

Who’s Watching the Health Risks that Bioscience Labs Create for Residents?

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The Boston/Cambridge biotechnology and pharmaceutical cluster is world-renowned.

Late in the public process of reviewing the future 109 Brookline Ave. development, meetings of the Boston Planning & Development Agency’s Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) became a forum for discussing safety concerns related to the new laboratories springing up across the city.

IQHQ—one of the biggest entrepreneurs in the speculative life-science development business—is building the Brookline Avenue lab, and also a partner with John Rosenthal’s Meredith Management on the Fenway Center Phase 2, which will have lab space, and a life-science lab at the Buckminster Hotel.

IQHQ’s executive chair Alan Gold previously led Biomed Realty. Biomed is associated with the Center for Life Science (formerly the Blackfan Research Center) at 3 Blackfan Circle next to Emmanuel College. That project was an early precursor to the speculative lab developments now proposed by IQHQ and others. Multiple entities rent lab space there. Some, like Wyss Institute, plan to expand next year into the 201 Brookline tower under construction at Fullerton and Brookline.

The graph outlines the official classifications of levels of danger in biolabs, both for workers and the community at large. A December IQHQ memo shared with CAC members explained that the firm primarily builds biosafety level 2 (or BSL-2) lab space. Tenants typically don’t commit to a lease until 6 to 12 months before completion of a new facility. The field is volatile, given its dependence on National Institutes of Health grants and venture capital funding.

At the final CAC meeting before the BPDA board vote on the project in January, Audubon Circle resident Dolores Boogdian pressed her request for a commitment not to house a BSL-3 lab in the project. She asked that IQHQ unequivocally not allow a BSL-3 lab because of the proximity of housing and congested streets near the site. Level 3 labs work with organisms that can cause serious, potentially lethal disease through inhalation exposure.

IQHQ’s Erik Lustgarten stated that it was important for the company to retain the opportunity of leasing to companies that require BSL-3 labs. Future labs will most likely be Level-1 or -2 (both Boston Children’s Hospital and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute are current tenants at 20 Overland and 109

Brookline, the two parcels that make up the site). As BPDA’s Edward Carmody later stated, an emergency could make it necessary to convert to a “high containment lab.” A follow-up question is, how would the public become aware of that conversion and what role would the community play in the process?

City Councilor Kenzie Bok supported the 109 Brookline project at the Jan. 13 hearing. However, she acknowledged the community concern for ongoing vigilance related to biosafety and biosecurity. Bok has focused on the need for state-of-the-art training space for Boston residents. BPDA planner Ocean Luo recently referred to an in-house workshop for life sciences and lab strategy that will craft recommendations for future developments.

Since 2006, the number of BSL-3 labs licensed in Boston has not increased. Simon Muchohi, biosafety director at the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) since 2018, shared the list of seven entities holding licenses, and all are academic institutions. Close to the Fenway and Mission Hill, there are two at Harvard’s Chan School of Public Health. Boston Children’s Hospital and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute also run Level-3 labs. Muchohi did not share specific locations for these labs. Biosecurity is a concern — the labs must be secured from terrorist threats or vandals.

BIOSAFETY LEVEL & DESCRIPTION			EXAMPLES
[RISK] ↑ HIGH ↓ LOW	LEVEL 4	Exotic agents that pose a high risk of aerosol-transmitted infections and life-threatening diseases that are frequently fatal and for which there are no vaccines or treatments.	Ebola virus, Marburg virus
	LEVEL 3	Indigenous or exotic microbes that may cause serious or potentially lethal disease via inhalation.	Tuberculosis, SARS-CoV-2, highly pathogenic avian influenza, plague
	LEVEL 2	Microbes that pose moderate potential hazards to personnel and the environment.	herpes simplex, common cold viruses (RSV, rhinovirus), salmonella
	LEVEL 1	Microbes not known to cause disease consistently in immuno-incompetent adults; minimal potential hazard to laboratory personnel and the environment.	skin bacteria, yeast

ADAPTED FROM U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION MATERIALS

Muchohi is responsible for permitting and oversight of High Containment (BSL-3) and Maximum Containment (BSL-4) research labs. Along with Julien Farland, director of environmental hazards at the BPHC, they are Boston’s guardians, protecting the public by managing the labs’ regulations.

Questions have been asked about

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY



The Emerald Necklace Conservancy’s “Lights in the Necklace” returns on Feb. 1. The public art installation, conceived during the grim COVID winter of 2021, adds light projections across the Emerald Necklace, starting with the two bridges flanking Justine Mee Liff Park in the West Fens (across from 401 Park). Three more bridges along the Riverway will be lit, as will bridges at Leverett Pond, Ward’s Pond, and in Franklin Park. Running from dusk to 9pm daily, the installation will continue through March 20—and will also light trees on the Comm. Ave. Mall at Charlesgate.

and Sciences, Massachusetts Eye and Ear, and Schepens Eye Research Institute.

COMS requires immediate reporting of any accidents, worker illnesses, or equipment malfunctions, and reports are supposed to be shared with the designated biosafety committee. All laboratories may require the services of emergency first responders from Boston EMS, Boston Fire Department, and Boston Police Department.

The Harvard Biosafety Manual says on page 15:

A significant amount of laboratory procedures have the ability to create biological aerosols that can be potentially hazardous to the personnel and the surrounding environment. Standard microbiological practices provide aerosol minimization techniques, but some special precautions can help increase the level of prevention. The HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system elements are the critical components for certification of the laboratory. The exhaust system for the BSL-3 and 4 labs cannot recirculate the air and must be released away from inhabited buildings and air supply intakes, HEPA filtration is used and filters must be changed regularly.

The Boston Biosafety Committee, created to monitor research at the BU lab, potentially could be more involved with other lab sites. At the moment, it is seeking applicants to serve as community representatives—preferably from the South End, Chinatown, or the Fenway. The committee meets quarterly. An application is available online. Contact biosafety@bphc.org with any questions.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

CIVIC AGENDA

• FEB. 4–COMMENTS DUE ON REQUEST FOR 16 CONCERTS

Live Nation has asked the City to license up to 16 concerts at Fenway Park this summer. The request adds 4 concerts to its previous request for 12 to make up for cancellations in 2021. Responding to a request from District 8 Councilor Kenzie Bok, the Licensing Board (part of MOCAL) extended the deadline for comments by one week. Address comments to Kathleen Joyce, Mayor’s Office of Consumer Affairs & Licensing, Room 809, Boston City Hall, Boston 02201. Mail your comments or submit them

electronically to MOCAL@boston.gov. Or (617) 635-4165.

• FEB 18–COMMENTS DUE ON PDA FOR BROOKLINE PLACE

Developer Skanska has proposed to replace the Simmons residential quad between Brookline Ave. and Pilgrim Road with 1.75 million square feet of labs, offices, housing and retail. The site sits just over the Fenway/LMA border. Submit comments to www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/305-brookline-ave-mixed-use-development#comment_Form

whether the BPHC is qualified to be the arbiter of dangerous research. This was raised during the prolonged protests and lawsuits opposing the Boston University’s BSL-4 lab on Albany Street that opened in 2018.

Other regulations require each licensed institution to have a biosafety officer. BSL-3 labs (and BU’s BSL-4 lab) must reapply yearly to the BPHC by Jan. 31 for an annual license, which runs from March 1 to Feb. 28.

The requirements for a permit include evacuation and emergency-response plans, multiple training and lab-safety protocols, and a permit from the Boston Fire Department. BPHC staff inspect BSL-3 labs annually. Because the Harvard Committee on Microbiological Safety (COMS) serves as the umbrella institutional biosafety committee for nearly all the licensed labs in the Longwood Area, the annual public meeting requirement is somewhat streamlined. There is no separate process for each licensee. Annual meetings, which are open to the public, are advertised with a legal notice in the Boston Herald. Only BSL-3 and -4 labs are required to hold public institutional biosafety committee meetings.

