



THE

Fenway News

HYPERLOCAL NEWS FOR THE FENWAY, AUDUBON CIRCLE, KENMORE SQUARE, UPPER BACK BAY, PRUDENTIAL, LONGWOOD, AND MISSION HILL SINCE 1974 • VOLUME 51 NUMBER 2 • JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 28, 2025

City Green-lights Contentious Mission Hill Development

BY ALISON PULTINAS

In a three-minute hearing on Jan. 16, the BPDA board approved the controversial real estate project for the Mission Hill property formerly owned by the Boston Redemptorists, acquired by Weston Associates more than 20 years ago. The board first had to “untangle” the proposal after voting in November to delay approval, putting the two-building plan on hold.

To move the process along and “build trust,” District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan convened an in-person meeting early in December at the Mission Main Community Center with the Impact Advisory Group (this reporter is a member). At the meeting, Attorney Joe Hanley, Sean Curran, and David McKay represented the owners. Durkan warned that only mitigation and community benefits could be discussed; the design and size of the project were non-negotiable.

Former City Councilor Kenzie Bok, now head of the Boston Housing Authority, also participated. In November, she requested four apartments be made available to

voucher holders in addition to the designated Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) units. McKay had rejected her suggestion.

However, at a January hearing, Planning Department Project Manager Ebony DaRosa announced in a presentation that all the IDP units would be equally accessible to voucher holders. This compromise creates the potential for some tenants to earn less than the standard 70 percent of area median income. However, only 33 of 218 units—15%—are income-restricted, not the 44 that would be required under the latest IDP policy.

There were odd discrepancies in the January presentation and in the board memo drafted by BPDA and Planning Department staff. Both 33 and 37 IDP units are mentioned more than once. A subsequent notation dated Jan. 23 on page 12 of the memo notes a “scrivener’s error.” DaRosa, in her final statement to the BPDA board, also used the number 37.

The final list of community benefits (which critics have called “extortion”) includes a \$75,000 contribution to the future Housing

Stabilization Fund under the Mayor’s Office of Housing. A \$1 million contribution from a Northeastern community benefit initially seeded the fund. According to the January board memo, Weston’s contribution will be targeted to three first-time-homebuyer households, prioritizing residents from Mission Main or the Alice Taylor developments.

Before the project reaches the Zoning Board of Appeals agenda, the IAG will meet with City staff to discuss the final construction management agreement and what was initially described as a “Good Neighbor Agreement.” Also, Harvard’s Chan School of Public Health has announced its intention to move from 90 Smith St.—the original parochial school. Bookended by the now vacant lots at 80 and 100—Weston Associates promises to hold a community meeting to discuss future leases negotiated with other institutions or parties.

Boston Globe reporter Esmey Jimenez interviewed some IAG members in December for an article that raised questions with readers; comments posted in response to the article revealed misunderstandings that still resonate. Why did the same developers not go forward with the project approved 20 years ago? Who is to blame? If the Mission Church

complex was a City landmark, as approved in 2005, what has been the role of the Landmarks Commission? And City Hall chose to accept Weston’s 2022 application as a Notice of Project Change—would that ever happen again with a project delayed 20 years?

At the January hearing, Priscilla Rojas, chair of the BPDA board, spoke of the importance of the Mission Hill neighborhood to the city. The board’s focus is economic growth, especially related to the Longwood medical area. This is not necessarily the priority in neighborhoods. However, her acknowledgement of the negotiations and politics involved in bringing the project to a board vote was appreciated (several elected officials said the project was initially scheduled for a vote last August but got pulled off the agenda at the last minute).

A draft construction management agreement shared with the IAG after the December meeting with Councilor Durkan includes promises of no blasting; vibration monitoring; and other protections for nearby residents. These conditions take on added importance, given the proximity of Mission Church to the construction sites.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

Just One Task Left for Gate Rehab

PHOTO: U.S. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



The Johnson Gate around 1910. The stone basins originally held water for horses.

In early January the Fenway Civic Association announced completion of masonry repairs at the Johnson Memorial Gate at the top of Westland Avenue in the East Fens.

