 30 stables for show and harness-
racing horses at 123 Terrace St.

Article 59 of Mission Hill’s zoning states that “the purpose of Local Industrial Subdis-
tricts is to encourage the preservation of the existing manufacturing and industrial base in a manner that is sensitive to and preserves the quality of life of the surrounding neighbor-
hoods, and to encourage the development of new job opportunities within the Mission Hill Neighborhood District.” The Terrace Street lo-
cal industrial subdistrict extends from Tremont to New Heath Street. Both sides of the street are included, except from Alleghany Street to Tremont Street, where only the east side of the block lies in the district. Residential use is forbidden in the industrial subdistrict, but artist live-workspace is allowed. However, in 2018 and 2019, construction of 184 apartments on five different parcels was approved, and most are not for artists. Primary Development has 21 under construction; the other projects have not begun. Sixty units are permitted for the city-owned parcel at 77 Terrace St. The Department of Neighborhood Development’s Joseph Backer told this reporter that Sebastian Mariscal’s innovative project, building into the hillside, will possibly start in late spring. However the transfer from the Department of Neighborhood Development won’t happen until the private lender finalizes its support. More housing has been approved closer to Jackson Square at 154 Terrace St.

Next door is Oliver Lofts, where resi-
dents are now organizing a petition drive to protest cutbacks in building security, high parking fees, and the loss of indoor bike stor-
age, among other concerns. Oliver’s owner, the Winn Companies, is the proponent for 64 condominiums at 154 Terrace, all but three of them market-rate. According to resident David Mynott, the Oliver Lofts Tenants Association, formed in 2012, comprises residents who both rent and own their units. Many are people of color, elderly, and families with small chil-
dren; some receive housing vouchers. The as-
sociation is working with the housing organi-
ization City Life/Vida Urbana to petition elect-
oficials and city hall staff to help negotiate their troubles with current management. Some of the issues in their petition include:
1. NTQ’s (notice-to-quit) being issued inappro-
priately.
2. Inappropriate language.
4. Being unapproachable and unwelcoming of residents.
5. Harassment (watching residents through surveillance).
6. Entering residents’ units without proper notice.
7. Refusing to complete annual paperwork in a timely manner.
8. Ignoring residents’ safety concerns.
10. Overcharging residents/inaccurate resident rent ledgers.

11. Pressuring residents to pay bills they don’t owe.

Changes coming to Terrace are being met with mixed opinions, but what won’t change are the physical constraints: a narrow corridor between rocks and the Orange Line tracks, with access only at either terminus or the Cedar Street bridge.

AlisonPullinaslivesinMissionHill.

DO YOU HAIKU?

In response to disruption caused by the coronavirus, Kaji Aso Studio in the East Fens has pushed back the deadline for its annual haiku contest. First prize is $300, and the deadline for submissions is now July 15. For directions on submitting entries, go to www.
kaijasostudio.com.

APPLY TO BE A
MASS PROMISE FELLOW

APPLY: masspromisefellows.org/apply

For more info:
abigger@northeastern.edu
617-373-5606

Do you believe that young people deserve care, encouragement, and support to reach their full potential? Are you passionate about education equity, college access, and social justice? Are you looking to grow professionally while making a difference in a community of aspiring, service-minded leaders?

The Massachusetts Promise Fellowship (MPF) is an 11-month AmeriCorps program dedicated to increasing youth academic engagement and college and career exploration through Out-of-School-Time (OST) interventions and data-driven programming. We are a passionate team that strives every day to empower young people to succeed as part of a national movement to achieve education equity.

Beyond experience and an interest in serving youth in grades 6-12, all applicants must have a high school degree or GED, be at least 17, be a US citizen, national or permanent resident, and willing to comply with a criminal background check.

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.
The neighborhood wins when community leaders put aside their differences. The first two Fenway Porchforts showed us that local groups can work toward a common goal despite past disagreements. Fenway Cares unites six groups with sometimes-unrelated missions to support their community during this public-health emergency. That unity of purpose bodes well for future cooperation for the good of the neighborhood. After rising to this occasion, maybe we can finally move past long-simmering friction.