Rebecca Caruso manages COMS. She is responsible for all Harvard-affiliated labs, specifically Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Joslin Diabetes Research Center, Harvard Medical School, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, Harvard School of Public Health, Harvard University Faculty of Arts

COVID TRACKER

	BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MED. CNTR.	BRIGHAM & WOMEN’S HOSPITAL	N.E. BAPTIST HOSPITAL	STATEWIDE AVERAGE
ICU CAPACITY IN USE	98%	93%	100%	87%

ICU capacity offers a quick gauge of demand for hospital resources. Source: www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/covid-hospitals-near-you.html? Figures for Jan. 27, 2022.

Harvard Medical School and the Murder of the (19th) Century!

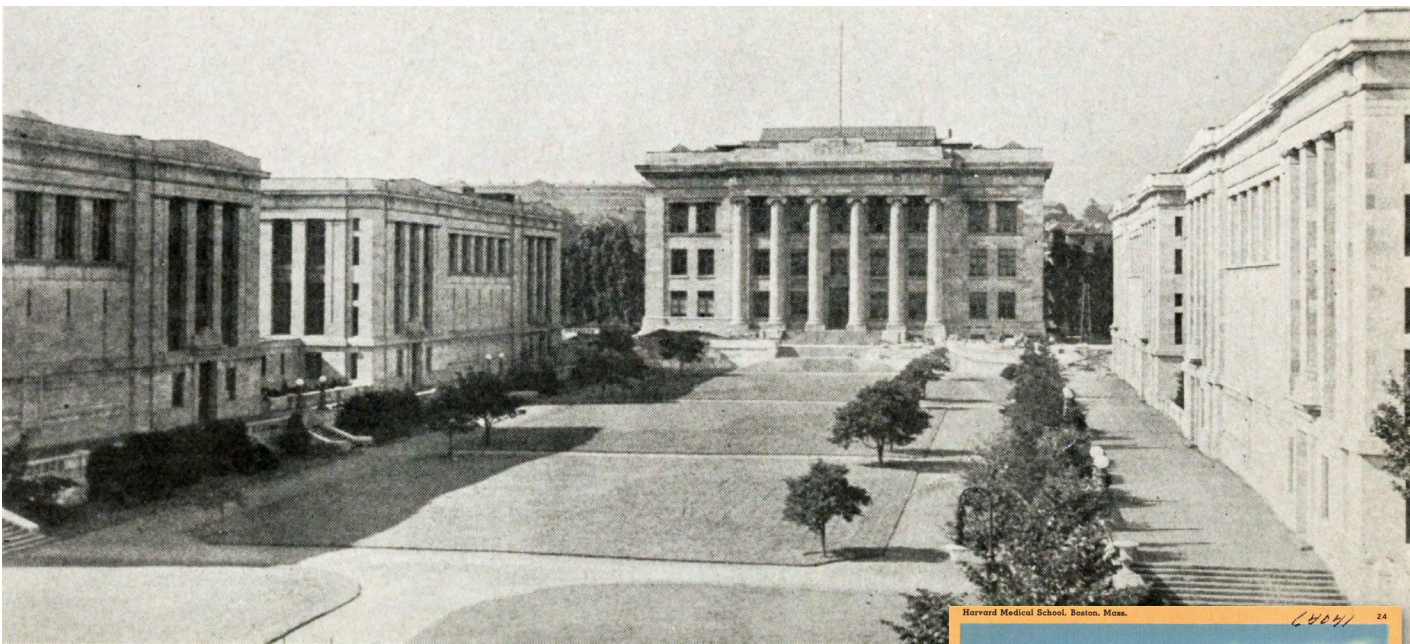
BY ED BALLO

Though short in length, Avenue Louis Pasteur delivers quite the historical bang for the buck, and the Urban Detective will divide the street into installments. We begin with the Harvard Medical School (HMS).

The movement of HMS from Cambridge to downtown Boston, to the West End, and finally to the greener pastures (and the more spacious grounds) of the Longwood Medical area, offer us a case study in how major Boston institutions “went west” looking for expansion opportunities and how landfill directly or indirectly played a part in this change.

The medical school was founded in 1782 and is the third oldest in the country. Its first lectures were held in Harvard Hall on the Harvard campus, today one of the university’s oldest and most venerated buildings. The building’s predecessor (destroyed by fire in the early 1760s) contained the library of John Harvard himself, and the present building of 1764 served as a barracks for colonial soldiers in 1775-6 while General Washington was in residence in Cambridge.

By the 1840s, the school had moved into a state-of-the-art facility adjacent to the Massachusetts General Hospital. It was here in 1849, in the lab of medical lecturer John Webster, that the dismembered and partly incinerated remains of George Parkman were found. Parkman had lent Webster a significant amount of money and then discovered that



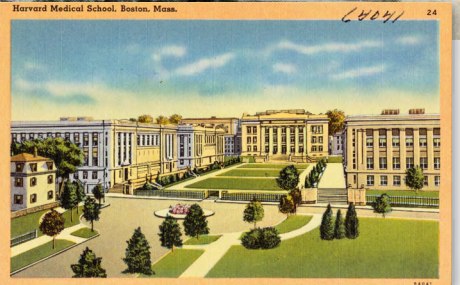
The medical school as it appeared about 1930; a hand-tinted postcard from the 1920s shows the semicircle at the head of Avenue Louis Pasteur.

Webster had put up the same collateral used to secure the loan to a second lender! Enraged, Parkman marched from his Beacon Hill home to the school on Grove Street.

We can assume that a heated exchange ensued; Parkman was bludgeoned to death. Using his knowledge of chemicals and acids, as well as anatomy, Webster began the gruesome process of dismembering the body, dissolving the flesh and throwing the remains into the privy and the furnace. Webster’s trial became a full-fledged media event, with journalists arriving from London, Paris, and Berlin to hear the lurid details. The Parkman

murder case was also the first trial where forensics, though primitive by our standards, was used to identify the remains. Webster was found guilty and hanged; he is buried in the Copp’s Hill Burial Ground in the North End.

Getting back to the physical campus, HMS would move to the Back Bay and then in 1906 to Longwood. Its five identical marble-clad, classically styled buildings form an elegant quadrangle and create a dramatic and monumental perspective, especially when viewed from Simmons University. Here is another example of the axial city planning that we saw with the Westland Avenue axis (see our January issue), but on a larger scale. The Detective would be remiss not to mention the influence of the City Beautiful Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in



the design and placement of these buildings. While never an organized school, “City Beautiful” was a movement by architects and city planners to produce monumental and aesthetically pleasing (read, “classical”) designs; the Columbian Exposition in Chicago of 1892-1893 is generally cited as its first major example.

Ed Ballo lives in the West Fens. His periodic “Urban Detective” column presents small bites of local history to help decipher the city around you and enhance your appreciation of it.

AT 98, DELIA ALVAREZ KNOWS A FEW THINGS ABOUT PARTYING IN STYLE



If it hadn't been for the Omicron surge, the crowd surely would have been much larger at the Jan. 15 celebration of Delia's 98th birthday. To observe COVID precautions, the festivities were deliberately kept small (and, of course, everyone had been vaccinated) when people congregated at the Prudential Center to celebrate. Delia has lived in the West Fens for more than 40 years. The birthday fan club included, from left, Fahmil Shah, Nasreen Latif, Jane Taub, and Barbara Fay (not shown). Feliz cumpleaños, Delia!

ZONING HEARING: 109 BROOKLINE AVE.

The Zoning Commission of the City of Boston hereby gives notice, in accordance with Chapter 665 of the Acts of 1956, as amended, that a virtual public hearing will be held on February 9, 2022, at 9:30 A.M., in connection with Map Amendment Application No. 744 and a petition for approval of the Development Plan for Planned Development Area No. 132, 109 Brookline Avenue Project, filed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority d/b/a the Boston Planning & Development Agency.

Said map amendment would amend “Map 1Q, Fenway Neighborhood District,” by adding the designation “D,” indicating a Planned Development overlay to approximately 85,613 square feet of land located at 109 Brookline Avenue, 20-26 Overland Street and 21-27 Burlington Avenue in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston (collectively the “Project Site”). The Project Site consists of two parcels bounded by Overland Street to the northeast, Brookline Avenue to the southeast, Burlington Avenue to the south and southwest, and a parcel owned by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation that will become the Fenway Multiuse Path to the north and northwest. Said Development Plan would allow for the demolition of the existing vacant three-story building at 109

Brookline Avenue and the construction of one building containing up to 250,000 square feet of gross floor area, including approximately 236,000 square feet of gross floor area of office, laboratory, and research & development uses, approximately 3,000 square feet of gross floor area of retail uses, approximately 2,600 square feet of gross floor area of community uses, and approximately 216 structured below-grade parking spaces.