The work addressed cracks in masonry, rusted embedded metal, and damaged bench balustrades. It also installed decorative bollards to protect repaired areas where blunt force had damaged corners of the monument’s tall piers.

Conservators from Folan Waterproofing conducted the repairs last fall, following review and approval by the Parks Department, Landmarks Commission, and the Boston Art Commission. The Emerald Necklace Conservancy served as fiscal agent for a grant from the George B. Henderson Foundation, with additional funds provided by the Boston Planning Department.

The Gate was built in 1905 from a design by Guy Lowell, architect for the original Museum of Fine Arts building and for the Fensgate building at 73 Hemenway Street [far right in the photo].

Bequeathed to the City in

1902 by Ellen Cheney Johnson in honor of her late husband, the gate comprises two tall marble piers, balustrades, benches, and troughs that once supplied water to horses. Fenway Civic has promoted the need for repairs since 2013, advocacy that has led to multiple repairs and Community Preservation Act funding.

Completion of the repairs finalizes the association’s multiyear effort to preserve the memorial, save for one remaining improvement—preserving decorative bronze

lion heads embedded in the pillars (inset photo). “We hope to repair some minor damage to these components

and take some time to celebrate the park in 2025,” stated Marie Fukuda, co-chair of FCA’s Parks and Open Space Committee.

—KELSEY BRUUN

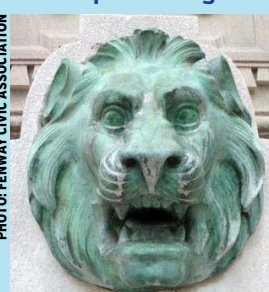


PHOTO: FENWAY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

AFTER OIL SPILL, THEN REHAB, MOST WATERFOWL RETURN TO MUDDY RIVER

The Town of Brookline has issued periodic reports on the Leverett Pond oil spill that contaminated sections of the Muddy River on Dec. 8. On brooklinema.gov the Town reports that “on Friday, January 3, one month after the Muddy River fuel spill, 37 ducks and geese, rescued from the incident, were released by New England Wildlife near

Netherlands Road in Brookline.”

Help with the release came from the EPA, MassDEP, Brookline park rangers and Department of Public Works staff, Brookline Animal Control, Boston park rangers, and the state’s Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Town reports that MassDEP is leading remediation and an investigation into the source of

WATERFOWL ON PAGE 2 >

ENC WILL PRUNE 900 TREES IN THE FENS



Taking advantage of winter dormancy, Bartlett Tree Experts have begun pruning more than 900 trees in the Back Bay Fens and Charlesgate. Over a seven-year cycle, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy systematically works through the 1,100 acres of the Olmsted Parks, inspecting and pruning all trees with an eye toward improving their health and removing potential hazards, such as dead branches. “Urban trees not only keep our parks beautiful and filled with wildlife, but they also keep our communities cool and healthy by purifying air and removing toxins,” says Jack Schliefer, field operations manager for the ENC. Schliefer points out that each year of a tree’s growth significantly increases the volume of benefits it delivers. The ENC sees the pruning as an investment in the trees’ “wellbeing and community health for decades to come.” The tree-pruning work should wrap up by late March 2025.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE EMERALD NECKLACE CONSERVANCY

> WATERFOWL FROM PAGE 1
the oil, which the department believes involved 50,000 gallons of No. 2 heating oil. The agency has contracted with Clean Harbors, a specialist in spill response, and will oversee the cleanup with Town support. MassDEP will document findings on its web portal for pollution releases (visit tinyurl.com/4x7xy2ux).

The Town also reports that the EPA will reimburse MassDEP for

the cleanup—although whether that policy will change under the Trump administration remains unclear. According to the Town, the response team captured 28 geese, 11 mallards, four black ducks, and one wood duck in need of treatment. Veterinary hospitals in Weymouth and Barnstable stabilized, decontaminated, and treated all 44 birds.

How the public can help:

- MassDEP believes it has identified and treated all affected wildlife, and both the Town and the State strongly discourage attempts to rescue additional wildlife that residents may spot. Without proper training, freelance rescuers can inadvertently cause more harm to wildlife, hinder recovery, or expose themselves to contaminants. If you see wildlife in distress, notify either

Brookline Animal Control (617-730-2222) or MassWildlife (508-389-6300). They will refer the issue to licensed rehabilitators or authorized veterinarians.