Grassroots efforts will keep people from falling through the cracks. Mutual-aid groups with goals like those of Fenway Cares have sprung up all over metro Boston in just a few weeks. Folks have rolled up their sleeves to volunteer time and money to help neighbors deal with a range of problems caused by the stay-at-home directive, providing everything from food deliveries to financial and emotional support. People delight in calling Bostonians cold and callous (admit it: you, too), but these grassroots efforts paint a very different picture, and we should embrace it.

Last month The Boston Globe published a thoughtful letter from East Fens resident Arlene Ash, a biostatistical researcher at UMass Medical School, underscoring the urgency of observing physical distancing to slow and reverse the spread of coronavirus. She warned against letting physical separation become the enemy of human connection. ‘We need both to contain the virus—or, as Ash put it, we “can protect ourselves only by protecting others.” What other approach even makes sense for this extraordinary time? Fenway Cares offers a great model of looking out for everyone as we move deeper into the uncharted waters of the pandemic. Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.
Before plunging in, ICYMI has a profound question: Where does this bumber crop of purple and blue disposable gloves—like exotic flowers blossoming in streets, drains, and parks—come from? With health care providers desperate for them, ICYMI wonders why have so many suddenly appeared in our streets? — Two LMA hospitals announced work on different lines of coronavirus treatment. Brigham & Women’s has become a test site for remdesivir, an antiviral drug developed by Gilead Sciences and one of the first possible treatments to undergo testing in humans. Meanwhile, Beth Israel hopes to start clinical trials in September for a potential vaccine it developed with Janssen Pharmaceutical. The company and hospital have collaborated on other vaccines, including ones for the Ebola and Zika viruses. Johnson & Johnson, which owns Janssen, grabbed headlines at the end of the month by announcing that it would produce one billion doses of the vaccine—assuming the trials go well—by early 2021. — Speaking of the BI, Kevin Tabb, CEO of Beth Israel Lahey Health, announced a salary cut for himself (50%) and other top execs (20%) as the healthcare system struggles to rein in costs associated with the pandemic. On closer inspection, it turns out the cuts only cover the second quarter—at least for now. — Remember the bitter fight to prevent completion of the biolab at BU Medical Center in the South End [officially, the National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories]? The Fenway News covered the years-long effort to block approval, led by activists who wanted to know why risky and dangerous activities are always seemed to end up in low-income, nonwhite neighborhoods. According to The Globe, the lab, which opened in 2017, has begun conducting rapid, large-batch tests of up to 20,000 existing drugs and compounds to see if any prove effective in stopping coronavirus. — Grocery giant Albertsons announced it would install plexiglass shields to protect cashiers at all its stores from potential coronavirus infection. Although the company promised installation across all stores within a week of its announcement, the Fenway Star still did not have the shields by month’s end. — Finally, ICYMI did find a few scraps of non-coronavirus news. The T’s board of directors approved a contract to build two new stops on Commonwealth Ave. for the Green Line’s B branch. One will replace BU West and St. Paul Street, and a second one will replace Pleasant Street and Babcock Street. Fewer stops will reduce travel times on the line. — The BPDA formally signed off on changes in Phase 2 of the Fenway Center, the $1 billion air-rights project to be built on a platform above the Mass. Pike just west of Kenmore Square. Meredith Management won approval to build offices and lab space rather than housing, as it originally proposed. Phase 1 is nearing completion, and construction on Phase 2 could begin this summer, although the pandemic throws that schedule into doubt.