This meeting will only be held virtually and not in person. You can participate in this meeting by going to <https://bit.ly/3laZgSI>. A copy of the amendment, the Development Plan and a map of the area involved may be obtained from the Zoning Commission electronically, and you may also submit written comments or questions to zoningcommission@boston.gov.

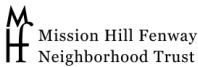
Interpreting services are available to communicate information at this hearing. If you require interpreting services, please contact the following: zoningcommission@boston.gov or 617-918-4308. The meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2022. Please request interpreting services no later than February 4, 2022.

For the Commission,
JEFFREY M. HAMPTON, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

MISSION HILL/FENWAY NEIGHBORHOOD TRUST

We invite proposals from organizations seeking funding for projects and programs intended to serve residents of the Mission Hill and Fenway neighborhoods.

Please visit www.missionhillfenwaynt.org to access the on-line application.



DEADLINE: Submit your proposal no later than 5pm on April 30, 2022. Please email hello@missionhillfenwaynt.org with any questions.

FENWAY HEALTH



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FENWAY HEALTH | 1340 Boylston Street | Boston, MA 02215
617.267.0900 | fenwayhealth.org

IN MEMORIAM

Peter Grana, 1951–2021

BY STEVE WOLF

Peter L. Grana, 70—a skilled photographer and beloved neighbor—died on Nov. 25 at Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care in Milton after a year-long battle with cancer. An East Fens resident for more than 20 years, Peter lived in the Belmont Chambers Cooperative on Symphony Road, where he was active in managing the building, and was a friend of the Symphony Road Community Garden.

A Providence native, Peter graduated from Rhode Island Junior College and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. He worked as a film equipment

specialist-manager for Harvard University, where he oversaw photography and film equipment used by students—a job he continued to perform through the pandemic.

Grant Young, a neighbor at Belmont Chambers, said Peter moved from Cambridge in 2000 after the end of rent control. He served multiple times on the Belmont Chambers board and was serving as board president when he first received a cancer diagnosis. He resigned to focus on treatment, then,



following a long period of recovery, rejoined the board to finish his term. Peter worked on many projects at the co-op, becoming the building’s unofficial representative to the roofers who renovated the roof in 2019.

Young remembered Peter for neighborly acts, like lending Young his car so Young could retrieve the plates after an accident totaled his own car. “He was always doing the odd errand or chore for our neighbors.” In another neighborly act, Peter practiced his

drumming someplace outside the co-op.

Other neighbors became close to Peter. “The things we will remember most,” said Nasreen Latif, “are how he was always willing to lend a helping hand and his caring attitude towards my plants and toward neighbors in our building, especially our senior members. We still can’t believe he is no longer with us.” Latif installed a shelf of plants between her and Peter’s apartments that ultimately inspired Peter to begin his own collection, which his family donated to the cooperative after his death. They’ll join the original set of plants in an enlarged collection that Latif has named “Pete’s Garden” in his memory.

IN MEMORIAM

Florence Elizabeth (Betty) Gillis, 1924–2021

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

Florence Elizabeth (Betty) Gillis, a long-time West Fens resident, died on Sept. 2 at the age of 97. Due to a chronic medical condition, Betty spent the last several years of her life at Sherrill House in Jamaica Plain.

Originally from Connecticut, Betty was one of six siblings. She moved to Boston and became a children’s librarian, writer, and editor. She used those skills to research and write articles for her church magazine and for *The Fenway News*. Her *Fenway News* features explored the history of the neighborhood. Betty was also a member of the board of the Fenway News

Association and helped to navigate the direction of our community newspaper. Betty was active in her church, First Church Boston Unitarian



Universalist in the Back Bay. She was interested in genealogy and did extensive research into her family history and that of friends. She especially enjoyed tracing her roots in Prince Edward Island and constructing genealogy charts for friends.

Betty is survived by two nieces and four nephews.

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens. We’ve republished one of Betty’s columns of Fenway history, below, on a topic that seemed especially apt during Black History Month.

In the 1950s, Young Martin Luther King Made a Critical Decision in the Fenway

BY ELIZABETH GILLIS

“You have everything I ever wanted in a woman. We ought to get married some day.”

Coretta Scott was understandably startled. She had just met Martin Luther King, a young minister. They had been introduced by a mutual friend and had talked on the phone the previous evening.

Martin had asked if they might meet for lunch. “I have a green Chevy that usually takes ten minutes to make the trip from Boston University but tomorrow I’ll do it in seven.” When Martin pulled up at the New England Conservatory of Music, Coretta’s first impression was that he was too short (five feet seven inches) and perhaps rather spoiled.

They spent the lunch hour at Sharaf’s Cafeteria on Massachusetts Avenue and talked about many serious subjects. Martin was impressed with her knowledge of and interest in civil rights and other current issues.

Coretta had come a long way from a one-room segregated school in Alabama.

After a scholarship took her to Antioch College in Ohio, she came to Boston so that she could study voice. Her ambition was to be a concert singer.

A boarding house on Beacon Hill provided a room and breakfast for \$7 a week. Coretta didn’t always have enough money for food.

One evening meal consisted of graham crackers and peanut butter. So she asked the landlady if she could earn her keep. They made an agreement that the young music student would clean rooms and do laundry in order to pay her rent.

Martin invited her to a concert at Symphony Hall and they took long walks. Still she was reluctant to be involved with a minister. Clergymen, she thought, were too pious and narrow-minded. And, besides, if they decided to marry her hope for a career in music was gone.

Martin’s father, “Daddy” King, a prominent minister in Atlanta, had picked out a prospective bride from a well-to-do family for his son. But Martin would have none of it. He said later that, “After an hour, my mind was made up.”

He had found the woman who would be a good companion to share his work and raise a family.

So, they were married in 1953 at her family home in Alabama. They spent their wedding night at the home of a friend who owned a funeral parlor. Hotels were for white people only.

They came back to Boston for a year in order to complete their respective studies.

Then they were on their way to civil rights work and history.

Elizabeth (Betty) Gillis, a long-time West Fens resident, died in

September. This column appeared in the Jan. 2010 Fenway News.



The Kings, at right, joined other American and Indian dignitaries to lay a wreath on the grave of Mahatma Gandhi in 1959 in India.

IN MEMORIAM

Liza Roman

BY JOHN LABELLA AND MARY ANN BROGAN

East Fens resident Elizabeth Ann “Liza” Roman died on January 11. She donated years of service and money to various causes and institutions. Liza lived in the Fens-gate Cooperative, on whose board of directors she served.

As the last living member of her family, she died without relatives to attend to her, but she was surrounded by a community of friends who meant a great deal to her.

Liza was gracious and had the admirable ability to balance opposites. As a child, she was not allowed to express opinions. So, as an adult, she would not allow others to silence her, even as she made space for others’ opinions.

Liza experienced crippling migraines from age 15 that lasted well into her fifties, but this didn’t impede her quest for knowledge. She attended Northeastern University on a scholarship, became editor of the university yearbook, traveled, and launched her own bookkeeping business “Roman Numerals.”

During her career, she worked with more than 60 small businesses, including a major architect, the founder of “Bear Week” in Provincetown, museum curators, child-development nonprofits, and social-justice internet startups. Her work involved more than taking care of the books. She helped businesses plan and move; she listened well and demonstrated a high tolerance for strange behavior. She didn’t mind admitting she was wrong; facts or an objective truth interested her most.

Nothing seemed to faze Liza. Even visiting a cemetery to investigate burial options was the occasion for humor and irony. When told she could purchase one plot and have two people buried atop each other, she responded “Oh, it’s like bunk beds.” Once, while dining

with a male friend, the waiter repeatedly implied that she and her friend were a married couple. Neither Liza nor her friend corrected the waiter, but when the man asked for separate checks at the end of the meal, she exclaimed, “Separate checks?! I want a divorce!”—which confused the waiter until all was explained.