- If you spot water-quality or wildlife issues along the Muddy River, report them to MassDEP's 24-hour hotline, at 888-304-1133, or the National Response Center (NRC) at 1-800-424-8802.

—CAROL LASKY & STEVE WOLF

BIRD FLU MAY HAVE REACHED THE BACK BAY FENS

Thanks to a timely tip from West Fens resident Stan Everett, The Fenway News was able to obtain a statement from the office of Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston, on the possibility of bird flu in Back Bay Fens waterfowl:

“The Boston Public Health Commission works with the State of Massachusetts to track Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), or bird flu. HPAI has been found in wild bird populations in Massachusetts since 2022 and has recently been the suspected cause of deaths among wild birds in Eastern Massachusetts.”

According to a Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife web page, updated on Jan. 23, “Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza has been detected in domestic and wild birds in Massachusetts. In January 2025, an outbreak of HPAI was suspected to be the cause of several recent cases of deceased Canada geese, swans, and other birds in Plymouth. Preliminary positive cases are being reported at other locations in Massachusetts and in the Northeast region. Officials are responding to collect, test, and safely dispose of dead

birds.... The virus is shed from infected birds through bodily fluids, most commonly saliva, mucous, and feces. Inhaling those shed particles or contacting them and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth can allow the virus to pass to humans.”

On Saturday, Jan. 25, signs (photo) went up along the Emerald Necklace to remind people not to interact with birds in the park.



The Public Health Commission statement advises: “If individuals see multiple sick or deceased birds at a single location, they should report them at mass.gov/reportbirds to assist with prompt removal and diagnosis. HPAI rarely infects humans; humans who have prolonged close contact with sick or dead birds are the most at risk of becoming infected. People and pets should avoid interacting with dead or sick birds and should not feed, touch, or remove them from parks. Boston residents with questions or concerns about HPAI can call 3-1-1 to be connected with appropriate Parks and Recreation, Animal Control, and Health Commission representatives.”

The BPHC posts updates on its social media @healthyboston / Boston Public Health Commission. A recent post notes that “Risk of human infection is currently low.”

—LESLIE POND

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, February 28.**

> DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS <
The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is **Friday, February 21.**

Let's Hear It for Snow Clearance!



A big thank-you to all the folks responsible for ensuring that sidewalks on Agassiz Road (above) and Boylston Street (left), and other walkways in the Back Bay Fens parks, were cleared of snow soon after the storm that ended on Monday, Jan. 20. (The sidewalk on the north side of Agassiz Rd. remained a bit slippery, though.) We don't know who you are, but we appreciate being able to walk safely and truly enjoy the winter wonderland, like the trees alongside the Victory Gardens shown below.



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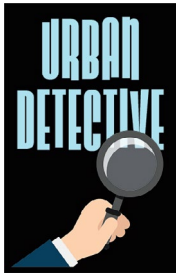
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How The Longest U.S. Highway Became Boston's Automile

BY ED BALLO

Passing through Kenmore Square, you may have scratched your head at the green highway sign near the MBTA bus shelter that reads “U.S. Route 20, Newport, Oregon 3,365 miles.” While Route 20 may not share the same fame as say, Route 66 or the Pacific Coast Highway, 20 is in fact the longest



U.S. Route in the United States! Prior to creation of the U.S. Route System in 1926, there was a first attempt at numbering long-distance roads in New England and New York. This short-lived system (1922 to 1926) was designated as the New England Interstate Route System. Route 20 was New England Route 5 (or NE 5). In 1927, the U.S. system took over the entirety of NE-5, and U.S. 20 was born. For point of reference, this system predates the inception of the Interstate Highway System by 30 years. Unlike interstate highways, U.S. Routes did not have uniform design standards and were maintained and improved by their state and local governments. Like the later interstates, U.S. Routes with even numbers run essentially east to west (think Route 66), while the odd numbers run north to south (think Route 1). Two of the longest U.S. Routes, 6 and 20, as well as the longest interstate highway, I-90, begin in our humble Bay State. While Route 20 is the longest U.S. Route in the country, Route 6 is the longest contiguous road, as 20 loses its U.S. number designation passing through Yellowstone National Park and the Route 6 designation stops at the California state line!