Neighborhood Newsline

City Loses Parking Rules To Help Residents During Pandemic

To address the altered transportation needs of residents during the public health emergency, the City has made changes in its parking enforcement policies, including: • Residents with a valid resident sticker may park in metered or two-hour parking spaces without having to pay a meter fee, or adhere to the time limit—as long as the space lies within their neighborhood. For cars lacking the relevant resident sticker, standard time limit and meter requirements remain in place. • The Boston Transportation Department (BTD) has suspended ticketing and towing for street cleaning, giving the difficulty of finding alternative places to park in neighborhoods. • BTD will not ticket for expired inspection stickers or registrations, given the challenges of renewing inspections and registrations while nonessential businesses remain closed, which (as of March 31) will continue through May 4. Other changes include pick-up zones outside restaurants, as they shift to take-out only business, and free Bluebike passes and parking for hospital employees.

MFA Plans for an Extended Shutdown

If you missed seeing the MFA’s big show of Lucien Freud’s self portraits during the first half of March, you might not get to see it at all. That, in a nutshell, represents the problem facing the MFA—and other cultural institutions: the museum built its budget around income from that show and a Jean-Michel Basquiat retrospective that would have opened in April, and now it’s lost for good. The Museum released a statement in late March saying it doesn’t expect to reopen before early July (even that may turn out to be optimistic). As it considers layoffs and other “significant cost containment measures,” it canceled all public programs through the end of the summer; said it will pay staff through April 11 and sought plans to develop new exhibitions, programming, and learning content online.

City Extends Deadline to Apply for Fenway Beautification Grants

The Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) has extended to May 12 the application deadline for Fenway Community Benefits Funds, which provide up to $100,000 for temporary or permanent beautification projects. Applicants must submit a plan to the BPDA that describes how their proposal will use the funding to produce the greatest measurable benefit for the community, and all projects must be fully accessible to the public. As part of the Fenway Park Demonstration Project in 2013, the Red Sox agreed to contribute $1,000,000 over 10 years to be used toward beautification efforts in the neighborhood.

B.U. Wants to Change Approved Uses for Kenmore Sq. Building

Boston University proposed an amendment to its institutional master plan focusing on two floors of leased space at 540 Commonwealth Ave., a three-story building Kenmore Square building at the corner of Brookline Avenue (McDonald’s and Santander Bank) on the first floor. The BPDA’s Edward Carmody is taking comments until April 13, but a scheduled hearing for temporary or permanent beautification projects. Applicants must submit a plan to the BPDA that describes how their proposal will use the funding to produce the greatest measurable benefit for the community, and all projects must be fully accessible to the public. As part of the Fenway Park Demonstration Project in 2013, the Red Sox agreed to contribute $1,000,000 over 10 years to be used toward beautification efforts in the neighborhood.

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In Case You Missed It

A Lot Happened in Our Neighborhoods Since the Last Issue, Including...

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Committee meeting. 6pm to 7:30pm via telephone session. To schedule your personal session, please contact Kris Anderson at kanderson@fenwaydc.org or at (617) 267-4637 x 29.

COUNTWAY REVAMP GETS UNDER WAY

Construction recently began on the Huntington Avenue entrance of the Harvard Medical School’s Countway Library in Longwood. The work includes both interior and exterior upgrades and this new entry bridge for access from Huntington Avenue.

P eople & Places: Gerry Cooper
in the very early days of the famed music school. He dropped out of Berklee and moved back to Michigan, where he attended Eastern Michigan and Toledo universities. He went back and forth between Michigan and Boston. After driving taxis for a time, he eventually opened a record store, Looney Tunes, in 1988. It was first on Mass. Ave. and then moved around the corner to Boylston Street. He eventually sold out to Pat McGrath, then opened King of Records in the West Fenway a few years later. Looney Tunes was a great record store, at a time when the neighborhood was full of record stores. It has since moved to Allston.

As we walk toward the garden from the West Fens, Gerry tells me about his history in the Fenway. He was very involved with the community through King of Records. One of the things he was most proud of was a window display to inform people about the AIDS epidemic while it was at its height. A benefit was eventually held, raising money for children with AIDS and incarcerated mothers with AIDS. His store was a center for artists and musicians in the Fenway and surrounding areas. He also converted part of the store into a makeshift apartment where he lived with his son. As the years went on and the demand for vinyl decreased, the store became more of a kaleidoscope of everything. All this is very evident in his garden.

