




THE

Fenway News

HYPERLOCAL NEWS FOR THE FENWAY, AUDUBON CIRCLE, KENMORE SQUARE, UPPER BACK BAY, PRUDENTIAL, LONGWOOD, AND MISSION HILL SINCE 1974 • VOLUME 50 NUMBER 5 • MAY 3 - MAY 31, 2024

Historic MH Retirement Facility Faces Uncertain Future

RESTHAVEN ON PARKER HILL



The above is a splendid view of Resthaven at 120 Fisher Ave., Roxbury, founded by E. P. Benjamin, Esq., as "a home or shelter for and otherwise to assist indigent people without regard to race, creed or color."—Sunday, March 31 at 7 P.M. Miss Margaret Henderson presents a concert and Book Review of 558 Mass. Ave. for the benefit of the Chapel the Junior Club plans to give to Resthaven. The chapel is to be "The Eliza P. Benjamin Memorial Chapel," given in memory of Mr. Benjamin's mother with dedication exercises in June—Miss Henderson and her chairman of patrons, Mrs. Columbus W. Harrison, are working for an enjoyable afternoon for the many friends of this worthy Institution. Several prominent Boston women will participate in the program.

The front page of The Guardian on March 31, 1940 carried this notice of a concert to raise money for a chapel at Resthaven.

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Mission Hill’s Edgar Benjamin Healthcare Center, founded in 1927, has been in the news recently because of a court-ordered receivership imposed in April. Benjamin’s board of directors has shrunk to just two individuals after director Tony Francis was ousted. Francis made a surprise announcement in February that the home would close in July, prompting elected officials, union officers and current staffers to call for investigations. According to recent reports, the patient count is now 73. Following several press conferences and demonstrations, the state’s Department of Public Health conceded that patient care had deteriorated (staff paychecks were bouncing while the director’s take-home pay had jumped

sky high). A Suffolk Superior Court judge approved a petition for emergency receivership filed by the group Lawyers for Civil Rights, and attorney Joseph Feaster was appointed receiver on April 3. Receivership and controversy aren’t new for Benjamin. Attorney Norman Huggins—like founder Edgar Benjamin, an African American graduate of Boston University Law School—was a court-ordered receiver appointed in 1979 and remained on the facility’s board for years. In 1988, following more formal complaints about substandard patient care, yet another receivership was recommended. The nursing staff unionized in the early 1990s, affiliating with SEIU Local 285. Known for more than 70 years as Resthaven, Edgar Benjamin Healthcare Center was often described in its early years as a boarding or rest home for “aged colored people.” However, the founders had a broader view. The 1927 articles of incorporation memorialized their goal “to provide a home or shelter for and otherwise assist indigent people without regard to race, creed or color.” The original 22-member board of trustees was a mix of African American and white ministers and lay people, including three women. A *Boston Globe* story from August 1927 describes the home as “a unique enterprise of cooperation between two races.” Judge Albert Hayden served as a trustee—his family homestead was next door—as did Charles Coveney, the architect hired to convert the mansion and carriage house. Bishop Samuel

G. Babcock served as board president. As with other nonprofit organizations of the time, the Episcopal City Mission and affiliated churches served as significant sponsors. However, African American congregations played significant roles with Resthaven, along with mutual aid organizations. The early history of the nursing home reveals a period of Boston race relations when the African American population was small yet boasted well-to-do individuals active in local and national affairs. Edgar Benjamin himself, with legal offices in the New Studio Building at 110 Tremont St., was a real estate investor, bank president, aspiring politician, and a philanthropist. He lived quietly in Mission Hill for decades at 52 Fenwood Rd. From 1900 to the 1940s, he owned properties in the South End, eight rowhouses on neighboring Kempton Street, and property on Batavia Street (now Symphony Road). His South End Co-Operative Bank, at 806 Tremont St., was the second Black-owned bank in the city. He purchased the former Warren Fisher estate in Mission Hill in 1926 and transferred the mortgages to the Resthaven Corporation. Businesses, churches, and social organizations connected through two Black-owned newspapers, William Monroe Trotter’s *Guardian* and the *Chronicle*. Benjamin, a Republican, advertised his law practice in the *Chronicle* but not the *Guardian*. In 1928, Resthaven’s trustees sponsored a

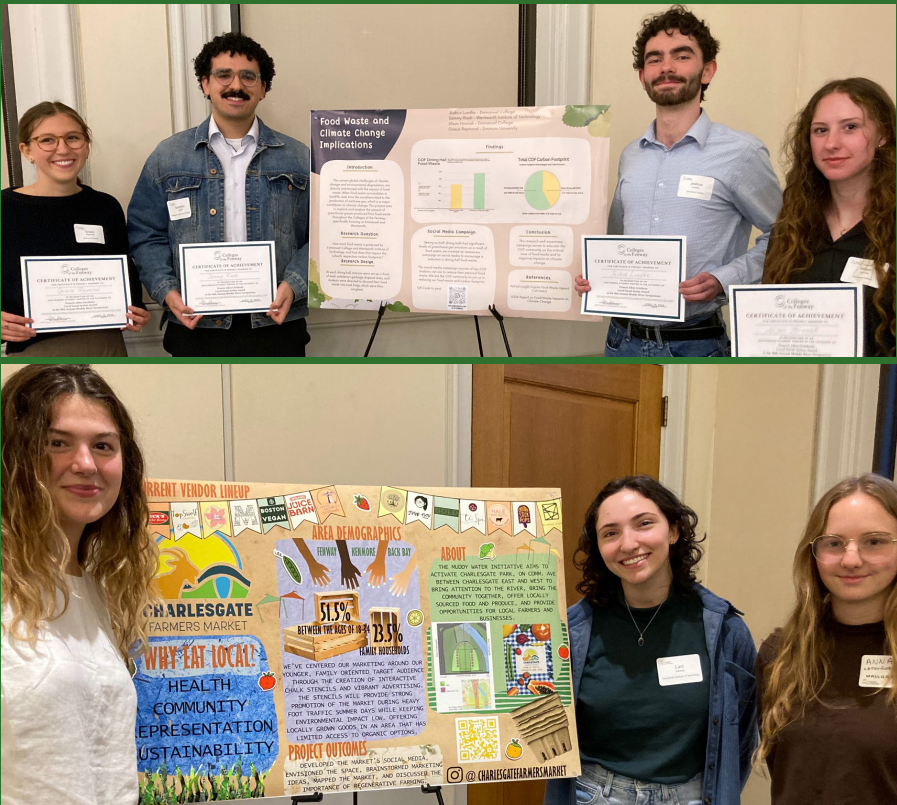
presentation by W. E. B. Du Bois at the Boston Public Library on the “Business of Charity.” Fundraising dances and cotillions in the 1930s and 1940s, sponsored by the Junior Resthaven Club, helped with the cost of operations. Resthaven had a forerunner, St. Monica’s Home for Colored Women and Children, established in 1904 on Highland Street and run by the Episcopal Sisters of the Society of St. Margaret. That facility closed in 1989, but Resthaven, renamed in 1998 to honor founder Benjamin, remains open—although in a very unsettled state given the current financial crisis. The late 1960s proved a tough time for the facility. City inspectors cited it for unsafe and dangerous conditions, and there were frequently reported fires. In 1968, a final report described the original building as “open to the elements and trespass.” That proved a death knell, and the building was demolished. A 1965 plan to build a replacement foundered due to financing difficulties. The Zoning Board of Appeal approved a second set of variance requests in 1968, and in 1970, with a generous mortgage from Prudential Insurance, the new Resthaven opened with 240-beds. Beginning in 1945, census records mysteriously listed Resthaven’s address, 120 Fisher Avenue, as Edgar Benjamin’s residence. He died in Silver Spring, Maryland in 1972 at 100 years old, not long after the new nursing home opened. Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

COVERING NORTHEASTERN’S GAZA PROTESTS...
The Fenway News lacked sufficient resources to report accurately on the Northeastern student encampment and protest of the Gaza war. Various reliable media reported that multiple police units—including State Police and the Suffolk County Sheriff—took part in clearing the encampment on Saturday, April 27, and arresting 102 people. For a good students-eye view, we suggest the coverage produced by the school’s independent Huntington News, which you can find it at <https://tinyurl.com/bdz4dm6>.