Liza survived two separate bouts with cancer. During the first long



treatment period, she was the sole and steady caretaker of her dying mother. During the second treatment period, she was the sole and steady caretaker of her dying brother.

Despite these hardships, she was fun. She painted, wrote stories and poems, learned

calligraphy, and was praised for her pottery work at Kaji Aso Studio. Liza enjoyed the Symphony and made friends with people of all cultures and ages. She loved pets and was good with orchids and cats.

Liza was an avid Anglophile and a passionate lover of all kinds of books, especially detective books. She introduced friends to some of their favorite books. She went to the opera and visited museums in New York. While it may be common in a eulogy to praise someone for great taste, she really had it: those who were lucky enough to visit her apartment were astonished by the beauty of the artwork, the wall hangings, and the unique and one-of-a-kind furniture she’d collected.

On Jan. 14, she was interred in a green funeral at the Gardens Cemetery, aka Gethsemane, in West Roxbury, on a small sloping lawn overlooking a grove of sugar maples. She made provision in her will for donations to a variety of charitable and artistic institutions including MSPCA, Kaji Aso studio and the Gardner Museum. For more information email JohnLaBella@rcn.com.

John Labella and Mary Ann Brogan live in the East Fens.

@ THE CENTER

The Fenway Community Center is now open six days a week. Visit <https://fenwaycommunitycenter.org> for more details. Masks and vaccines required.

- Tuesdays, 2:30pm: MARTIAL ARTS. Classes are designed for all abilities.
- Wednesdays. 6pm: GUIDED MEDITATION.
- Fridays, 12:30pm: BINGO.

• Wednesday, Feb. 16, 6pm: FENWAY SCOOP. Fenway Scoop is a monthly program during which Fenway community members are invited to join for a virtual conversation featuring: updates from BPD Sergeant Paul A. DeLeo, Jr., celebrations of Fenway community members, talks with elected officials, and Fenway-based organizations and businesses. bit.ly/FenwayScoop.

FENSVIEWS

MORE Fenway Concerts? You Can Help Rein Them In

BY KRISTEN MOBILIA AND DOLORES BOOGDANIAN

Live Nation and Fenway Sports Group (FSG) have applied to book 16 concerts at Fenway Park this summer—the most ever proposed. That translates into tens of millions of dollars for them and a host of negative impacts for us neighbors. On top of 80 ballgames, 16 concerts would mean 16 extra nights of traffic jams, air pollution (from that traffic), crowds, light pollution, and fans who damage property and use our neighborhood as a bathroom. And, of course, noise.

For years the Fenway Quality of Life Alliance (FQLA) has documented these problems in detail. Right now, we’re focused on three urgent issues that the license request has highlighted:

1. Too many concerts. FSG’s request to the Mayor’s Office of Consumer Affairs & Licensing (MOCAL) breezily declares 12 concerts its new “benchmark” for 2022 and beyond. That “benchmark”

GUEST OPINION

ignores the fact that residents have demanded fewer concerts for years. It maximize profits for the promoters without regard for residents’ concerns or the wide-ranging impacts 30,000-person events impose on the city. And FSG wants four *more* concerts this year—a total of 16—as compensation for dates that fell through last summer. Last month *Forbes* estimated FSG’s value at \$9.81 billion, up \$3 billion from last year; FSG clearly doesn’t need the money four more concerts would bring.

2. A broken licensing process. A fully functional licensing board would try to balance residents’ interests against those of corporations. Yet MOCAL has greenlighted almost every concert request since 2003. It has never made FSG publicize its requests aggressively (a legal notice in the Boston *Herald* hardly counts as out-

reach). It has failed to check whether the few restrictions placed on licenses have been followed. Concerts have often violated Boston’s noise ordinance, as we know from testing Dr. Erica Walker conducted in 2019, yet when we cited these violations to argue for fewer concerts, MOCAL said Boston Police never reported violations. (The police, in turn, said they don’t monitor noise levels.)

3. A “good neighbor agreement” (GNA) between FSG and the neighborhood, negotiated in good faith under the eye of a neutral facilitator. Start with the agreement the Chicago Cubs created with their neighbors. A GNA would set a jointly agreed-upon “benchmark” for the number of concerts; establish a plan for measuring concert noise; bring in a consultant to suggest ways to reduce sound spillover; create a robust transportation management plan for concerts; set standards for post-concert clean-up; designate a small percentage of concert revenues to benefit the community; and oblige FSG to produce an annual report showing how it performs, as the Cubs do.

FQLA has worked to restore some balance—and peaceful non-game nights—since 2016, but it’s hardly a fair fight. The licensing process favors wealthy players like FSG and seems designed to thwart average residents without vast resources.

We like concerts. We also like the occasional peaceful evening in our neighborhood. If the City’s licensing machinery would support resident voices, a balance can be found. **Please take five minutes before Feb. 4 to send comments to MOCAL. Ask for fewer concerts this summer and a requirement that FSG begin negotiating a GNA before it comes back for a concert license in 2023.**

Kristen Mobilia lives in the West Fens; Dolores Boogdanian lives in Audubon Circle. The “Civic Agenda” box on page 1 explains how to submit comments to MOCAL.

The Story of ‘America’ Needs to Recognize Everyone

BY BYRON RUSHING

What we now call “America” (a name that is about 500 years old) is a collection of tribes, nations, and countries—with founders—the indigenous peoples who arrived here tens of thousands of years ago, the imperial Europeans who attacked and invaded these lands, and the Africans whom the Europeans stole and brought here as property, chattel, to supply and supplement the labor for the Europeans to exploit the vast resources of these lands.

America’s founding peoples, whom European-Americans would come to call, “the Red, the White, and the Black” are the founders of the Americas and the founders of the United States of America.

Over the past several years, I have been so moved by indigenous people acknowledging and asking us all always to acknowledge the first peoples on whatever lands we are on. It is a simple, profound, gracious telling and reminder of the truth. Wherever we are in the

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Americas we are on the land of indigenous people. People here thousands of years before the invasions of Europeans. In the Fenway, we are on the shores of the land of the Massachusetts people who used the rich waters for fishing and the rich rocky resources of the mainland for toolmaking. Places the English invaders would come to call Roxbury and the Brookline Marshes.

These acknowledgments have brought me to consider and to ask you to consider another acknowledgement, an acknowledgment of a time: the date and year when the first Africans were brought to a place, wherever that place may be.

For us the acknowledgment may go something like this:

We stand on the land originally occupied by the Massachusetts and visited by the Nipmuck and the Wampanoag and the Pawtucket.

And to which the first Africans were brought, enslaved, in 1638.

The first record of a group of African people arriving in Massachusetts is from John Winthrop’s journal. In his July 1637 notation, Winthrop wrote, “We had now slain and taken, in all, about seven hundred [Indians]. We sent fifteen of the boys and two women to

Bermuda, by Mr. Pierce; but he, missing it, carried them to Providence Isle.”

William Pierce was the captain of the Desire which was built in Marblehead and sailed out of Salem. Providence Isle was a Puritan settlement off the coast of Central America.

In an entry dated February 26, 1638, Winthrop wrote in his journal: “Mr. Pierce, in the Salem ship, the Desire, returned from the West Indies after seven months. He had been, at Providence, and brought some cotton, and tobacco, and negroes, etc., from thence, and salt from Tertugos. Dry fish and strong liquors are the only commodities for those parts. He met there two men-of-war, set forth by the lords, etc., of Providence with letters of mart, who had taken divers prizes from the Spaniard, and many negroes.”

In 1637, Puritans in the Caribbean had already begun to engage in the slave trade—probably purchasing them from Spaniard slavers.

We know the name of the ship, the name of the captain, the name of the recorder of the events, but today after 384 years we have not one of the names recorded of the 17 indigenous people “sent.” Nor of the enslaved Africans “brought.”

We know the names of the slavers and slave traders. We need to add the names of the enslaved.