If you know Gerry, you likely know his garden—it’s hard to miss. It’s one of the larger plots, and it’s prominent alongside the walkway on the Boylston Street side. It has the homey feel of someone’s backyard, with artistic touches throughout; old cast iron pans here, sculptures there, things hanging off trees, and trellises. He calls himself “a self-proclaimed connoisseur of trash picking,” but it’s an exquisite form of trash picking that delights the senses as you look in every corner of the garden and find something new. He uses it much as people use a popular backyard. He’s had weddings, memorial services, spontaneous parties, and on some summer evenings, people just come by and play music.

Chef and photographer Steve Harnish lives in the East Fens.

With Concerts MIA, Classical Moves Online

BY BRYAN CLAGUE

H ere’s some wonderful news: Since they can’t perform live, many of the world’s greatest arts organizations are opening up their archives during the pandemic. Some of these are free; some cost a bit to rent, like an on-demand movie; all are truly worthwhile:

• Listen to the Berlin Philharmonic, one of the world’s top orchestras, play Beethoven’s 6th or Mahler’s 4th. www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/concerts
• Watch the Vienna State Opera—another world leader—perform The Magic Flute or Der Rosenkavalier. www.stateoperavie.org/watch-and-listen/?mc_cid=366c6e74a0&mc_mcid=0f1e1eo248
• For some of the most beautiful singing I’ve ever heard, listen to a recording ofMontserrat Caballé singing in an ancient Roman amphitheater: www.youtube.com/results?search_query=casta+diva+caballe+orange
• This Arkansas orchestra will soothe all your coronavirus anxiety with bedtime lullabies: www.cmc.com/2020/03/25/us/coronavirus-arkansas-symphony-orchestra-wellness-trnd/index.html
• Boston, of course, has its own very fine orchestras:
  • The Boston Symphony Orchestra needs no introduction, of course. www.bso.org/brands/bso-at-home/bso-at-home-week-1-bso-music-directors.aspx
  • Boston Baroque has performances available at https://baroque.boston/listen;
  • Handel & Haydn Society posts a new performance daily in its “Listening Room” at https://handelandhaydn.org/hh-listening-room/https://handelandhaydn.org/hh-listening-room/
• A Far Cry, which explores modern classics in residence at the Gardner Museum, posts new clips daily at https://aforcry.org/watch-live.

Brian Clague, a professional violist, lives in the East Fens.
TUFTS LAUNCHES VIRTUAL GALLERY

In addition to the museums mentioned in this article, the Tufts University Art Galleries have launched an app with resources that include virtual tours. The app allows you to tour the galleries’ spring exhibitions with a virtual walk through feature, as well as images and gallery texts. Search for Tufts University Art Galleries in app stores to find the app.

Museum Closed? No Problem With Virtual Tours

One of the many activities I miss during this time of home confinement is going to Fenway museums and seeing the courtyard at the Gardner or the Impressionists at the MFA. Fortunately, we can visit these beloved institutions—virtually.

A website called artsandculture.google.com takes you on a virtual tour of almost any famous museum in the world, including our very own Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts.

The tour for the Gardner is amazing. There are at least 32 slides, featuring every room on the three floors of the museum. What makes this tour so special is that by touching a tab, you can zoom in to see various parts of the room, making you feel as if you are there.

Start with the famous courtyard, then move to the red-lined room with Titian’s Europa and the famous full-length portrait of Isabella Stewart Gardner by John Singer Sargent.

On the first floor there’s another Sargent, Madame Guarrino Drinking a Toast, and down a long hallway with walls covered in ceramic tiles, another Sargent, El Jaleo. In a yellow-fabric-lined room on the first floor hangs James McNeill Whistler’s Harmony in Silver and Blue.