Colleges of the Fenway Dive Into The Muddy River’s Ecology

BY LESLIE POND

The Colleges of the Fenway Center for Sustainability and the Environment held its 18th Annual Muddy River Symposium on April 10 at Simmons University. The event featured a poster session showcasing students’ projects, poster awards, and a “fireside chat” with Stephen Exner, president of the Fenway Garden Society (FGS), which maintains the Fenway Victory Gardens. This year’s theme was “Stewardship and Civic Engagement in a Sustainable Local Ecosystem.” The symposium was launched in 2007 by Fran Gershwin, former chair of the Muddy River Restoration Project Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee (MMOC), and Ellen Faszewski, former director of environmental science at the Colleges of the Fenway and currently a clinical professor and associate dean at Boston University. The MMOC continues to co-sponsor the symposium. The event coincides with the culmination of the Environmental Forum, a Colleges of the Fenway course that provides academic and service-learning opportunities focused on sustainability and environmental issues. The topic for this year’s course was “Food, Environmental Justice, and Sustainability.”



Upper photo shows the winners of the new Frances Allou Gershwin Local Social Action Award for their poster presentation, “Food Waste and Climate Change Implications in the Colleges of the Fenway.” Lower photo shows students with their poster explaining the new Charlesgate Farmers Market, opening in June.

Students from this course and others presented their projects, conducted with faculty advisers and, in some cases, non-academic partners. Topics ranged from enabling waste reduction, addressing food insecurity, and designing sustainable packaging for medically tailored meals, to the impact on plants of PFAS “forever chemicals,” and the effect of salt levels on growth of Japanese knotweed, an invasive plant along

the Muddy River. To view the research abstracts, visit tinyurl.com/2s3nrm5v. The top posters, as judged by faculty members, received awards in three topic areas: sustainability science, environmental justice, and water. In addition, this year marks the inaugural Frances Allou Gershwin Local Social Action Award, presented by Carol Lasky and the MMOC’s outgoing chair Kelly Brilliant. (See sidebar on p3 for the award winners.) Gershwin, who died last year, was a visionary force in establishing the framework for the restoration project and led the MMOC almost to the project’s completion. A dedicated parks advocate in Massachusetts and nationwide, she was passionate about restoring the Muddy River and bringing the next generation of environmental activists into the work of advocating for healthy urban parks and waterways. Through her leadership, Gershwin ensured that the federal, state city, and town partners were aligned, and their decades-long collaboration reflected Frederick Law Olmsted’s original design intentions. Lasky noted in her remarks that Gershwin saw the symposium as central to the restoration project’s objectives. Known for leading inspiring tours along the Muddy River and elsewhere, she helped to bridge academics and activism, welcoming students at MMOC meetings and **MUDDY RIVER ON PAGE 3 >**

PHOTOS: CAROL LASKY

FENS VIEWS

When Good Buildings Make Bad Neighbors

BY STEVE WOLF

The proposal for the Trans National Travel site in the West Fens looks like a winner. Called 2 Charlesgate West, it would add 400 units of new housing—69 of them affordable—to a neighborhood and city that desperately need them. The developer has proposed a highly sustainable structure built to stringent “passive house” standards for low energy use. Two highly regarded design firms, Utile and Mikyoung Kim Design, have produced an appealing building and streetscape plan that includes a distinctive public staircase connecting Boylston Street to Ipswich Street, where the main entrance would be located.

So why does 2 Charlesgate make so many people’s heads explode?

Let’s start with its height of 275 feet. Actually, make that 295 feet, since the BPDA routinely lets developers ignore rooftop mechanicals when calculating height. At 27 stories, the tower would

dominate the built environment for blocks around. Just as concerning, it

would loom over the Back Bay Fens, just across the street, a problem I’ll come back to in a minute.

To get to that 275 feet, the project has to violate the Zoning Code. Zoning for the site allows a building of 135 feet (or 150—equivalent to 15 stories—if it includes ground-floor retail). Those numbers come from zoning put in place 20-plus years ago that allowed extra height on a few “gateway” parcels in hopes of kick-starting redevelopment on Boylston Street, then a suburban-style wasteland of parking lots and fast food joints. Redevelopment did take off, but the City never downsized the gateway parcels to remove the incentives, leading to the Pierce (340 feet), the recently approved proposal for the Star Market site (190 feet), and 2 Charlesgate.

Park advocates, led by the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, have zeroed in on another critical zoning problem. Long-established law limits the height and setback of new buildings along the Back

Bay Fens. Without diving too deep into the weeds, you can’t build anything taller than 70 feet within 100 feet of the park. To get around this restriction, the developer—with no known pushback from the City—plans to subdivide the site. As a result, 2 Charlesgate would look and function like a single building yet legally count as two on adjacent parcels. A small “wing” would sit on a slice of the site closest to the park and meet the 70-foot height limit. The bulk of the building would sit on a different parcel, right outside of the 100-foot zone. Its 275-foot height wouldn’t violate the letter of the law, but it would take a buzz saw to its spirit.

Once the City—in this case, the Parks Department—signs off on this legal sleight-of-hand, parks advocates see a truck-sized loophole that every future developer of a park-adjacent building anywhere in Boston will embrace as a precedent.

Which brings us back to the Fens. 2 Charlesgate will introduce new shadows on the Muddy River, Charlesgate Park, and the Comm. Ave. Mall. Environmental impact reports show that ground-level winds hitting pedestrians will increase by up to 15 mph. Caroline Reeves of the Muddy Water Initiative—a long-time champion of cleaning up the river—argues that the building will pile a range of new environmental stresses on the neglected section of the Muddy between Boylston and Ipswich streets. She notes that 2 Charlesgate would add new shadows, increase toxic pollutants from cars and delivery trucks serving the building, and create an echo chamber for noise from Mass Pike and commuter rail traffic (already a serious problem). “We don’t know what any of that will do to wildlife [in the river],” she says, “but you can bet it won’t be good.” (Reeves also predicts the public staircase will become “a trash magnet.”)

In the end, all the good design and best practices in the world can’t undo the problems spawned by a building of this size, in this spot. 2 Charlesgate bends or breaks rules meant to protect livability and threatens the health of a park that serves thousands of people every day. How can anyone seriously argue that its costs won’t outweigh its benefits?

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.

Back Bay Fens Needs a Dog Park

TO THE EDITOR:

Over the past few decades, there have been a number of failed attempts to get a designated dog area in the Back Bay Fens. Now we are trying again. There are many

dozens of both renters and

owners who have dogs—a lot more than 10 years ago with the huge explosion of new buildings, which are all pet-friendly, with more to come.

In the West Fens we have a very large park with a few isolated corners, far from the street, which would be quite appropriate for an off-leash or fenced-in area. During past attempts, calling the Fens part of the Emerald Necklace was used as a reason to deny our efforts.