Slavery and the slave trade in the Americas existed longer than emancipation and the period of civil rights has yet existed. If you use 1619 as the approximate date of the introduction of slavery in the North American British colonies, slavery lasted for 246 years. It will not be until 2111 that people of African descent will have been free as long as they have been enslaved in these United States.

If this virus has brought us to the verge of a “new normal,” it must mean for us and for all we tell, a time when we decide to tell the truth and teach the truth about all that history which has been “lost, stolen, or strayed.” Tell the story of all the peoples who founded this nation and this state and this city; and who work to continue to transform it today. Here on the shore of the land of the Massachusetts, which Europeans invaded in 1630, and to which Africans were brought in February of 1638.

Byron Rushing represented the Ninth Suffolk district in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1983 to 2019.

FCDC/Fair Foods Partnership Has Served The Fenway Since 2016

TO THE EDITOR

In the December 2021 issue of *The Fenway News*, a guest opinion essay, “Michelle Wu and Sustainability,” stated

LETTERS

that food-distribution support addressing the issue of food insecurity in the Fenway did not exist prior to the pandemic. I’m writing to correct that misunderstanding.

Since May 2016, Fenway Community Development Corporation has partnered with Fair Foods, which provides healthy produce to low-income families, since May 2016, when we opened our Fenway Fair Foods site at Holy

Trinity Orthodox Cathedral at the corner of Park Drive and Kilmarnock. The unique \$2 bag program has been a strong force in making healthy produce affordable and available to Fenway residents every two weeks.

After the onset of the pandemic, we saw the need for increased food accessibility for community members. Thus, beginning in July 2020, we gave out bags of healthy produce to households free of charge. We distributed more than 2,100 bags in 2020 and continue to distribute them—free—to this day. In addition, early in the pandemic, Fenway CDC collaborated with other area nonprofits to set up Fenway Cares, a mutual-aid food-access program that distributes food at Symphony Park and the Fenway Community Center.

Fenway CDC will also open a new food-distribution site in the next few months in Lower Roxbury, expanding healthy-food availability and accessibility near the Fenway.

We cherish our community members.

Over nearly six years at our Fenway Fair Foods site, we’ve made long-lasting friendships, greeting our neighbors with love and care. It’s our mission to support, uplift and empower the diverse mix of people who call the Fenway home, and do everything in our power to provide them with the support they need to live happy and healthy lives in this neighborhood.

**SINCERELY,
ANAR KANSARA
COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES
COORDINATOR, FENWAY CDC**

THE Fenway News

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

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The Fenway News is published monthly by the Fenway News Association, Inc., a community-owned corporation dedicated to community journalism. If you’d like to volunteer to write, edit, photograph, distribute, or sell ads, please contact us at

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**SUBSCRIPTIONS \$30/YEAR
(\$20 FOR LIMITED INCOME)**

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“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 <

Our next issue will appear on **Friday, February 25.**

> DEADLINE <

The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is **Friday, February 18.**

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SKANSKA PROPOSES MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT ON SIMMONS SITE

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Two virtual public meetings took place in January for the 1.75 million square feet of new development proposed for the Simmons residential campus on Brookline Avenue. The plan calls for four high-rise buildings—three research labs and one apartment building—plus more than 1,000 underground parking spaces. Simmons is partnering with Skanska on the site, now labeled 305 Brookline, or Longwood Place.

The application for planned development area (PDA) zoning—a special BPDA designation that eases some development rules—seeks approval of future massing, height, and the proposed uses. Skanska, the developer, expects the phased plan to take 7 to 15 years to complete, with construction beginning in 2026. Public comments are due on Feb. 18 (see “Civic Agenda” on page 1).

At a Jan. 24 presentation for the public, Sasaki architect Victor Viizgaitis outlined a vision that one speaker jokingly labeled *nirvana*, with public green space, food trucks, interior gardens, and new local retail.

Viizgaitis cautiously phrased his description of shadows the project would cast on the park land north of the project along the Riverway. He said that only two small areas would receive more than an hour of new shadow between 10am and 5pm on March 21.

The last four pages from the PDA application, however, includes a fuller picture, showing more early-morning shadows as well as new shadows in other seasons. Mid-day shadows in December, for example, are seriously long. Several members of the public at the Jan. 24 meeting asked that the project be scaled down to have zero shadow impact on the Emerald Necklace.

Fenway residents and Impact Advisory Group (IAG) members spoke about the need for more housing in the plan to balance the job—and increased commuter traffic—the proposal would bring. IAG members come primarily from neighboring institutions and businesses. The group has no residents from the adjacent condo buildings at 110-120 Riverway and 114-122 Riverway.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

Following the hostage-taking at a suburban Dallas synagogue, NPR ran a story on congregations struggling to find a balance between security measures and openness. The story included comments from Temple Israel’s senior rabbi, Elaine Zecher, on the difficulty of striking that balance. ➡ **A *Globe* article on how fitness facilities view the city’s new vaccine mandate featured comments from Heather White, owner of Mission Hill’s TrillFit studio. Reporting sharply lower in-person attendance because of Omicron in January—the health-club equivalent of the Christmas shopping season for retailers—White praised the requirement, which TrillFit had already been following. “Customers want to be in a safe place,” she said, “and they want to know that the people they’re surrounded by have the vaccine and are doing everything they can to slow the spread of coronavirus.”** ➡ A midday bicycle chase on the Fenway/South End border ended with the arrest of a heavily armed man who’d threatened a police officer in what may have been a mental-health breakdown. The *Globe* reports that a chase careened from Mass. Ave. to St. Botolph to Huntington Ave., where the Brockton resident tried to force his way into a car stuck in traffic. The suspect ignored repeated commands to drop the knife he’d brandished, according to the police report, at which point an officer shot him with a nonlethal beanbag gun. ➡ **The Boston Public Health Commission has opened a high-volume testing center in the Bruce Bolling Municipal Building in Nubian Square. The site will provide PCR tests between 12 and 8pm, Tue–Sat. CIC Health, which ran the Fenway Park vaccination site last winter, expects to deliver results in 24 hours. The center will require masking and social distancing; it will have the capacity to test 1,000 people a day, with room to test 25 people at a time and distanced indoor waiting for another 50.** ➡ Planet Fitness told a meeting of NABB that it plans to lease the former Boston Sports Club space on Newbury Street just east of Mass. Ave. *The Boston Sun* reported that, like all the chain’s facilities, the branch would operate 24/7 but expects minimal traffic after midnight, based on data from its branch at Downtown Crossing. ➡

Snowboarding in Mission Hill



A snowboarder took advantage of the big storm in early January to turn McLaughlin Playground in Mission Hill into their own personal terrain park.

Arts Newsline

Huntington Extends Run of ‘The Bluest Eye’

Based on the classic novel by Toni Morrison, the Huntington’s production of *The Bluest Eye* begins Jan. 28 at the Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts in the South End. (The Huntington’s second stage has become its new home while the mother ship undergoes a multiyear restoration and reconstruction.) The production will now run an additional two weeks, through March 13. Pecola, the young Black girl at the center of *The Bluest Eye*, believes everything in her world would be made wonderful if she had blue eyes. Inspired by the storytelling circles of Black rituals, audiences sit in a circle surrounding the actors, a theater-in-the-round experience the Huntington says “will create a space for provocation, remembrance, and healing.” Prior to Morrison’s death in 2019, the author gave her blessing to playwright Lydia R. Diamond, previously commissioned by Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago to adapt the novel. Tickets \$25-125, discounts for students and under-35 patrons. Tue–Thu 7:30pm; Fri–Sat 8pm; Sun, 2pm (slightly different start times on 1/30 and 2/2). Find tickets and details at www.huntingtontheatre.org/

Second Immersive Show, Featuring Frida Kahlo, Hits Town

Vincent van Gogh died more than a century ago, yet the success of two immersive shows of his work (see page 7) has opened contemporary floodgates for sound-and-light shows built around an artist’s work. Next up: *Frida: Immersive Dream*, opening Feb. 10 at the Lighthouse ArtSpace at the Castle. (Don’t think we’re that special, though—these shows make money, so Kahlo will play in seven North American cities.) *Frida* focuses on the art and life of the Mexican artist, an early 20th-century painter who ran in modernist and political circles, died in obscurity in 1954, but was rediscovered in the 1970s and has risen in popularity and esteem since. Attendees will step into 500,000 cubic feet of art featuring 90,000,000 pixels and 1,200,000 frames of video. Produced by Lighthouse Immersive, the exhibit will run through May 8. The Castle, originally the First Corps of Cadets Armory, is at 103 Columbus Ave., diagonally across Arlington Street from the Park Plaza Hotel. For more information, or to purchase tickets (timed entry, \$40-70 for adults, depending on day and time chosen) visit www.immersive-frida.com.