This brings us to the first mile of Route 20 on Commonwealth Avenue, which became Boston's first “Automile.” At the beginning of the 20th century, showrooms, garages, and other auto-related businesses began to spring up on the then-vacant land. By 1929, there were 117 such businesses on this stretch of roadway. The architecture of this part of Commonwealth Avenue today reflects its former use, with wide ground-floor bays, which once housed automobile showrooms and service and repair facilities.

In the Boston area, the name that became synonymous with the auto trade is Fuller. Alvan Tufts Fuller was a descendant of English Puritan stock and distantly related to Benjamin Franklin. He was born



A section of Route 20 in Iowa.



Noyes Buick showroom at 858 Comm. Ave. in 1927. It's now the Stone Gallery in B.U.'s College of Fine Arts.

in Charlestown in 1878 to working-class parents. Moving to Malden, Alvan first worked in a rubber factory and repaired bicycles on the side (speaking of rubber factories: Malden is also the home of the iconic Chuck Taylor high-top!). He promoted his bicycle business through racing and won

trophies, which he would later sell to launch his automobile business. He also engaged in a practice—shared by other bicycle shops in the area—of holding an open house on Washington's Birthday. He would continue this tradition once he entered the auto business and is generally credited with launching this



Route 20 East sign in Newport, Oregon.

nationwide tradition. In 1920, he was dubbed the world's most successful car dealer!

Concurrent with his burgeoning automobile empire, Fuller began to set his sights on political offices. In 1912, he was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives and in 1916, he won a seat in the U.S. House. In 1920, he became lieutenant governor and then governor in 1924, winning against the “colorful” James Michael Curley. Unfortunately, his refusal to grant clemency in the Sacco and Vanzetti case—despite nearly worldwide pleas to do so—would end up sully his political reputation, leading to his being dropped from future political tickets.

Finally, Fuller was a philanthropist and an art collector. His philanthropy included art, hospitals, education, religion, and social services. The Fuller Foundation is still active in Greater Boston. The National Gallery of Art and our Museum of Fine Arts have both been beneficiaries of works that Fuller once owned, such as paintings by Rembrandt, Turner, Sargent, Renoir, and Monet.

Two questions related to Fuller may have kept you awake at night:

1. Packard's Corner is called so because of a stable on the site once owned by a John Packard, and the Packard dealership that Alvan Fuller opened there in 1909.
2. Peter Fuller, a name that most of us old-timers remember, was Alvan's youngest son!

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.

ZBA Approves 2 Charlesgate Community Benefits

The Zoning Board of Appeals approved community benefits for the 2 Charlesgate West project on Jan. 14. The 275-foot-tall building will replace a vacant low-rise building and feature 400 furnished residential units—68 of them income-restricted—2,400 square feet of retail along Ipswich Street, and parking for 200 bikes.



The BPDA board approved the project in July despite opposition from residents and parks advocates worried about the project's scale, traffic impacts, and potential precedent for circumventing City rules protecting parks and open space from oversized development projects.

- ZBA approval puts the final seal on \$3.2 million worth of community benefits promised by the developer:
- Contribution to fund for Boston Parks improvements: \$500,000
 - Contribution to the state Department of Conservation & Recreation for tree care in the Back Bay Fens: \$200,000

- “Grand Public Stair” connecting Boylston and Ipswich streets: \$850,000
- Public elevator and elevator lobby: \$440,000
- Accessible bathroom open to park visitors: \$50,000
- Two year-round bike-share stations: \$185,000
- Contribution to the Fenway CDC to support affordable housing in the Fenway (specifically on Queensberry Street): \$300,000
- Fenway infrastructure improvements as directed by the Boston Transportation Department: \$50,000
- Contribution to the fund to Boston Parks for tree grates on Ipswich Street: \$30,000
- Contribution to Friends of the Public Garden for lighting infrastructure near the Leif Erikson statue on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall: \$40,000
- Commitment to provide a 1,000 square foot retail space at a reduced rent, targeting local minority- and women-owned business enterprises
- Commitment to pursue the design, permitting, and installation of up to two static wayfinding signs and to have any generated revenue directed to Boston Parks

The list reveals the ongoing confusion between development mitigation and development benefits. Most of the measures on this list, described as benefits, will serve the future tenants of 2 Charlesgate just

as much—if not more—than current residents.