There is an off-leash area on the Boston Common, which shows it can be done. Boston Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods mentioned that there were some issues with that off-leash area. Well, of course in a large public space that is being shared by lots of people with differing objectives, that’s bound to happen, but it’s still preferable to no delineations on how space is used.

The western corner of the park behind Clemente track and field—of which Emmanuel College has priority use even though it’s still a public park—would be one potentially good area for the dogs. Maybe, as an act of goodwill, Emmanuel could commit to putting up some fencing in that back corner, or another corner, like behind the War Memorial.

Having a designated area would help alleviate constant clashes with park rangers and Animal Control.

We recently met with District Director Anne Mazzola, who works with State Senator Will Brownsberger. She noted both the great need for a designated dog area given how many dogs she saw while walking to the park to meet with even more dogs and owners, and how big this park is—certainly big enough to share with all!

She is going to consult with someone in the Allston Brighton district who recently got a dog park up and running.

We know that even with a dog park there can be issues; that’s a given, but the need is still great. There continues to be an explosion of new buildings here in the Fenway, which means even more dogs in the future.

Hopefully this time, we can get it done!
LISA SIMON (AND TILLY)
WEST FENS

YMCA Should Rescind Earlier Summer Closing Time

TO THE YMCA ADVISORY BOARD:

I am writing you concerning the posted message at the front desk of the Huntington Avenue YMCA informing the members of the Y’s summer schedule which will cut evening hours by closing at 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday from April 29 until September 9, rather than the current time of 11 p.m.

This is impractical for me as I work evenings and afternoons in a restaurant. On my days off my energy peaks after 7:30 p.m., so my optimal efficiency is at 9 p.m.

As with Mayor Menino’s running roughshod over the IMP to push forward the “new” Y, the membership found out after the fact. Fait accompli!

Furthermore, there does not seem to be any plan to discount membership fees for this reduction in accessibility.

I have been a member of the YMCA since 1996.

As a member of the YMCA Advisory Board, this cutback in service deserves your consideration. Please advise.

Respectfully,
STEVEN GALLANTER
EAST FENS

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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“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. While the Fenway has changed since then, we remain committed to the spirit of identifying problems and making our neighborhood a better and safer place to live.

> NEXT ISSUE <
Our next issue will appear on
Friday, May 3.
> DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS <
The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is
Friday, May 24.

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IN MEMORIAM

Arthur “Archie” Isenberg

COMPILED BY RUTH KHOWAIS

Last Fens resident Arthur “Archie” Isenberg died on March 1. He was 90 years old.

As a young man, Archie delivered goods for his father’s pickle business. While in graduate school, he drove an ice cream truck.

He began a social work career with the Jewish Community Center in Brighton. Then, he directed and shared ownership of a Boston retirement home. In 1978, he made a transition to academia, retiring after 10 years from his faculty position at the Boston University School of Social Work at the age of 55. A colleague at B.U. said, “given the challenges, highs and lows of field ed, Archie was always grounded, thoughtful, funny, and present.”



In his leisure time, Arthur liked in attending Celtics games, traveling, and meticulously documenting the rich history of his family. East Fens resident Nasreen Latif said, “the Church Park, East Fenway community will miss his dry humor and seeing him at Symphony Whole Foods market.”

He is survived by his beloved wife, Elaine; four children; six grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, one honorary grandchild and one newborn great-great-grandchild. He was preceded in death by his parents, Morris and Lillian.

A Celebration of Life will be held May 5. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the ACLU. The family received visitors at Arthur’s home on March 8 and 9.

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.

COMMUNITY MEETING ROUND-UP

BY RUTH KHOWAIS
Fenway Civic Association
Annual Meeting

The Fenway Civic Association held its 62nd annual meeting on April 10 at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. Elected officials in attendance included State Sen. Will Brownsberger, State Rep. Jay Livingstone, At-Large City Councilor Ruthzee Louijeune, and District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan.

After refreshments and social time, President Tim Horn reviewed 2023 highlights. These included advocacy for the 55 bus, the Muddy River dredging project, advocacy against park shadows, Fenway Cares food distribution, the Fenway tree lighting, the flower share, concerts in Ramler and Symphony parks, the Rose Garden picnic, coordination of the Fenway’s Porchfest together with the Fenway Alliance and the Fenway CDC, and repairs to the Johnson Gates.

Goals for 2024 include final repairs to the Johnson Gates and conservation of John Boyle O’Reilly Plaza. The FCA declared 2024 “the year of the tree” and said they would be planting trees in the Back Bay Fens.

The keynote presentation, “Recycling in Boston,” featured Madeline Montgomery and Avantika Mathur, both employees of the Boston Public Works Department’s Zero Waste division. The pair first explained “Zero Waste” and methods for reducing waste. Their suggestions included using bar soap instead of liquid soap; bringing egg cartons to farmers’ markets for reuse; using rags or reusable Swedish-style dish cloths instead of paper towels for housecleaning; and using newspapers to wrap gifts.

Montgomery and Mathur also described the recycling process. In a pre-sort, large bulky items are manually removed, as anything larger than eight inches gets sorted out. Glass is broken into smaller pieces and steel cans are removed by magnets and sorted by machine. They said that plastic stays in North America while cardboard and mixed paper are sold overseas, and aluminum has a high market value.

A surprise to many in the audience was some of the items that *cannot* be recycled. Those black plastic take-out containers from

restaurants are not (but the white ones are). We often look for codes marked in plastic as a sign of recyclable items, but Montgomery said that codes 4, 6, and 7 are not recyclable. Also not recyclable are Styrofoam cups, plastic shopping bags, light bulbs, medical waste, coat hangers, and extension cords. Batteries can pose a fire hazard.

Maine has the highest recycling rate in the US at 65 percent; Massachusetts ranks third. The most recycled material in Massachusetts is aluminum. The pair directed people with questions about recycling to visit www.boston.gov/recycling.

Fenway CDC Annual Meeting

On April 25—its 51st anniversary—the Fenway Community Development Corporation held its annual meeting at Simmons College.

Nikki Flionis, president of the Fenway CDC board, welcomed attendees and noted that this was her last board meeting, as she will retire after 12 years on the board.

First order of business was a series of by-law changes, which were approved. The election of new board candidates added Eric Daniel, Robert Parker-Mason, Mary Elizabeth Peters, Cathy Van Bui, Martin Ward, and Tadesse Zerihun to the CDC board. Two departing board members, Ryan Boxill and Brian Clague, agreed to stay on to help orient

the new members.

Tim Coakley, treasurer, presented the year in review with a video featuring accomplishments of the past year, including progress on the construction of Burbank Terrace, the purchase of a building at 43 Hemenway St. for preservation as affordable housing, the monthly Free Market at the community center, 55 bus advocacy, the Fair Foods food distribution program, rental assistance, and the Fenway Ball.

Community service awards were presented to local artist Juan Perez, who graduated from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1973 and has been featured in numerous exhibitions; to the Northeastern Co-op in Service to Our Neighbors Program, which funds co-op students who work at community agencies; and to six departing board members.

The organization’s new executive director, Steven Farrell, presented the keynote speech that introduced him to the members after just five weeks on the job. He replaces long-time E.D. Leah Camhi, who retired earlier this year.

Prior to Fenway CDC, Farrell worked for Metro Housing Boston for 11 years, most recently as its chief operating officer. Farrell talked about what community means to him. He proposed a series of “Community Vision Conversation” starting this fall as part of the

CDC’s new strategic-planning process. The series of “town hall” meetings would put a strong focus on community and resident input, which would augment input gathered through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and a community needs assessment. At the first town hall meeting, said Farrell, those participating would discuss “what is our community vision for the Fenway CDC?”