Boston Public Library Releases Black History Month Booklist

The Boston Public Library honors Black History Month with its annual “Black Is... Booklist” of 70 recent works that examine the Black experience. Copies of the list will be available at all library locations on February 1, or find it on the BPL website at bit.ly/BPLBlackIs2022. Created by staff librarians from the Central Library at Copley Square, and the Lower Mills and Fields Corner branches, this year’s list features books for adults, teens, and children by authors such as Amanda Gorman, Stacey Abrams, Meena Harris, Ibram X. Kendi, and more. The BPL has also created expanded Black Is... Booklists for adults, teens, and children. Patrons can explore previous Black Is... Booklists at bit.ly/BPL-BlackIs.

MassArt’s Méndez-Ortiz Named Kennedy Center Next 50 Awardee

Massachusetts College of Art and Design’s Cecilia (Ceci) Méndez-Ortiz was named one of the Kennedy Center’s Next 50—leaders, artists, and culture makers whom the Kennedy Center believes will lead the country into its next 50 years. At MassArt, Méndez-Ortiz serves as executive director to the Center for Art and Community Partnerships and is co-director of the Radical Imagination for Racial Justice re-granting program in Boston.

COMMUNITY meetings

- **TUESDAYS** Mission Hill Main Streets **SMALL BUSINESS CONFERENCE CALL.** Join this weekly call featuring reopening guidance, support services, and resources, and your questions. Register in advance at bitly.com/smallbizbos. 3pm.
- **FRIDAYS** Harvard Law School’s Legal Services Center hosts weekly **VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS** in partnership with the Boston Public Library. Advice and referral information on civil legal issues. 10am–12pm. For Zoom info, visit bit.ly/LSCBPL.
- **THU, FEB. 3** The Mayor’s Office of Housing hosts a meeting on development scenarios for the **PUBLIC PARCELS AT PARKER AND TERRACE STREETS.** 6pm. Register at <https://boston-gov.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlId-CqrDgJEtO8bO4PNjgQuhrtAKSg9qzs>. Contact Julio Pilier at julio.pilier@boston.gov with any questions.
- **THU, FEB. 10** Join the Fenway CDC for an **Organizing Committee Meeting**, 6pm on Zoom. Contact Cassie White at cwhite@fenwaycdc.org or (857) 217-4370 for the link.
- **WED, FEB. 16** The BPDA hosts a **NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY DORM UPSIZING VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING** to discuss the proposed “upsizing” of two existing Northeastern University residence halls, East Village and International Village. This is a follow-up to the Oct. 26 Northeastern Task Force meeting in which the proposal to increase the bed count in these two residence halls was discussed. Northeastern will answer questions about the need for these additional beds and address neighborhood concerns raised at the last meeting about housing these students. 6pm. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8jnpnrn>. Contact Edward Carmody at Edward.Carmody@Boston.gov or (617) 918-4422 for more information.

SENIOR EVENTS

- All Peterborough Senior Center programs require masks. No eating or drinking can take place at the Peterborough Senior Center or the Fenway Community Center. The Senior Center will provide coffee and breakfast items to go at each Coffee and Conversation event. To attend these events, RSVP to Tracey or Sara at (617) 536-7154. To receive Zoom links and call-in numbers, email Mallory Rohrig at mallory@operationpeaceboston.org.
- Tue, Feb. 8 and Feb. 22 at 12pm: **BINGO AT THE PETERBOROUGH SENIOR CENTER.**
- Tue, Feb. 15 at 12pm: **CURIOSITY KIT DISCUSSION AT THE PETERBOROUGH SENIOR CENTER.**
- Wed, Feb. 9, Feb. 16, and Feb. 23 at 12pm: **TECH CAFE WITH LITTLE BROTHERS-FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY**
- Thu, Feb. 10 at 11:30am: **COFFEE & CONVERSATION AT THE FENWAY COMMUNITY CENTER.** Special guest: State Rep. Jay Livingstone
- Thu, Feb. 24 at 11:30am: **COFFEE & CONVERSATION AT THE FENWAY COMMUNITY CENTER.** Special guest: State Rep. Jon Santiago

Mission Hill Gas Lamps Keep Historic Flame Lit

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Hidden in back alleys or next to rear-lot houses, Mission Hill retains six public gas lamps from decades past. Some of the locations are so obscure that they appear to stand on private property, including a very hidden fixture at the rear of 36 Calumet St., a property owned by Thomas Payne of Brookline. Until recently, a fixture at the rear of 124 Calumet, which appears to have been converted to electricity, was the seventh.

Two lamps were installed in the 1970s—one in the alley behind 2 Wigglesworth St. (1971) and one behind 704 Huntington Ave. (1975). The other four date from the early 20th century. Before 1910, a private company, poetically named Rising Sun Lighting, owned the lamps and the City leased them.

Like historic gas lamps on Beacon Hill, studied last year for a Beacon Hill Civic Association survey, half of the inventory no longer functions. In Mission Hill, the lamps that still work include some of the more noticeable ones—at the dead end of Shepherd Avenue and two in the alley between Wigglesworth Street and Huntington Avenue. However, a lamp in front of the 1847 Alonzo Folsom house at 4 Folsom Ave., once functioning, is now damaged.

According to a search through 3-1-1 records, unlike Beacon Hill or Charlestown, Mission Hill residents aren't calling in requests for repairs. Boston's Street Lighting Division has a standard form on 3-1-1 for



From left, gas lamps on Wigglesworth Street, Calumet Street, and at 4 Folsom Ave.

reporting outages; a significant part of its work involves responding to those requests. Weather conditions, moisture, and temperature, even extreme gusts of wind can affect the lights. Lighting Division employees have the equipment needed to relight gas fixtures, clean the glass, and replace mantles and burners. However, if gas no longer flows to the lamp, it's up to National Grid to replace the gas feed. In a correctly functioning lamp, the flame stays on constantly, like a pilot light on a gas stove. Public Works Department records identify approximately 2,800 gas lamps across the city. Due to concerns about gas leaks damaging sidewalk trees, recent proposals have suggested converting some Beacon Hill lamps to LED lights. And a few years ago, the Public Works Department considered retrofitting lights with solar-powered timers. The 1959 annual report from the city's Public Works Department set out a policy of replacing inefficient gas lamps with modern electric illumination, saying "[W]e hope to complete the gas lamp changeover during the coming year." But with the historic-preservation movement just getting started in the 1960s, as well as the lamps' added charm along narrow cobbled streets, gas lamps were reinstalled in some downtown neighborhoods. Perhaps these last few Mission Hill lamps were just overlooked and never taken out. They now add their own secret charm to hidden corners of the community. Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

The Arts

LOCAL DOGS STEAL THE SHOW

PHOTOS: STEVE CHASE



West Fens resident Karen Wolff, a professional artist and restorer, is in the process of painting a utility box at the corner of Hemenway and Boylston streets. Each side features portraits of neighborhood dogs.