On the second floor, you can see elaborate tapestries and cabinets filled with ceramics, along with Ander Zorn’s portrait of Gardner in Venice. Also, on the second floor in a red-walled room is Raphael’s Count Tommaso Inghignami, and in another room Raphael’s Venus. The second floor gives a wonderful view of the courtyard and also contains my personal favorite, Rembrandt’s Self-Portrait. Age 23, which, fortunately, was not stolen during the infamous heist.

The third floor has a painting by James McNeill, entitled Whistler, and Botticelli’s Virgin and Child with an Angel.

The MFA tour takes you to several sections of the museum. There are sculptures and ceramics from ancient Greece and Rome, antiquities from Egypt, and both European and American paintings. Particular paintings and sculptures are featured, rather than room views.

You can view Claude Monet’s Rouen Cathedral or Mary Cassatt’s The Loge or John Singleton Copley’s A Boy with a Flying Squirrel or Window Home’s The Fog Watcher. A lesser-known painting shown, Elijah in the Desert by Washington Allston, was donated in 1870, the first work of art in the museum’s collection.

Also of interest is a glazed-brick mural of a striding lion from ancient Babylon, an 1880 wooden cabinet with playing and inlay, and a ceramic bowl from ancient Greece. Clicking on the title for each work gives you extensive information about it.

If history is your forte, try a virtual tour of the Massachusetts Historical Society. This museum, on Boylston Street in the East Fens, has an extensive collection of papers by John Quincy Adams and Thomas Jefferson. The virtual tour focuses on the letters and papers of Jefferson, third U.S. president and principal author of the Declaration of Independence. The slides open a window into Jefferson’s inner life through extensive notes on his activities and ideas, giving modern audiences a glimpse into the mind of the architect of American freedom, himself a notorious slave owner.

There are letters to Adams and to his grandchildren, a manuscript copy of the Declaration, a copy of the speech Jefferson delivered at his installation as president, and many architectural drawings. Jefferson designed his home at Monticello after many architectural plans and, influenced by time spent in France, kept his private spaces separate from public spaces. Jefferson strongly believed that a country that could feed itself could maintain political independence. To this end, reflected in diagrams and lists, he experimented with new fruits and vegetables and devoted much of Monticello to agriculture.

Ruth Khouri lives in the West Fens.

The MFA virtual tour features in the Loge, with its famous web of watchers and the watch, by Mary Stevenson Cassatt.

By Steve Wolf

he Boston Public Library rides to the rescue of Bostanians sheltering in place—as long as they’ve got a library card. That’s the ticket to a 30,000-title film library on kanopy.com, a consortium of libraries and universities that lets you stream free movies on any digital device.

You can’t beat the range or the quality of Kanopy’s films. True, you won’t find big franchise films [studios are too busy milking more money out of them], but you’ll find almost anything else, from classic silents to art-movie indie hits to recent Academy Award winners. Kanopy, the home of Kanopy Kids, a service designed for children’s entertainment and, yes, educational fare geared to viewers younger than 3 years and older.

Sign up and begin creating a list of titles you want to watch (it’s easy to lose track of time while putting that list together—but most of us suddenly have lots of time on our hands). Like Netflix, Kanopy groups films by categories; choose films right from the landing page or click on a title to jump to a plot summary, cast, and running time. You’ll also see a sidebar with other titles—think “people who bought this product also viewed” on Amazon—and a viewing window for the film itself. But take care: that window isn’t a preview but the film itself. Once you click on it, you’ve used up one of the eight films you can stream every month.