The meeting ended with a raffle of tickets to the Fenway Ball, which will take place July 16, and Taste of the Fenway on September 25.

Red Sox Neighborhood Meeting

On April 3, the Red Sox held a neighborhood meeting at the Ford Clubhouse on Brookline Avenue. At the meeting, the team’s Executive Chef Ron Abell introduced new foods on the Red Sox menu. Abell, who grew up in Braintree, attended Johnson and Wales University, did an internship at Maison Robert, and formerly worked at the Parker House. He said that he was trying to come up with “some new, fun stuff.”

Attendees got to taste a Boston Cream Pie truffle and an “Irish nacho”—a waffle with corn beef and sauerkraut. Abell also introduced a chicken-and-waffle bowl with mashed potatoes and gravy, a clam roll with cabbage and togarashi sauce, and a one-pound chocolate chip cookie. He said the cookie was big enough for a family of four, but he eats one by himself. Abell said he was proud of Fenway Park’s rooftop garden, which produces lettuce, tomatoes, and beets.

Spokesman for the Red Sox Dave Friedman announced that 10 concerts are scheduled at Fenway Park, but the team may book up to two more. He noted that per agreement with the neighborhood, there would be no pyrotechnics and concerts would end at 10:30pm. Due to neighborhood concerns, the Red Sox have agreed to four free weekends—two in July and August and two in June and September—during which there will be no Red Sox games and no concerts.

During the question-and-answer period, residents asked about the 55 bus, which the Red Sox say they are advocating for with the MBTA. One attendee suggested that the MBTA expand the bus hours on game days. Attendees also asked about the idling buses on Van Ness Street.

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.

WENTWORTH WOMAN OF THE YEAR



PHOTO: DARLENE DEVITA FOR WENTWORTH INST. OF TECHNOLOGY

Wentworth Institute of Technology has named Maria Aiolova, class of 1996, as its 2024 Woman of the Year. Aiolova’s work focuses on environmental design, sustainable development, and resilience for cities. Aiolova received the honor at at Wentworth’s 17th Women@Wentworth Breakfast on March 28, where she gave a keynote speech (pictured).

PHOTO: CAROL LASKY



“Tracking the Flow of the Muddy River” took home the prize for best poster presentation in the Water category.

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keeping the college communities updated on the progress of the restoration effort.

Faszewski moderated the discussion with Exner, who related that his involvement with the Fenway Victory Gardens started in college and remains an important part of his life. The gardens have been an especially meaningful place in a relationship that progressed from dating to marriage and raising a family, and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Exner believes that access to green space is “an experience that should be available to everyone.” He emphasized the all-volunteer organization’s diverse members, who span Boston’s socioeconomic spectrum, speak 14 languages, and range in age from their teens to 104 years. Last year, the FGS started working with the City’s PowerCorps

Boston program, which offers green jobs training for young adults from historically marginalized communities.

Exner considers the gardeners stewards of “an incredible gem in the Back Bay Fens” and the gardens as fostering the everyday interactions that help to “build culture and sustain community.”

Victory gardens originated during World War II to augment the food supply and address food insecurity. Established in 1942, the Fenway Victory Gardens is the oldest continuously operating victory garden in the U.S. Last year, *National Geographic* spotlighted the gardens’ history [see education. nationalgeographic.org/resource/fenway-victory-gardens/].

To learn more and—if you’re a Boston resident—sign up for a garden plot, visit fenwayvictorygardens.org.
Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

These projects received commendations at the Muddy River Symposium. The descriptions come from the students’ research abstracts.

SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE AWARD
Eco-Forensics: eDNA Metabarcoding Techniques for Biodiversity Monitoring of Pollinating Insects

- STUDENT: Anna Saunders, Simmons University
- FACULTY ADVISORS: Anna Aguilera, Simmons; Kristian Demary, MassArt; Jane Lopilato, Simmons

“The dramatic decline in global insect biodiversity observed in recent years poses a considerable threat to public health and the global economy... We are working to develop an insect pollinator monitoring protocol that utilizes a meta barcoding analysis of environmental DNA (eDNA) from flowers. This approach will enable sampling of species that comes in contact with the sample flower.”

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AWARD
Charlesgate Farmers Market

- STUDENTS: Ella Poor, Emmanuel College; Anna Letourneau, MassArt; Laci Santos, Wentworth Institute of Technology
- SITE SUPERVISOR: Caroline Reeves, Muddy Water Initiative

“Our team has worked alongside the Muddy Water Initiative to develop a farmer’s market concept and envision Charlesgate as a site for regenerative farming... Our actions will help the market successfully launch and provide fresh local food for our neighbors and Boston community in a vibrant, welcoming, and lively atmosphere.”

WATER AWARD

Tracking the Flow of the Muddy River

- STUDENTS: Anna Pyche, Wentworth; Izraël Irizarry, Simmons; Shannon Bittner, Simmons; Phoebe Jarvis, MassArt
- SITE SUPERVISOR: Caroline Reeves, Muddy Water Initiative

“Using four GPS and four Bluetooth trackers connected to our phones, we tracked the flow of the Muddy River and identified key locations of debris build-up—and possibly new locations to place...the Muddy Water Initiative’s trash-collection WATERGOAT device.”

FRANCES ALLOU GERSHWIN LOCAL SOCIAL ACTION AWARD
Food Waste and Climate Change Implications in the Colleges of the Fenway

- STUDENTS: Alison Hrivnak, Emmanuel; Joshua Luedke, Emmanuel; Grace Raymond, Simmons; Sammy Riadi, Wentworth
- SITE SUPERVISOR: Angela Pillarella, Emmanuel

“This project aims to explore and analyze the amount of greenhouse gases produced from food waste throughout the Colleges of the Fenway.... To encourage a reduction of food waste...we launched a social media campaign to raise awareness... about potential actions that community members can take to curb their food waste.”

COMPILED BY CAROL LASKY

NEWSLINES

Two Sustainability Projects at Museum School Win Funding

TUFTS UNIVERSITY’S SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE provides funding for sustainability projects and ideas from and for the Tufts community, and it announced the awards from its Green Fund on March 12. Two of the five winning projects have a Fenway connection.

- **Nutrition Security Initiative:** Fork Farms at Tufts aims to supply sustainable nutrition to grad students at the SMFA and Boston/Health Sciences campuses. Proposed by the Seeding the Future Lab—part of the Friedman School’s Food & Nutrition Innovation Institute—the project responds to the difficulty of balancing living expenses and healthy food choices. The Lab team identified a nutritional gap for students at the two campuses, which have limited access to fresh produce, and will use indoor food-growing systems from hydroponic farming company Fork Farms to produce fresh, nutritious food for students. Once set up, the largely self-sustaining hydroponic pods should yield an average of 20 pounds of produce each month. Hundreds of grad students on the two campuses and other members of the Tufts community will have access to the produce.
- **SMFA Garden initiative,** proposed by undergraduate Abigail Harrison, aims to update the SMFA Garden, which the Green Fund first supported in 2020. This project will add planters and plants, develop an educational seeding and planting workshop, and add community signage, making the garden a more identifiable shared area for the community. The updated garden will continue supporting native pollinators while creating a more accessible shared green space for SMFA students, faculty, and staff in the

Bonner Replaces Van Scoy As Neighborhood Liaison

FENWAY-KENMORE LIAISON MAGGIE VAN SCOY left the Office of Neighborhood Services at the end of March to become campaign Director for Allison Cartwright’s campaign for Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court. In a Neighborhood Services newsletter, Van Scoy said “I was presented with an exciting opportunity a couple of weeks ago and things moved pretty quickly from there (hence why this may seem out-of-the-blue).” The new Fenway-Kenmore liaison is Maccon Bonner.