EATS BEAT

• Garrett Harker—creator of Kenmore Square's late, lamented Eastern Standard and The Hawthorne—will

touch down this year a few blocks away with a new venture. Following his very public dispute with Eastern Standard's landlord, Harker lands on the ground floor of the Bower apartments on Beacon Street. Built as Phase 1 of the Fenway Center air rights project, the Bower puts Harker smack on the Kenmore/Audubon Circle border. As restaurants grapple with COVID, local media checked in with restaurateurs about their efforts to stay afloat during the pandemic. Chris Coombs, chef/owner at Deuxave, didn't mince words in the *Globe* when asked about the City's vaccine mandate, which took effect Jan. 15 (spoiler: he doesn't like it). GBH's Boston Public Radio also talked to Tiffani Faison

[Sweet Cheeks and Orfano in the West Fens] to get her take on the mandate. The Conservation Law Foundation's newsletter featured Mei and Irene Li, the sister owners of Mei Mei in Audubon Circle, and their new initiative, Food Waste Feast, a website that helps reduce wasted food with dozens of recipes for ingredients you might otherwise pitch. The site arranges recipes by food type, and you can sign up for a monthly newsletter. The Colonnade's Lucie has introduced a new bar menu offering a range of comfort-food dishes like poutine (a dish whose appeal has always escaped Eats Beat) and maple-bourbon chicken wings. More Tiffani Faison! Her tiny West Fens bar, Fool's Errand, made *Boston* magazine's list of the town's six hottest bars. Did the magazine limit the list to six, or did COVID send the competition into hibernation this year? Not clear.

February

> CALENDAR from page 8
www.eventbrite.com/e/the-boston-festival-of-new-jewish-music-15-naftules-dream-tickets-169806502821
Thu, 2/24 Z

TALKING HEADSTONES: WHAT BIOGRAPHERS LEARN FROM VISITING THEIR SUBJECTS' GRAVES. Massachusetts Historical Society hosts a virtual talk on hunting one's subject's final resting place. The panelists all have stories to tell—one even peeked into her subject's coffin. Learn more and register at www.masshist.org/events/talking-headstones.

Thu, 2/24 to Sun, 2/27 V M

In the opera *IF I WERE YOU*, the devil offers a failing writer a deal—he can move his soul and identity into other people's bodies but if he returns to his own, he'll die, and the devil gets his soul. To complicate matters, he hopes to win his beloved's heart—but can he do it as someone other than himself? Thu-Sat 7:30pm; Sun 2pm, BU's Booth Theatre, 820 Comm. Ave. Tickets at www.theatermania.com/venues/massachusetts-theater/joan-edgar-booth

theatre_18862
Fri, 2/25 V M
Who else had the chops to create **A TRIBUTE TO ARETHA FRANKLIN: THE QUEEN OF SOUL** but veteran performers Damien Sneed and Valerie Simpson. Band leader and composer Sneed toured with Franklin for years, and Simpson sang and produced soul hits from the 1960s through the '80s with husband Nick Ashford—everything from "You're All I Need" to "I'm Every Woman." 8pm, Berklee Performance Center, tickets \$29-80. Details and tickets at www.celebrityseries.org/productions/a-tribute-to-aretha-franklin-the-queen-of-soul/
Sun, 2/27 V M Z

Benjamin Zander returns to Symphony Hall with the **BOSTON PHILHARMONIC YOUTH ORCHESTRA**, performing Ravel's *La Valse*, Elgar's *Cello Concerto*, and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5*. This concert presents another prize-winning cellist—and local boy—Zlatomir Fung, as featured performer. 3pm; in-person tickets \$20-60; live-stream tickets \$10-20. Details at <https://www.bostonphil.org/concerts/2021-2022>

TheArts

FENWAY ARTIST EXPLORES ‘EMOTIVE LANDSCAPES’ IN BROOKLINE EXHIBIT

BY MARY ANN BROGAN

From now until the end of February, one can view whimsical landscapes by Fenway resident Lisa Jeanne Graf at the Brookline Art Center. The exhibit has 21 pieces, some inspired by a poet, such as Elizabeth Bishop, or by a song, like “Don’t Fence Me In.” Graf describes her work as coming from a place of hope. The paintings are inspired by different emotional states. The exhibit attempts to identify different emotions that the viewer might feel as they enter the visual space, exploring the different subjects and colors. It strives to be interactive by asking the viewer to identify the emotions related to a specific painting.

Graf labels the work on the right “Greed.” One might react viscerally to the image of a snake trying to attack and eat a gem. Others are inspired by the bleak, cold winter in “Silent Snow” or the peacefulness of greenery on a hill framed by sky.

Graf strives to create places that are “fully formed so that the viewer can feel that the spaces are real. Viewers can enter them and explore them, possibly becoming transformed by that experience.”

Graf obtained her bachelor of fine arts degree, with a major in painting, from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. She also attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and Art Institute of Boston. Besides painting, Graf is an activist in supporting fair and equitable policies in schools and local government. She is currently attending Harvard’s Kennedy School of government, working to obtain a public leadership credential. She hopes to balance her time between painting and policy. Her goal is to be an artist resident who also participates in policy making.

The Brookline Arts Center, at 86 Monmouth St. in Brookline (a block from the St. Mary’s stop on the C Line), is open Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm. Visit brooklineartscenter.com for more information.

Mary Ann Brogan lives in the East Fens.

PHOTO: MARY ANN BROGAN



Leaving Soon, Two MFA Shows Feature Art of Japan, China

COMPILED BY OUR STAFF

The Museum of Fine Arts has two current exhibits ending soon.

Tattoos in Japanese Prints, in the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art, remains on view through Feb. 20. Some of the world’s most popular tattoo motifs trace back to early 19th-century Edo (modern Tokyo), where tattoo artists took inspiration from color woodblock prints known as *ukiyo-e*. Today, the global popularity of tattoos has brought renewed attention to the centuries-old Japanese tradition.

“Tattoos in Japanese Prints” looks closely at the social background, iconography and visual splendor of tattoos through the printed

media that helped carry them from the streets of Edo to 21st-century tattoo shops all over the world. It explores the Japanese tattoo’s evolving meanings, from declarations of religious or romantic devotion to symbols of punishment and even crime.

The **Weng Family Collection of Chinese Painting: Travel and Home** includes paintings and calligraphy by some of the greatest masters of the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties.

It’s the second of three exhibitions celebrating a landmark donation by Wan-go H. C. Weng, a longtime supporter of the MFA who, until his death in 2020 at 102, devoted his life to the preservation, study

and promotion of China’s cultural heritage. In 2018 and 2019, Weng made the largest gift of Chinese paintings and calligraphy to the MFA in its history, comprising more than 230 objects acquired and passed down through six generations of his family.

This exhibition features approximately 20 works from the gift that relate to travel and home. Multiple works represent the art and regional culture of Changshu, the Weng family’s hometown.

A masterpiece among the collection is *Ten Thousand Miles Along the Yangzi River* (1699), a 53-foot-long scroll by Wang Hui.

The most recent work is a short film by Wan-go Weng himself, *A Town by the*

Yangtze. It presents a pre-modern Chinese cityscape—including scenes of daily life and architecture—recorded in Changshu in 1948.

The “Weng Family Collection of Chinese Painting: Travel and Home” remains on display through March 5.

MASSART MUSEUM REOPENS

The MassArt Art Museum (MAAM) reopens to the public on Feb. 2. Under the City of Boston’s B Together policy, the museum will require visitors to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination for entry.

PHOTO: RUTH KHOWAIS

A Tale of Two van Goghs

Two flashy shows of Vincent van Gogh’s work have touched down in Boston at the same time. Both shows project images of the painter’s work onto giant screens that subdivide two large but unusual venues and allow patrons a chance to “step into” the images while maintaining social distancing. Tickets don’t come cheap, so we sent two intrepid Fenwickians to find out more about the duelling van Gogh shows.

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

“Imagine Van Gogh” at the SoWa power plant in the South End is like nothing you’ve ever seen—well, you don’t exactly see it, you experience it. This immersive experience takes you into the world of van Gogh. You are surrounded by images and literally step into each painting. You feel every brush stroke and get lost in the colors and details. It is beautiful and inspiring.

More than 200 paintings are featured on a loop projected over walls and floor. The paintings aren’t static, they move and glimmer. The entire room lights up—the walls, the floor. You feel as if you’re living inside of a van Gogh painting. The exhibit is also synchronized to great classical music, most of it by French composers.

Imagine being surrounded by van Gogh’s *Starry Night*, or *Irises* or *Sunflowers*. At one moment, you’re there in his bedroom in Arles; in another moment, a soft blue-and-green landscape surrounds you. Perhaps most interesting is when several self-portraits of van Gogh emerge at once, his eyes meeting yours.