Kanopy can help you keep your streaming costs down while in self-isolation (and maybe without a salary) with choices like:

• SCREWBALL COMEDIES: Try His Girl Friday, with its mile-a-minute baronet between Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant, or Preston Sturges’ wellofeudated comedy Miracle on Morgan Creek.
• RECENT INDIE HITS: Moonlight, Lady Bird, Midsummer. The Florida Project, Room.
• FILMS NOIR: Dark and cynical takes on life like The Strange Love of Martha Ivers [Barbara Stanwyck at her scheming best], D.O.A., Woman on the Run, Detour.
• THE CRITERION COLLECTION, staples of 20th-century art house theaters—these films still show up at the Brattle—with titles like The Conformist, Black Orpheus, The Seventh Seal, Bicycle Thieves, Cleo from 5 to 7.
• RECENT COMEDIES: The Brothers Franno in the Disaster Artist, Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant in the delightful adaptation of the play Florence Foster Jenkins; the blasphemous but wildly funny Little Hours; Taika Waititi’s [Juno Rabbit] deadpan vampire mockumentary What We Do in the Shadows.
• CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD: A Place in the Sun, Chinatown, The Great Dictator, Ace in the Hole, Charade, with its iconic pairing of Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant.

As noted, you need a library card to sign up [a university ID works, too, assuming the university sponsors Kanopy], but the process is quick and relatively painless. More to the point, it opens the door to a century’s worth of high-quality films you can fall in love with.

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.

ON THE COVER: The MFA virtual tour features in the Loge, with its famous web of watchers and the watch, by Mary Stevenson Cassatt.

ART IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

By Steve Wolf

The Seventh Samurai, Bicycle Thieves, Cleo from 5 to 7, Moonlight, Lady Bird, Midsummer. The Florida Project, Room.

On Sunday, March 22, a guerrilla artist placed a face mask on one of the baby head sculptures flanking the Fenway entrance to the MFA. [The sculptures, by Antonio Lopez, are known as “Day” and “Night.”] The Boston Globe later tracked down the artist, Peter Agoos, who recruited his nephew to help him in the prank, made of cling wrap. Although the museum had closed the previous week, its administrators didn’t take kindly to the installation and had it removed the next day.

By Ruth Khouri

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.

Tufts Launches Virtual Galleries

Tufts has launched virtual tours of the university’s art galleries, allowing students and the general public to explore its collections from anywhere in the world.

The tour of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, for example, includes famous works of art such as Raphael’s Count Tommaso Inghignami and John Singleton Copley’s A Boy with a Flying Squirrel. The tour also features highlights of the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) collection, including works by Rembrandt, Van Gogh, and Monet.

The virtual tours are accessible through the Tufts University Art Galleries’ website and can be found in the “Virtual Galleries” section.

These virtual tours are just one of the ways that Tufts University is adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic. With all physical events canceled, Tufts has shifted its focus to online learning and virtual events to continue providing a quality education.

By Ruth Khouri

E Pluribus Unum: Uplifting ‘Concert’ Video Shoots to Viral Fame on YouTube

Shelbie Rassler, a Boston Conservatory at Berklee student majoring in composition, worked with 70 fellow musicians from Berklee and the Conservatory to produce a “virtual orchestra” performance of Kurt Bacharach’s “What The World Needs Now Is Love.” Rassler said the idea came to her on her flight home from Boston after the school shut its doors and moved classes online in the wake of coronavirus clampdown.

Rassler produced a joyful, compelling and uplifting rendition of the 1960s pop classic. By press time, the video had passed 1,500,000 views on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=QagzdvzzHBQ).

BY STEVE WOLF
In the few short weeks since the pandemic exploded in the U.S., the City and State have shut down all “nonessential” activities that draw crowds—including the performances, shows, and exhibitions that normally fill this space. With the Folkways cultural institution shuttered and everyone spending as much time inside their homes as possible, we asked dozens of folks in the Fenway, Mission Hill, and Audubon Circle to recommend books and streaming options (that are or were not talk-showy) to help us “tune in to the network of distraction, or escape. Here’s what they recommended."

PODCASTS
- **Tiny Desk (Home) Concerts** has repackaged a long-running NPR feature as short videos (roughly 15 minutes), shot at home, by bands of all sizes and in any number of genres. A round-the-world musical adventure with a unique vibe. You can subscribe for free at npr.org/tiny-desk-concerts/.
- Album-based PAX Podcast Garage—a podcast recording space made by local artists, located at www.paxpodcastgarage.org/neighbor-hood-podcast-list/
- *On the Media* hosts Brooke Gladstone and at the end of every show they feature a reliable news source that relies on democracy and journalism. Here’s what they recommended.