Ward 4 Opens Applications for 9th/10th-Grade Scholarships

THE BOSTON WARD 4 DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE will award scholarships to 9th and 10th graders who live or go to school in the Ward 4 neighborhoods: The Fenway, the South End, or Back Bay. Students who attend Boston Latin School, Melvin H. King South End Academy, or Winsor School and who are engaged in community programs and projects are eligible. Students can apply at bostonward4dems.org/scholarship-program. Deadline for applications is May 15, and scholarships will be awarded at Ward 4’s Annual Ice Cream Social, scheduled for Saturday, August 17, at Symphony Community Park in the East Fens.

Landmarks Commission Shake-up Raises Questions

BY ALISON PULTINAS

For some time, there have been tension and surprises in the Wu administration’s treatment of historic preservation staff and advocates—and not just the recent shake-up of the leadership at the Boston Landmarks Commission. Yes, director Rosanne Foley was fired on April 12, but only the timing came as a surprise. It was just one event on a trajectory that the Wu administration has set for preservation in Boston. There has been consistent change since 2022, and more is coming.

Inn 2022, the Landmarks Commission staff moved out of City Hall and into the former Kirstein Library branch on City Hall Avenue, with one ancient elevator and no public access.

Today the Environment, Energy and Open Space Cabinet administers historic preservation for the City, but there are rumors that Landmarks might be folded into the future planning department. July, when Brian Swett returns to City Hall as climate czar, may bring even more upheavals with the Environment Department. Chief Mariama White-Hammond’s departure, announced in January, also wasn’t unexpected. Transitions are happening.

A major change for the Landmarks Commission came with an increased preservation budget in 2022 that allowed it to hire Murray Miller to lead a newly established Office of Historic Preservation.

That office brought together nearly all the related programs (except for the City Archives) and birthed the Commemoration Commission, one of Kenzie Bok’s special projects as a city councillor.

The Commission’s charge goes beyond event planning for the city’s 400th birthday and the 250th anniversary of American independence. It has taken on preservation policy planning as part of its mission and connecting Wu’s goals of climate resiliency, affordable housing, and equity. At recent meetings, Commission members have focused on the need for a citywide survey, doing away with ineffective demolition-delay regulations, and developing strategies to align preservation with other city goals. That last plan is the central component of Murray Miller’s “A Vision for Historic Preservation in Boston,” now being shared through in-person and virtual meetings.

Did Director Foley’s firing come at the instigation of Wu’s advisors who have supposedly overstepped and interfered with Landmarks Commission review of potential sites to be designated city landmarks? The explanation is murky. Yes, 16 members of the citywide Landmarks Commission signed an April letter to Wu criticizing her staff, but whether Foley had a role is unknown. Perhaps the situation was more complicated, and she was caught in the middle.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

A NOT-QUITE-TOTAL ECLIPSE



Community members gathered at Clemente Field for the total[ish] solar eclipse on April 8. Beautiful weather drew many people out for the rare event, which reached a maximum of 93% coverage in Boston at 3:29 pm.

The Question of Agassiz Road’s Name

Following completion of the dredging, flood-control, and re-landscaping project along the Muddy River last fall, Agassiz Road remained closed to traffic. It reopened on Feb. 23. The focus on the road revived questions about its name, which may (or may not) memorialize Louis Agassiz. The prominent 19th-century naturalist promoted pseudo-scientific theories about race that spurred a raft of racist political policies over nearly a century. The Fenway News has received a lot of responses to the questions of whether we should rename Agassiz Road and planned to share them this month. Due to space constraints, however, we will publish them in a future issue.

Marathon Charity Runners Bring Home the Bacon for Fenway Groups



East Fens resident Tim Horn cheered on Nehal Manshi, who ran in the Marathon to raise money for Fenway Cares free food distributions.

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

Eight runners each raised at least \$5,000 for Fenway nonprofits in this year’s Boston Marathon. All finished the race; here are their times and the groups they ran to benefit:

- Georgios Mitselos, 4:46 [hours:minutes] for ARCK [Arts Resource Collaborative for Kids]
- Veronica Brown, 5:15, for the Boston Arts Academy
- Yeji Cha-Beach, 3:41, for Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra
- Julian Day, 5:08, for Fenway Alliance
- Nehal Munshi, 5:55, for Fenway Cares
- Fabian Benabente, 4:55, for Fenway Health
- Ali Hamilton, 3:48, for Fenway Health
- Myles Spar, 5:08, for Fenway Health

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.

Red Sox ‘Neighborhood Nines’ Tickets Return

Again this summer, neighborhood residents can catch a game at Fenway Park for \$9. After registering, applicants receive a code good for \$9 tickets for up to five regular season games. They may purchase up to four tickets per game. Register at mlb.com/redsox/tickets/specials/neighborhood9s?partnerId=redirect-bos-neighborhood9s.

GRADUATION SCHEDULE

SUN, 5/5 Northeastern University @ Fenway Park: graduates, 10am; undergrads, 4pm	SAT, 5/11 Berklee School of Music @ Agganis Arena, 925 Comm. Ave., 10am	• Roxbury Community College @ Reggie Lewis Track Center, 1pm
THU, 5/9 Mass College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences @ Leader Bank Pavilion (in the Seaport): 8:45am and 2:45pm	THU, 5/16 Mass College of Art & Design @ Leader Bank Pavilion (in the Seaport), 2pm	SAT, 5/18 Emmanuel College @ campus, 11am
FRI, 5/10 Northeastern School of Law @ Matthews Arena, 2pm	FRI, 5/17 • Simmons University @ MGM Music Hall, Lansdowne Street, 9am	SUN, 5/19 • Boston University @ Nickerson Field, 1pm • New England Conservatory @ Jordan Hall, 2pm

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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

Fenway residents gleaned a bit of intelligence about a new neighbor from the *Globe*'s business section. Lego CEO Niels Christianssen revealed that staff from the Danish toymaker's Connecticut HQ will arrive at 1001 Boylston in spring 2025. The company expects to have 750 people working there eventually.

Combined Jewish Philanthropies sponsored a Stand Up for Jewish Students rally outside Temple Israel on the Riverway.

As many as 1,500 people attended, expressing concern that opposition to Israel's military campaign in Gaza has, on some campuses, shaded into anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish students.

Father John Unni led the funeral service for former Red Sox President Larry Lucchino at St. Cecilia's Church. Hundreds of mourners attended.

Just down Belvidere Street, a buyer paid \$171 million for the Back Bay Hilton, beating out unnamed colleges that wanted to buy the building and turn it into a dorm.

Certares Management, told the *Globe* that it will keep the Hilton flag but plans to spend up to \$30 million on renovations (then raise room rates). The 390-room hotel will stay open during rehab.

A 2017 Boston Conservatory grad, Eleri Ward, will originate the role of Jordan Baker in a new musical based on *The Great Gatsby*. The heavy-duty creative team behind the production leaves ICYMI feeling pretty confident that *Gatsby* will follow multiple ART shows (*Pippin*, *Waitress*, *Jagged Little Pill*) on the trail from Harvard Square to Broadway.

Northeastern wheeled in some heavy firepower for a symposium honoring former Gov. Michael Dukakis, who taught at the university for 29 years.