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens. “Imagine Van

Gogh” runs daily through March 19, 10am–9pm (last entry 8pm) at 550 Harrison Ave. Adults, \$39.99 Mon–Fri, \$49.99 Sat–Sun; children \$5 less. Your ticket allows you to enter at a specific time, on the half hour. More info at www.imagine-vangogh.com/.

BY MARY ANN BROGAN

“Van Gogh—The Immersive Experience” at Dorchester’s emblematic Strand Theatre is one of many being shown around the world. It is the work of Annabelle Mauger and Julien Baron.

The exhibit allows one to be transported into the world of Vincent van Gogh. As one experiences van Gogh’s starry nights in the sky, one also sees starry lights as they reflect and twinkle on the floor. Likewise, raindrops that fall around images of the asylum where he sought help for depression also spatter drops of rain in puddles on the floor. Music floods the senses to help make it truly immersive.

A bonus activity at this exhibit is the virtual reality experience as one ventures through the forest at Arles where van Gogh was inspired by the light and colors around him.

Mary Ann Brogan lives in the East Fens. “Van Gogh—The Immersive Experience” runs through February 20, 10am–8pm (last entry 7pm). Tickets are limited to weekdays because weekend dates have sold out. Adults \$34.90, children \$19.90. For tickets and more information, visit www.boston.imagine-vangogh.com/tickets. At the Strand, 543 Columbia Road in Dorchester.

February

CALENDAR

COVID PRECAUTIONS KEY

- ✓ Proof of vaccination or negative PCR text within 72 hours
- M Masking required
- R Reduced seating capacity
- Z Remote viewing

Tue, 2/1 Z

THE AMERICAN FUNDING. This virtual Massachusetts Historical Society panel will discuss two papers on the history of money from the mid-1700s to the early 1800s. Katie Moore examines the political, economic, and monetary conditions that informed the colonial Massachusetts land bank “controversy.” Ann Daly will discuss the cultural construction of monetary value in the antebellum US. 5:15pm. Learn more and register at <https://www.masshist.org/events/american-funding>.

Wed, 2/2 Z

- The Boston Public Library hosts author and podcaster **DANA SCHWARTZ** on Zoom. She’ll talk about getting published, working for Marvel, and more. Schwartz has written two YA novels, hosts the top-charting podcast *Noble Blood*, and has written for Marvel’s *Deadpool* and *Rescue* comics and for the upcoming Disney+ *She-Hulk* show. Register at <https://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6197d4c5f997403a00435818>. 4:30pm.
- The **2022 LOWELL LECTURE SERIES**—free and accessible programming for the citizens of Boston—will explore the themes of equity, hope, resilience, and healing. BPL President David Leonard will moderate each discussion, followed by an audience Q&A. On Feb. 2, the BPL welcomes **PHILONISE FLOYD**, brother of the late George Floyd and a tireless advocates for ending systemic racism and

police injustice. Informed by his brother’s legacy, he illustrates how to turn pain into purpose. Learn more and register at <https://bit.ly/BPLFloyd2222>

Fri, 2/4 ➡ Sun, 2/6 V M R

HANDEL + HAYDN SOCIETY PERFORMS BACH’S BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS 3-5 AND BACH’S ORCHESTRA SUITE on period instruments at Jordan Hall. H+H calls the concerti “dazzlingly inventive, virtuosic, exuberant, inspired.” All programs at 7:30pm; tickets \$82-107. Visit <https://handelandhaydn.org/> for details.

Sat, 2/5 V

The Museum of Fine Arts hosts a **LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION**. Wah Lum Kung Fu & Tai Chi Academy returns to lead a lion dance parade, traditionally performed to bring great health, good luck and happiness. Performances at 11am, 12pm, and 1pm throughout the museum, ending in the Shapiro Family Courtyard. Take-home art kits, with materials and instructions for making a dragon puppet, available in the Lower Rotunda while supplies last.

Sun, 2/6 V M R

BENJAMIN ZANDER AND THE BOSTON PHILHARMONIC present a program of Mussorgsky (Prelude to *Khovanshchina*), Shostakovich (*Cello Concerto No. 1*), and Beethoven (*Symphony No. 3, “Eroica”*). Romanian cellist Andrei Ioniță, winner of the Tchaikovsky Competition gold medal in 2015, performs the Shostakovich. Zander gives at pre-concert talk at 1:45pm; performance at 3pm. Symphony Hall; in-person tickets \$30-115; live-stream tickets \$10-20. Details at <https://www.bostonphil.org/concerts/2021-2022>

Tue, 2/8 Z

The Massachusetts Historical Society hosts **POOR RICHARD’S WOMEN**, which reveals

the long-neglected voices of the women Ben Franklin loved and lost during his lifelong struggle between passion and prudence. The most prominent among them was Deborah Read Franklin, his common-law wife and partner for 44 years. 6pm. Learn more and register at <https://www.masshist.org/events/poor-richards-women>.

Wed, 2/9

The Nature Conservancy’s N.J. chapter presents **HARRIET TUBMAN: AN UNSUNG NATURALIST**. You may know her central role in the Underground Railroad, but some historians refer to her as the “ultimate outdoorswoman” because she navigated using the stars, found food and medicine among wild plants, and even used bird calls to guide her charges. Learn how Tubman used nature to help some 70 people escape slavery. 12-12:45pm. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/volunteer-and-attend-events/find-local-events-and-opportunities/new-jersey-harriet-tubman-webinar/>

Wed, 2/9 & 2/23 V

FENWAY FAIR FOODS. Fair Foods welcomes community residents to get a free bag of fresh fruits and vegetables. Mask required. Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral, 165 Park Drive, 02215. 3-5pm. Contact Anar Kansara at akansara@fenwaycdc.org for additional information.

Thu, 2/10 V M

Afro-Cuban singer and composer **DAYMÉ AROCENA** performs with Berklee students in the college’s Signature Series. NPR Music describes Arocena’s voice as “a deft combination of Aretha Franklin’s soul and the *sabor* of Cuban music queen Celia Cruz.” 8pm. 136 Massachusetts Ave. Tickets \$15/\$20 in advance; \$20/\$25 day of. Purchase online or at the Berklee

Performance Center box office. www.etix.com/ticket/p/5845781/daym%C3%A9Arocena-meets-berklee-boston-berklee-performance-center.

Thu, 2/17 ➡ Sun, 2/27 V M

Boston Playwrights’ Theatre presents **RX MACHINA**, a deep dive into Big Pharma’s impact on American life as money, sex, and power blur to power the opioid epidemic. A BU New Play Initiative. Thu 7:30pm; Fri-Sat 8pm, Sun 2pm. Tickets \$10-35. More info at <https://www.bu.edu/bpt/>

Thu, 2/17

The Nature Conservancy presents a live-streamed meeting with **MASSACHUSETTS SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS KATIE THEOHARIDES**. She’s helped boost Massachusetts as a national leader on climate change, conservation, and environmental justice, and she’s worked to foster nature-based solutions for climate adaptation and mitigation. 12-1pm. Register for this free session at https://tnc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6MEk0n1VTJqxCM30XPykqQ.

Sat, 2/19 M

REI hosts a **MONTHLY RUN CLUB** and seasonal pop-ups, featuring free ski and snowboard waxing, giveaways, expertise and more. 9am. More info at <https://events.hoka.com/reirunfebruary>

Wed, 2/23 V M R Z

THE BOSTON FESTIVAL OF NEW JEWISH MUSIC hosts free monthly concerts highlighting the best in Jewish-influenced music by area composers and performers. Tonight, let raucous klezmer music lift your spirits. All concerts performed live at the Boston Synagogue (55 Martha Rd., 02114) and live-streamed. 7pm. Register at <https://calendar> on page 6 >

Book your next community event at Northeastern Crossing!



City and Community Engagement at Northeastern is excited to re-open our classroom and conference space reservations to organizations and individuals to host community programming!

Advance reservations are required for both spaces.
All programming must be free to participants.

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Our conference space



Our classroom space



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