**I once attended a meetup with the Boston Organizing Group, which is typically a great day to hear the news, music, or politics.**

**FENWAY SPORTS**
- Check the Red Sox and the *Boston Globe* for their podcasts.
- *High Fidelity* explores the incredible world of music and—most importantly—the power of music to make us feel better.
- *On the Media* hosts Brooke Gladstone and at the end of every show they feature a reliable news source that relies on democracy and journalism. Here’s what they recommended.

**MORE BOOKS: TRIDENT WEIGHS IN**

We asked Katherine Nazzaro, social media director and lead bookbinder at Trident Bookbinders and Café on Newbury Street, for book recommendations if titles that you might not have heard of. You can order books for delivery from Trident and their café is still open for takeout orders. www.tridentbookbinders.com

**THE LAST UNICORN by Peter S. Beagle.** A classic fantasy novel, this book tells the story of the last unicorn, who embarks on a journey to find what happened to her rest of her kind. The first time I read this book I was already fourteen, for Beagle weaves a fantastic tale about a girl and a dragon and what it means to be alive. There is nothing about this book that isn’t beautiful and captivating. The magical and the mythical are all intertwined.

**WE RIDE UPON STICKS** by Quan Barry. Filled with 30’s nostalgia this book introduces us to a Danvers field hockey team that turns to witchcraft to win their season. What starts out as innocent “supernaturalism” is turned into a revelation of obsession. A fun, light-hearted read centered on the strength of teenage friendship.

**EMRESS OF FOREVER** by Max Gladstone. This fast-paced space epic clocks in at almost 600 pages, so it’s easy to keep your captive for a while. Join Vivian Lia, a tech CEO, as she gets sucked into the future, learns about a space dictator, and fights to get her people free. Filling a completely alien space (pun intended), Lia teams up with a wonderful cast of characters to fight for the liberation of all sentient beings. An excellent and fun story built on the importance of caring for each other.

**TROJAN WAR MUSEUM** by Ayse Papatya Bucak. My first review of this short-story collection was nothing more than a string of exclamatory marks because I was so excited about it. Every story had me thinking “the next one can’t possibly be as good as this is my new favorite short story,” and each one was a work of art. The title story, especially, is one I know I’ll come back to over and over again.

**THE STARLESS SEA** by Erin Morgenstern. There’s something truly special about this book. Very much a book not only for fans of fantasy, it’s a book that makes you feel more settled and powerful when you started it. A book of magic, it plays with the structure of narrative and time in ways that work. By the time I’d finished, reading it was almost physically shaking—and after I was done I didn’t want it to end. The author has a remarkable gift for crafting incredible, heart-warming, and always, an excellent choice, and this makes a perfect introduction to the Discworld.

**SMALL GODS** by Terry Pratchett. This book is about a turf god who loses his mojo, meets a janitor, teams up with some fantasy ancient Greek philosophers, and fights the “Gods” in a loud-mouthed stand-up comedy routine. 

**EVERYTHING BUT THE MAN** by Samira Ahmed. A big thanks goes to our contributors: Arlie Ash, Mary Ann Library, Lizitha, complaints about this issue and the contributors.

CONTINUOUSLY ON THE MEDIA
- *The Blacklist* stars James Spader as a former government agent turned international art thief who isAftermath of which she has a remarkable singing voice. Think Glee meets This Is Us, as Zoey grapples with her father’s Parkinson’s. Lauren Graham (Lorelai on Gilmore Girls) and Mary Steenburgen add serious acting chops and give each episode class. (streaming on HBO Go).