Gov. Maura Healey joined former Govs. Deval Patrick and William Weld on a panel that assessed the Duke's career and praised his values.

ICYMI cheered the news last year that the amazing Harvard Bookstore would open a branch at the Prudential Center [fittingly, in the old Barnes & Noble space].

Alas, that plan fell apart earlier this year, but the Pru has lined up a new and different replacement tenant. Minnesota-based gym chain, Life Time, will use the space to house what it bills as an "urban athletic country club," per the *Globe*.

Life Time operates six other locations in some of Boston's tonier 'burbs.

Fenway-Connected Groups Collect \$85k in Cultural Grants

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Added dollars from the Red Sox Arts Fund allowed the Boston Cultural Council to increase its distribution of funds to organizations with a Fenway connection for the second year in a row.

According to Julia Ryan of the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture (MOAC), "all of the organizations that will be funded through the Red Sox Foundation are either located in Fenway, have members who live in Fenway, do programming in Fenway, or prioritize engaging communities who live in Fenway through their programming."

The Council's standard three funding

levels reflect an organization's size and budget. An event celebrating all the awardees takes place June 4 at the Artists for Humanity's Epicenter in South Boston. The party is only open to the awardees, their partners and other MOAC grantees.

Grant recipients are :

- Art Resource Collaborative for Kids: \$7,500
- Boston Comic Arts Foundation: \$10,000
- Cantata Singers: \$7,500
- Company One Theatre: \$5,000
- Kaji Aso Studio: \$10,000
- Longwood Symphony Orchestra: \$10,000
- Project STEP: \$5,000
- The Boston Landmarks Orchestra: \$10,000
- The Fenway Alliance: \$10,000
- TransCultural Exchange: \$10,000

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

SOX BOX

FRI, 5/10 7:10PM	SAT, 5/11 4:10PM	SUN, 5/12 1:35PM	MON, 5/13 7:10PM
TUE, 5/14 7:10PM	WED, 5/15 7:10PM	THU, 5/16 7:10PM	FRI, 5/24 7:10PM
SAT, 5/25 4:10PM	SUN, 5/26 1:35PM	THU, 5/30 7:10PM	FRI, 5/31 7:10PM

DASHBOARD

TRASH & RECYCLING PICK-UPS

BACK BAY Monday and Thursday	FENWAY Tuesday and Friday	MISSION HILL Tuesday and Friday
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STREET CLEANING

Street cleaning (and towing) resumed on April 1. In the Fenway, you need to check both City and DCR schedules to see when street cleaning takes place. Find City info at tinyurl.com/s9fyarf8. See the DCR schedule at tinyurl.com/4usvd8w3.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MOAKLEY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!



Northeastern University
City and Community Engagement

Updates from the Muddy River

BY LESLIE POND

Muddy River Visioning

Ever wonder why people don't swim in the Charles River? Part of the answer is "No swimmable Charles without a cleaner Muddy River!" says Emily Norton, executive director of the Charles River Watershed Association. The Muddy River, a major tributary of the Charles, has an unacceptable-for-swimming "C" grade from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, mainly due to bacterial contamination.

Ongoing efforts to improve the Muddy River's water quality include the Muddy River Visioning series, co-convened by the CWRA

and Emerald Necklace Conservancy, with the goal of engaging the widespread public support necessary to clean up the river.

The second meeting occurred online on April 9, with the participation of partner organizations and interested area residents. The session focused on "Existing Conditions," with speakers reviewing community input from the first meeting, soliciting additional community comments, and describing the major sources of pollution in the Muddy River that contribute to its "urban stream syndrome," how the watershed may experience climate change, and what plans are already in the works.

To learn more about CRWA's Muddy

River restoration work; sign up for the Muddy River email list; and view recordings, slides, and transcripts of the Muddy River Visioning meetings, visit crwa.org/muddy-river-project-page. *The Fenway News* covered the first visioning meeting in our Jan. 2024 issue.

Call For New Members From The Friends Of The Muddy River

Friends groups are vital partners in taking care of, and advocating for, our parks. The Friends of the Muddy River was established in 1980 by Brookline resident Isabella Callanan, in response to a neglected and highly polluted Muddy River. The nonprofit group's members

have included volunteers from Brookline and Boston, particularly the Fenway. The FMR has led many successful activities, including tree planting, maintenance, and donations to other local organizations.

The FMR encourages new members to join, reinvigorate the group, and help build community around the many opportunities for future improvements along the Muddy River.

To learn more and get involved, see the fall/winter 2023 issue of the Boston Green-Space Alliance's publication *PLACE* at brooklinegreenspace.org/pdf/Fall-Winter2023.pdf or email carroll.m.williamson@gmail.com.

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

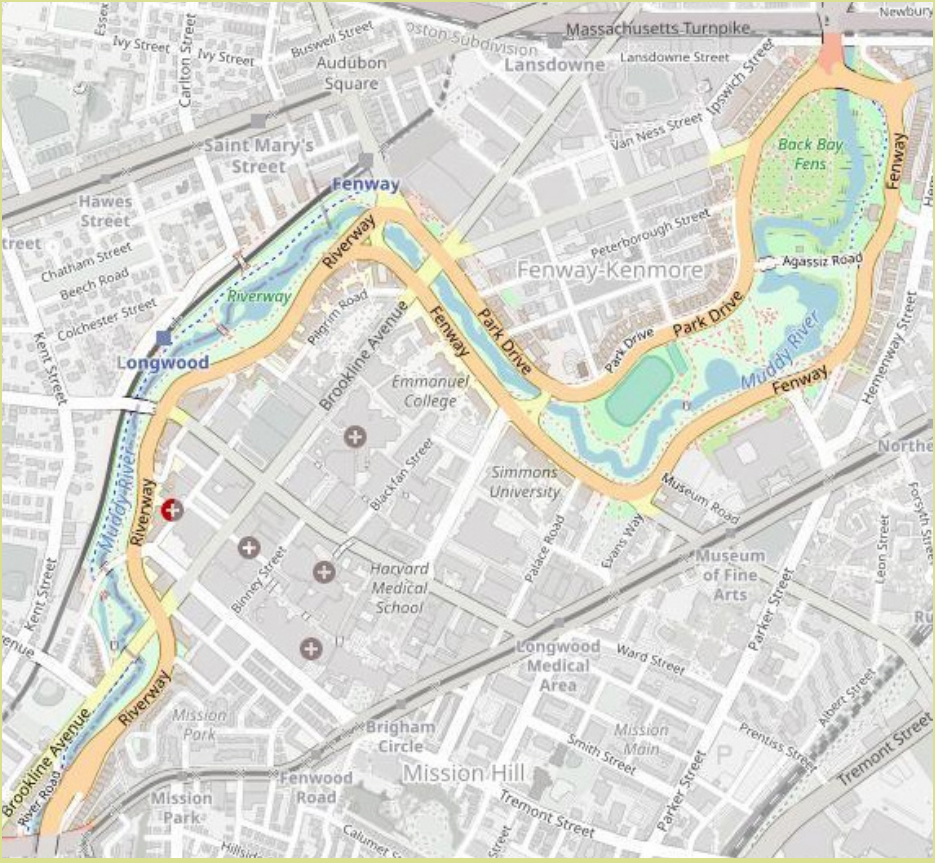
PARKS DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES STUDY OF SHADOW IMPACTS FROM DEVELOPMENT

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The Boston Parks Department has chosen Cambridge-based Agency Landscape+Planning to lead a "Study of Shadow Impacts on Parkland." The woman-owned business recently took part in the BPDA's Design Vision project.