2 Charlesgate began life as a project of UK-based Scape, which

develops private student housing, but the company created a new division, Morro, to handle compact urban housing properties. It already owns “The Bon” at 1260 Boylston Street.

—KELSEY BRUUN & STEVE WOLF

REMINDER: DON'T FEED THE GEESE!



Now there's a new reason not to feed the invasive Canada geese that have established themselves in the Back Bay Fens over the last three decades. As both state and city officials made clear at the end of January (see story on page 2), bird flu has arrived in eastern Massachusetts, and the geese could be carrying it. Keeping yourself and your pets away from the birds is a simple but critical way to reduce the possibility of contracting the virus. It has infected humans and other animals, although only in a few cases, but it can travel via droppings—and if Fenway residents know anything about the geese it's that they produce enormous volumes of droppings. Someone has regularly poured mounds of cracked corn in front of 11-15 Park Drive, bringing geese close to the heavily traveled path between Peterborough and Boylston streets. If you happen to know the person doing this, please ask them to stop.

City Updates Problem Properties List



BY ALISON PULTINAS

Following up on our December story in January, the Mayor's Office released a new citywide list of "Problem Properties." Of the 14 properties identified as problems, three are in Mission Hill and none in the Fenway. Dorchester counts seven, and Mattapan, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and the South End have one each. A South End property, a condo at 231 West Newton St., was the focus of a Jan. 16 article in the *Boston Globe* that ran under the headline "In a fancy South End building, an indoor Mass and Cass."

Two of the three Mission Hill properties are on Pontiac Street: a long-vacant single-story commercial building behind 1542 Tremont St. and a three-family at 59 Pontiac St. that is under renovation. The third Mission Hill building, 18 Eldora St. at the corner of Sunset Street (pictured), is a large single-family house owned by Marc A. Gordon. In disrepair, it has been unoccupied since a fire in 2010.

Gordon owes more than eight years of property taxes and, according to the City's Collecting Division, the City's law department is considering collection options. Gordon had

a home-improvement contractor's license, but the renovation work has moved at a snail's pace. The neighbors next door said, "we've given up and have planted a hedge at the border" of their property.

Updates on other real estate mentioned in the December story:

- Aforeclosure auction for the vacant former Landmark at Longwood assisted-living facility at 63 Parker Hill Ave. is scheduled to take place at 11am on Feb. 7. The mortgaged property will be sold "as-is," with a deposit of \$100,000 required, according to a legal advertisement in the *Boston Herald*.
- The long-paused demolition at 812-814 Huntington Ave. resumed in January, although no permits have been issued for the lab project slated to replace it, approved in 2022.
- At 36 The Fenway, unpaid real estate taxes have reached more than \$65,000. This vacant rowhouse sits next door to 38 The Fenway, its twin, where Mark Ehrman and Chee Kwong have proposed a controversial multimillion-dollar renovation (see our story in the November *Fenway News*).

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

WALKING ON (THIN?) ICE



People walked on the Muddy River, iced over in the January cold snap, near Roberto Clemente Field.

NEWSLINES

Skanska Filing Signals Start of Article 80 for Longwood Place

On Jan. 21, developer Skanska filed a letter of intent (LOI) with the Boston Planning Department for the first phase of construction on Longwood Place. Readers will remember that Skanska bought the low-rise Simmons University residential campus between Brookline Avenue and Pilgrim Road with a plan to redevelop it much more densely as a mixed-use project with approximately 1.7 million square feet of offices, labs, housing, and public amenities. In 2023—almost two years to the day before the LOI filing—the BPDA made the site a planned development area, which loosens City restrictions on development. Parks advocates and neighborhood groups strongly opposed that designation because of shadow impacts on nearby Olmsted parks and increased traffic. Phase 1 of the project would include site infrastructure, a series of plazas and paths designed to enhance the project and, in Skanska's telling, the neighborhood around it, and three of five proposed buildings. Although the LOI does not spell this out, based on a presentation Skanska released in December 2022, Phase 1 appears to involve three buildings ranging in height from 210 to 320 feet. Under the Article 80 process, Skanska will next file a preliminary plan with firm details about proposed uses, heights, and massing. Stay tuned.