**MOVIES**
- Watch classic films. Start with two of the greatest noirs, *DOUBLE INDEMNITY* and *OUT OF THE PAST*. (Indomitable—free on Star, rent on YouTube, Amazon, *i*Tunes; *Past—rent* on Amazon). Or try Japanese films, much beloved by the late, great Steve Brody, such as *Ozu’s TOKYO STO -RY* (available free on Kanopy; see with low ion price). For a TV binge, nothing has approached THE WIRE. ( HBO or streaming on HBO Go).
- Watch *BISBEE 17*, (Amazon) an award-winning documentary that landed on dozens of 2018 Best Movie of the Year lists. The story of the last unicorn, who embarks on a journey to find what happened to her rest of her kind. The first time I read this book I was already fourteen, for Beagle weaves a fantastic tale about a girl and a dragon and what it means to be alive. There is nothing about this book that isn’t beautiful and captivating. The magical and the mythical are all intertwined.

**MUSIC**
- See East Fens musician Brian Glucksberg’s recent videos for streaming classical music on p6.
- I have been enjoying CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM (HBO). Show is produced for and stars Larry David, the creator of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, hilarious and funny character. Other celebs playing themselves include Ted Danson and Richard Lewis. It’s in its 10th season but there’s really no need to go back to Season 1.

**TV SHOWS**
- In *BIG MOUTH* (Netflix)—the funniest and silliest cartoon you’ve ever seen—four friends in suburban New York enter the scariest years of junior high school and puberty. The tone takes on the adolescent psyche never precludes rapid-fire jokes or overdoes it for a year or two-olds to under-stander sex. The phenomenal voice cast includes a who’s Who of Hollywood’s cool kids, from John Mulaney, Maya Rue-dolph, and Jenny Slate to Jordan Peele, Andrew Rannells, and Fred Armisen. *TASкамER (YouTube)* is a British panel show where comedians compete in a series of creative and quirky “tasks.” The official Taskmaster YouTube channel uploads a new free, high-quality episode every Tuesday, and the first four seasons are available. In response to CO-VID-19, Taskmaster is engaging social media users to participate in tasks that audiences can do within their own home. Submit suggestions via Twitter using the hashtag #Hometasking. Visit https://twitter.com/TaskmasterUK for instructions.
- I am watching BISBEE 17 (also highly recommended). It’s a space opera set in the not-too-distant future in which humanity has colonized much of the solar system. Despite this level of technology, the same problems that we deal with now follow us off-world. It features drama, intrigue, relatable characters and a level of technology more believable than found in most science fiction series.
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- *The Expanse* (Amazon Prime) is based on the novel series of the same name (also highly recommended) by James S.A. Corey. The show’s space opera set in the not-too-distant future in which humanity has colonized much of the solar system. Despite this level of technology, the same problems that we deal with now follow us off-world. It features drama, intrigue, relatable characters and a level of technology more believable than found in most science fiction series.
- Watch *classic films*. Start with two of the greatest noirs, *DOUBLE INDEMNITY* and *OUT OF THE PAST*. (Indomitable—free on Star, rent on YouTube, Amazon, *i*Tunes; *Past—rent* on Amazon). Or try Japanese films, much beloved by the late, great Steve Brody, such as *Ozu’s TOKYO STOR-Y* (available free on Kanopy; see with low ion price). For a TV binge, nothing has approached THE WIRE. (HBO or streaming on HBO Go).
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- *WRITE A HIKE*. Consider submitting your next to Kaj Ase Studio’s annual Haiku Competition, which is closed to the public by mail. $3 entry per haiku poem. Cash prizes for first-, second-, and third-place winners.

- *Fill out your CENSUS FORM*. This is a landmark moment in American health affects human health and how we can cut in impacts with THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. The latest episode discusses caregiving in the face of COVID-19 and previous stories focus on LGBT+ elder abuse and policies. (iTunes, Spotify, RadioPublic and other platforms).
- *On the Media* hosts Brooke Gladstone and at the end of every show they feature a reliable news source that relies on democracy and journalism. Here’s what they recommended.

- *I once attended a meetup with the Boston Organizing Group, which is typically a great day to hear the news, music, or politics.**