According to an RFP issued in January, the study will establish a shared understanding—grounded in research—of the impacts of light and shadow on both the ecological character of and the user experience in the Emerald Necklace parks. During the 9- to 12-month study period the City will appoint a community advisory group of roughly 25 members through open nominations, and expects the consultants to hold one or two public forums.

The study area covers the Back Bay Fens and Riverway parks (see map), running from Charlesgate on the north to Huntington Avenue/Route 9 on the south. The analysis



will be applied throughout the Emerald Necklace and guide policies and inform planning by the Parks Department and other City of Boston agencies.

The consultants will draft guidelines for sunlight access and allowable shadows, but they will not draft regulations for use in reviewing the impacts of new development.

The study comes in reaction to strong community criticism of the Longwood Place planned development area approved by the BPDA in early 2023. The PDA, just west of the Fenway/Longwood border, authorizes five buildings ranging in height from 170 to 320 feet. Both residents and parks groups objected strenuously to (among other things) significant new shadows the buildings would cast on the Emerald Necklace, concerned about unanticipated damage to the park's ecosystems.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

ATTENTION BOSTON WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION CUSTOMERS

You may have noticed some changes in your most recent bill from Boston Water and Sewer Commission. As of April 1, 2024 BWSC customers will now see three separate line-item charges on their bill, for water, sewer, and stormwater. Now, paying for stormwater separately will lower the sewer rate while showing the charges attributed to stormwater activities for the property. This is a more equitable way to fund improvements for the stormwater system because everyone pays for the service they use. Here are key highlights of the bill:

- Stormwater charge will be \$8.98 per month for each Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) attributed to the property.
- All property owners with more than 400 square feet of impervious area will be billed.
- 60% of residential households will see a reduction in their overall bill.
- The 30% discount extended to seniors and disabled residents will automatically apply to the new stormwater fee.
- Credits and grants are available for customers who implement green infrastructure measures on their property.



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The Arts

AT ASTA, A FOOD ADVENTURE OF RUSTIC ELEGANCE

BY MARY ANN BROGAN

Asta Restaurant at 47 Mass. Ave. seems to be a curious place. Unlike most restaurants that have their menus on view, Asta's tasting menu features what's available in season and daily from local sources, making each day's menu full of potential surprises. The restaurant is a hidden gem in the Back Bay. It opened in 2013 under Chef Alex Crabb and co-owner Shish Parsigian. While Crabb trained in the style of French *haute cuisine*, the food at Asta is inspired

by his varied experiences: in Paris with Joel Robuchon; in Denmark at Noma Restaurant, famous for foraged and unusual ingredients; and at Dufresne's WD-50 in New York, showcasing molecular gastronomy. Prior to Asta, Crabb was sous chef for seven years at the distinguished L'Espalier. While many Boston restaurants now feature sharable, small plates, Asta has continued the tasting menu as a way of heralding the best of each season. Crabb believes this is good for the environment and a way to showcase foods that no longer

form part of our culinary landscape. A spring item that Crabb looks forward to showcasing—if available—is stinging nettles, a wild plant that's tricky to prepare but delicious and a superfood. In the coming months, vegetables in many forms will find their way to the tables at Asta. The history of food preparation around the world shows that protein sources often complement an array of vegetables. Gourmands won't find a 12-ounce steak or two-pound lobster at Asta. Rather, dining at Asta is an adventure that is also visual with the burst of

colors from the featured vegetables of the day. A popular place to sit is the front counter, where you can watch your dish being assembled in a lineup of colors and shapes before it arrives at your table. Enhancing the casual simplicity of Asta, many of the dishes are served on rustic pottery that Crabb has made himself at Somerville's Mudflats Studio. Mary Ann Brogan lives in the East Fens. Asta serves dinner from Tuesday through Saturday. Visit the website at astaboston.com.

'A Wrinkle in Time' at Wheelock Family Theatre

BY ALISON BARNET

I've always been an admirer of Wheelock Family Theatre's plays and have reviewed them for the *Fenway News* since 1983. But I've got to say I'm not crazy about its current show, *A Wrinkle in Time*, even though I usually like crazy plays. *A Wrinkle in Time* is the story of Meg (Beza Mekonnen) and her little brother Charles Wallace (Eviva Rose, a girl), whose father has been missing for two years. Friend Calvin (Miles Allen) joins Meg on her adventure. Strange neighbors Mrs. Whatsit (Jaronzie Harris), Mrs. Which (David Jiles Jr.) and Mrs. Who (Becca A. Lewis) lead them to other planets and, ultimately to Camazotz where they find their father (David Jiles, Jr.) How do they get there? I read Madeleine L'Engle's 1962 book, on which the play is based, which—witch—is stranger and somehow more compelling than the play. Quoting from the book: "oh, we don't travel at the speed of anything," Mrs. Whatsit explained earnestly. "We tesser. Or you might say, we wrinkle...Well, the fifth dimension's a tesseract. You add that to the other four dimensions and you can travel through space without having to go the long way around."

In the play, Mrs. Whatsit illustrates wrinkle by bringing the sides of her huge skirt together. Interesting that *A Wrinkle in Time* is being presented so soon after the eclipse, another wrinkle in time. If I were a director, which I'm certainly not, I would have put much stranger stuff on the sliding boards at the back of the stage and added more eerie special effects, such as darkening the stage during talk of the Black Thing and IT. Or would that be frightening for children? *Wrinkle* is only 80 minutes long and recommended for ages 8 and over. Typical of Wheelock, the cast is racially diverse and the young actors are quite young. Many are part of the ensemble, playing more than one role. Director Regine Vital has a wide-ranging background, having been involved with many theater groups. John Glore, who adapted the book for the stage, writes plays and does adaptations for young audiences and also has a long track record. Was it just me who had trouble hearing and had to rely on the boards of transcribed text? *A Wrinkle in Time* ends on May 11.

Opening Wheelock's next season, which begins in October, is *The SpongeBob Musical*.

Sounds just as strange as *Wrinkle*. I hope I like it. (See wheelockfamilytheatre.org.) Alison Barnett lives in the South End.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WHEELOCK FAMILY THEATRE

Taking in The View From Our Garden



BY IORY ALLISON

This spring marks the 34th year of tending to our beloved garden at the Fenway Victory Gardens. My snapshot shows the view over our fence, looking toward Boylston Street. Yes, for all that time we've been tucked between the pedestrian paths leading toward Fenway Ball Park, the great Boston museums, and the rushing traffic along Boylston Street. Because of this location people from all over the world walk by and wonder at all of our collective efforts to nurture nature in an oasis of greenery held in the grip of urban bustle. After the brief smile of spring, the daffodils and buttercups sprinkling

these lawns fade and the Parks Department mow the lawns, keeping the coarser wild flowers in check, all neat and tidy. Inside our garden, our buddy John Valvana has arranged a pretty bouquet of the various daffodils fringed with pink and white andromeda, a tribute to the renewed hope of spring that stirs all our hearts. Our garden neighbor Rick Malkasian in an over-the-fence chit chat remarks on his great good fortune in being a gardener in the Victory Gardens and how the experience of the last three decades has completely changed his life. "Before getting my garden here the only gardening I knew about was



mowing the lawn of our family home." Rick now has an exquisite Eden that he lovingly tends to in a style reminiscent of the composed nature of a Japanese temple garden. Gardening at the Victory Gardens has introduced us to a host of friendly neighbors to the extent that walking home after a rigorous gardening day takes the better part of an hour as we stop along the way to shmooze with fellow gardeners. Carmen Musto talks with pride about his Elizabeth magnolia that is beginning to burst forth with an elegant cloud of pale golden-yellow blossoms. "After it blooms, I'm going to prune back the top branches to keep it to a reasonable height." Susan Povak, her long auburn hair dancing about her, sighs with joy now released from winter's hold as spring renews her unflappable enthusiasms. "We are so blessed to have all of this!" She spreads her arms wide like a flower bud opening to the miracle of life returning. Jerry Cooper pauses, rake in hand, to wonder at the delicate chartreuse leaves already forming on the large tree dominating his garden, where a glorious magenta azalea smiles up at all who pass by. These friends and many others are like faithful daffodils returning year by year reminding us of the beautiful rainbow colors of nature and the sweet scent of life lived to the fullest through gardening. Iory Allison lives in the West Fens and tends his garden with his husband, Leo.