New Cancer Hospital Continues City Reviews

Dana Farber's new cancer hospital at 1 Joslin Place, developed jointly with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, faces another round of public review and critique with the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) and the Parks Department. Questions raised at the last BCDC subcommittee meeting focused on the extensive set of sky bridges meant to connect the new building with existing BIDMC facilities on Pilgrim Road. A future subcommittee meeting will focus on impacts on Joslin Park and a potential redesign of the landscape. A public task force meeting is scheduled for Feb. 10. The 1,000-plus page draft project impact report filed in mid-January has a March 3 deadline for comments.

Community Preservation Committee Votes on Proposals Feb. 10

Boston's Community Preservation Committee has scheduled its final vote on 2025 applications for Feb. 10 at 6pm. Local affordable housing projects submitted include Fenway CDC's 112 Queensberry development and the Mission Hill Pathway Parker/Terrace project. Historic preservation applications include second phase of masonry repair for Ruggles Baptist Church in Audubon Circle and renovation work at the Mission Church rectory to accommodate expansion of the Mission Grammar School in Mission Hill.

Reconstruction of Fens Pathways Could Start This Summer

On Jan. 28, Boston Landmarks commissioners got their first look at plans prepared by landscape architect Kyle Zick for the Back Bay Fens Pathways project. Boston Parks project manager Lauren Bryant announced at the hearing that construction is expected to start this coming summer or early fall.

Huntington to Lose 4 Dead Trees...and Maybe Some Living Ones

In mid-January residents noticed orange dots spray-painted on the trunks of four street trees in front of the Museum of Fine Arts, marking them for removal. Boston Parks responded to an inquiry about their fate stating that "the four large oaks all have a diameter at breast height of 17 to 19 inches, two are labeled dead already because of hypoxylon cankers, the others are considered 75 to 90 percent dead, so no public hearing with the City's tree warden is required." A few blocks down the street, Northeastern University has requested permission to remove 11 smaller trees so it can install an underground steam line at 400 Huntington on the block between the Cabot Center and Richards Hall. The City's tree warden will hold a remote public hearing at 10am on Feb. 6. Learn more or join the hearing via boston.gov/public-notices/16275006. Submit comments by email to trees@boston.gov, putting "Huntington Ave. Tree Hearing" in the subject line).

Sides Agree to Postpone Meeting in Fernandes Anderson Case

The *Boston Herald* reports a delay in the next phase of the corruption case against District 7 City Councilor Tania Fernandes Anderson. An information-sharing meeting, originally set for Jan. 29, will now take place March 5 after both sides agreed that the volume of files under review would require more time to review. The court-ordered meeting will be virtual and will focus on next steps and sharing information.

Fenway CDC to Develop Affordable Housing on Beacon Hill

Fenway CDC won the designation to redevelop 27-29 Hancock St. on Beacon Hill into 15 affordable homeownership units. In an article in the *Beacon Hill Times*, the CDC's executive director Steven Farrell thanked the community for its input and city officials for their support, emphasizing the project's transformative impact. The development marks a milestone in creating income-restricted housing, supported in part by \$1 million in federal funding.

'Tis the Season for Local Honors and Awards

- The Massachusetts School Administrators' Association recently named Fenway High School's **Maya Smith** "Assistant Principal of the Year." Boston Public Schools' Superintendent Mary Skipper and the Boston School Committee congratulated Smith and her dedication to her students.
- Berklee alumni and faculty racked up recognition across many of the major categories for the Grammy Awards, scheduled to take place on Sunday, Feb. 2. **Alissia Benveniste** (class of 2014) was nominated for Producer of the Year, Non-Classical; **Amy Allen** ('15), received a nomination in the category Songwriter of the Year, Non-Classical for her work on several hit pop songs, including Sabrina Carpenter's "Please Please Please" and "Espresso," Tate McRae's "run for the hills," and Olivia Rodrigo's "scared of my guitar," among others. Berklee Dean **Rodney Alejandro** earned a nomination in the category of Best Regional Roots Music Album for his work on *25 Back to My Roots*; **Lalah Hathaway** ('90) received two nominations including Best R&B Album for *Vantablack*; **esperanza spalding** ('05) was nominated for Best Jazz Vocal Album; **Miguel Zenón** ('98) earned a nomination for *Golden City* in the category of Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album; and **Arooj Aftab** ('10), another returning nominee, received a nod for Best Alternative Jazz Album.

CORRECTIONS

- In our January issue, *The Fenway News* published a photo of a celebration of the Northeastern University City and Community Engagement Team. The caption indicated that the event was hosted by Fenway Civic Association. However, it was hosted by Fenway

Cares. We apologize for this error.

- Also in the January issue, *The Fenway News* published a photo of artist Elena Dodd under a headline that incorrectly spelled her last name as "Todd." We apologize for the error, which has been updated in the issue's online version.

'BERDO' NUDGES APARTMENT BUILDINGS TOWARD ZERO CARBON BY 2050

BY MARY ANN BROGAN

Boston's Building Emission Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) establishes requirements for large existing buildings in Boston to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over time. The City aims to attain zero carbon emissions by 2050. Seventy percent of such emissions come from fossil fuels that heat, cool, and power our buildings. BERDO's goal to reduce fossil fuel emissions will help mitigate the effects of climate change, improve indoor and outdoor air quality, increase green jobs, and enhance environmental justice.

Established in 2021, BERDO stipulates that beginning this year, owners of residential buildings with more than 15 residential units report annual energy and water usage. It also contains requirements for non-

residential properties, such as schools and hospitals.

What does BERDO mean for people who rent their apartments? Starting this year, energy use and reduction will be measured and recorded annually using a measuring unit called carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). All greenhouse gas emissions—such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide—are figured into this measurement, which reflects the creation and transmission of energy by a building and represents a standard way to measure carbon impact.

As a city dweller, one thing you can do to cut your own emissions is to switch your electricity supply to partially or fully renewable sources. Boston operates a municipal aggregation program, which means that the City gets lower rates by purchasing electricity in bulk on behalf of residents. The

program automatically enrolls you at the "standard-default" level, with 42 percent of electricity coming from renewable sources. You can opt out of the default with no penalty and choose "optional basic," which saves you 4 percent on cost but drops your renewable power to the state's 27 percent minimum. But you can also opt in to fully renewable energy by choosing "Green100." That costs 16 percent more, but your electric bill won't jump that much because roughly half of it reflects Eversource's charge for delivering energy. Find out more or sign up at www.boston.gov/departments/environment/community-choice-electricity, where you can also schedule a 15-minute explanatory meeting.

There are other things you can do

to reduce your carbon footprint. Monitor water use and reduce it if possible. Choose LED bulbs for your apartment; you may be eligible for free bulbs from Mass Save if you qualify for its income-eligibility program. Weather-strip or caulk your windows to reduce heat loss. Blinds with reflective finishes, honeycomb shades or well-hung drapes can also stabilize a room's temperature.

Ask your building manager or landlord how your building is doing as part of the BERDO program. Knowing that residents are aware of the program may spur action toward a more environmentally sensitive and comfortable home environment.

Mary Ann Brogan lives in the East Fens.

Samuels Floats New Plan for Key West Fens Corner



A rendering of 69 Kilmarnock as seen from the southeast corner of the intersection.

BY STEVE WOLF

Piggybacking on a previous approval from the BPDA, Samuels & Associates hopes to build a dual-purpose project at the northwest corner of Kilmarnock and Queensberry streets, currently a parking lot and the one-story building that once housed the Linwood Grill and, later, Church and Tapestry. At a community meeting held remotely on Jan. 23, the firm provided an early public look at the plan: 89 apartments, some of them income-restricted, plus housing for families of patients being treated at Children's Hospital.