TimeOut MARKET

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May

CALENDAR

Sun, 5/5

Boston Playwrights’ Theatre produces the annual **BOSTON THEATER MARATHON**, an all-day marathon of new 10-minute plays. The plays are chosen from approximately 400 entries from New England playwrights; the 50 selected plays are produced by 50 New England theater companies, which donate their time and talent to the event. 12:10pm. 949 Commonwealth Ave.

Mon, 5/6

Join the Massachusetts Climate Action Network for an online information session

about the **MASS SAVE PROGRAM’S 2025-2027 DRAFT ENERGY EFFICIENCY PLAN**. Mass Save, comprising utility companies, offers services, info, rebates, and incentives to help residents and businesses save energy and money. The public is invited to comment on its next three-year plan. Register at shorturl.at/qBKP9. 1pm.

Wed, 5/8

THE FENWAY EFFECT: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE BOSTON RED SOX author David Krell knows the Sox phenomenon well, and he’ll give us a lively discussion of

the wider social impact of Boston’s beloved team. Central Branch, Boston Public Library, Copley Square. 6pm.

Sat, 5/11

BOSTON YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS recently opened the BYSO Youth Center for Music at 235 Huntington Ave. Their Opening Day event, 1-4pm ,will offer guided tours by BYSO student ambassadors, self-guided tours, instrument demonstrations, student performances, arts and craft activities and more.

Sat, 5/18

ZERO WASTE DAY DROP-OFF. Visit the Department of Public Works Facility at 400 Frontage Road and drop off tires, batteries, household materials, kitchen and laundry materials, paint, textiles, clothing, light bulbs, electronics, and paper shredding. Details at boston.gov/zero-waste-day. 8:30am–12pm.

Wed, 5/22

Dr. John Edward Hasse presents the Lowell Lecture on **THE MUSIC OF CIVIL RIGHTS, FROM STRANGE FRUIT TO THE ROOTS**. Music has always been central to the African American quest for freedom. The

Civil Rights struggle and its music provided some of America’s most powerful calls of hope, moral clarity, and equity. Central Branch, Boston Public Library, Copley Square. 6pm.

Sat, 5/25

Celebrate **STUDIOS WITHOUT WALLS’ 25TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION** of site-responsive sculptures at its opening reception. Performance by Karen Bray Performance Project at 2pm. Hosted by Brookline Department of Public Works, Parks and Open Space Division. Riverway Park, next to the Longwood T Station. 12–4pm. Rain date: Sun, 5/26. Through 9/2. studioswithoutwalls.org.

Wed, 5/29

Join author Daniel Dain and photographer Peter Vanderwarker as they talk about their new book, **A HISTORY OF BOSTON**. They will act as your tour guide through the history of the City and discuss what lessons can be learned for the challenges of a modern city today. Central Branch, Boston Public Library, Copley Square. 6pm.

ARTS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **MUSICIANS WANTED:** Fenway Porchfest is looking for local acoustic musicians to play in the free outdoor music festival happening around the Fenway on June 15. Apply now at fenwayporchfest.org/signup/band.
- **MISSION HILL ARTISTS AT THE MFA:** On Wednesday, June 19, the Mission Hill Artists Collective will, for the third year, celebrate Mission Hill artists as part of the Museum of Fine Arts’ Juneteenth celebration. Join them in the MFA atrium between 10am and 3pm to view the work of LeShonda Zene, Aminata Dakowa, Zahira Nurtruth, and Michelle Zene. Enjoy paintings, fabric creations, fluid art of handcrafted paper items, resin and more.

SEARCH FOR NEW HEAD OF SCHOOL AT ARTS ACADEMY PICKS UP STEAM

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Dr. Anne R. Clark was a pillar of stability at the Boston Arts Academy for more than 25 years, including 11 as head of the school. She left quietly last August after overseeing six years of planning for the new building, including the Dorchester swing space used during demolition and construction. Her BPS career, however, hasn’t ended. She has been named “principal on assignment and partnership liaison,” a job that entails “facilitating networking” and “fostering external partnerships for learning opportunities” (for example, the new program for free museum admissions to BPS students on Sundays). Tyrone Sutton, interim head of school at the BAA, has served since 2008 as both teacher and dean. He is also a candidate to replace Clark as permanent head of school. Two college administrators, Robert Chambers of MassArt and Krystal Banfield of Berklee, will co-chair the search for a new leader. Both also serve on the BAA board of trustees as chair and vice chair, respectively. Other committee members, appointed last December, include teachers and parents. The process kicked off publicly in April. Surveys and conversations with the BAA community—students, staff and families—took place in April to identify the priorities the committee should consider and thoughts on the school’s current challenges. The committee hopes to announce a final choice in June. *Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*

COMMUNITY meetings

MON, MAY 13 The BPDA hosts a virtual public meeting to discuss the recently filed **2024–2034 WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN (IMP)** at 6pm. The meeting will provide an overview of the IMP and its potential projects, and will discuss potential impacts and mitigation. Following a presentation the public can ask questions and make comments. Register for the meeting at bit.ly/3vomgMU. Email nick.carter@boston.gov with any questions. Note that this is a rescheduled meeting. The comment period for the IMP has been extended to Friday, May 31.



Paintings Push the Petals at Art in Bloom
The MFA’s annual *Art in Bloom* returned to the museum’s galleries on April 26. The event featured interpretive floral arrangements—created by both volunteers and professional floral designers—of 45 artworks from the MFA collection.

SENIOR EVENTS

- To attend, RSVP to Tracey or Sara at (617) 536-7154. For information, visit operationpeaceboston.org. Unless otherwise noted, events take place at the Peterborough Senior Center.
- Tue, May 7, 14, 21, & 28, 2pm: **MUSIC4WELLNESS** with Berklee College of Music
 - Wed, May 1 & 15, 12pm: **WATERCOLORS**
 - Wed, May 15, 1pm: **NAME THAT SONG TRIVIA**
 - Thu, May 9, 12pm: Presentation from **WOMEN’S BAR ASSOCIATION**
 - Thu, May 16, 12pm: **OPIOID EDUCATION WORKSHOP**

@ THE CENTER

- The Fenway Community Center is open six days a week. Visit fenwaycommunitycenter.org for details.
- Fri, May 17, 3:30pm: **ART WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN**
 - Fri, May 17, 5pm: **LOVE YOUR MENOPAUSE TALK AND DINNER**
 - Wed, May 22, 6pm: Center Cinema “**A MAN CALLED OVE**”
 - Fri, May 30, 7pm: **DEATH CAFE**
 - Thursday, 3pm: **SLOW FLOW YOGA**

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