Cabot, Cabot & Forbes secured BPDA approval for an eight-story building on the site as part of the Idyl Apartments development, recently opened across Kilmarnock Street. (Samuels bought the parcel after CCF decided not to include it in the larger project across the street). At the meeting, Samuels staff noted that the new proposal hews closely to the originally approved height and density. They also underscored some important differences, such as the patient-family housing. The new plan includes 89 apartments (compared to the 77 previously approved) and increases the number of onsite affordable units to eight. Rather than create significant onsite affordability, Cabot, Cabot & Forbes met most of its affordability requirements with a \$3 million payment that helped the Fenway CDC preserve 97 affordable apartments at the Newcastle-Saranac development in the South End.

Other notable changes: the new plan will meet higher sustainability targets, starting with use of the Passive House standard, a rigorous program that cuts heating and cooling needs. Combining Passive House with the LEED Gold standard will allow the building to operate without any fossil fuels. Samuels also plans to eliminate parking within the building, arguing that data from its nearby garages show declining demand for parking.

Visually, the building will take design cues from its context. "We're not trying to make a statement with this," project architect David Halinski FAIA, a principal at PCA Architects, told the meeting. "To the greatest extent possible we're really trying to fit in with our neighbors." The structure would rise to six stories, but it would step up to eight stories several feet in from the Queensberry facade. The two uses on the site would operate independently, with the apartments' entrance on Queensberry and an entrance for the patient-family component on Kilmarnock. The ground-floor lobby there would also house services run by Children's for patient families.

Questions and comments from roughly 30 people at the meeting focused largely on traffic—trip generation (essentially the same as previously projected, according to Samuels); location of loading and drop-off zones; and the configuration of the alley between the development and Fensviews Condominiums to its north.

Comments are due soon—by Feb. 7. Send them to Project Manager Ebony DaRosa at ebony.darosa@boston.gov. View a recording of the meeting and other project documents at tinyurl.com/eh2xr4.

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.

@ THE CENTER

The Fenway Community Center is open six days a week. Visit fenwaycommunitycenter.org for details.

- Wed, Feb 12, 6pm: **BREAK UP BALLADS KARAOKE NIGHT**
- Fri, Feb 21, 12:30pm to 2:30pm: **SENIOR CHARLIECARD SIGN-UPS with Senator Will Brownsberger's office**
- Wed, Feb 26, 6pm to 8pm: **FILM SCREENING: THE SIX TRIPLE EIGHT**

COMMUNITY

meetings

TUE, FEBRUARY 4 The Fenway CDC hosts a **55 BUS COALITION MEETING**. 6pm to 7pm, Fenway Community Center, 1282 Boylston St. Contact Jamie Culbertson at jculbertson@fenwaycdc.org with any questions.

THU, FEBRUARY 6 TO APRIL 10 Vita offers **FREE TAX PREPARATION**. This is both drop off and remote tax assistance for individuals with a household income of \$70,000 or less. Every Thursday during tax season at the BPL's Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Center. 10am - 7pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Learn more at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6728f57f54a602ae2c37d1a2.

MON, FEBRUARY 10 1 Join the Boston Planning Department for a joint Task Force and Public Meeting for the proposed **1 JOSLIN PLACE** for Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Dana Farber Cancer Institute, located in the Longwood Medical Area neighborhood of Boston. 6pm to 8pm. Register for the meeting at bit.ly/1JoslInTF_Pub. Contact Tyler Ross at tyler.c.ross@boston.gov with any questions.

WED, FEBRUARY 10 1 Join the Boston Planning Department for a joint Task Force and Public Meeting to discuss the Northeastern University Institutional Master Plan. 6pm to 8pm. Register for the meeting at bit.ly/40Ulv14. Contact Quinn

LETTERS

Kudos for Great Photos in the January Issue

TO THE FENWAY NEWS EDITOR:

Kudos to Fenway News photographers Leslie Pond and Ryan Hatcher whose lovely and sensitive photos (of icy sidewalks and the oil spill, respectively) appeared in the January issue of *The Fenway News*.

HELEN COX
RESIDENT OF THE FENWAY
SINCE 1958

Valcich at quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov with any questions.

THU, FEBRUARY 13 Join your neighbors for the February meeting of **FENWAY CDC'S ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**, a group of residents interested in advocating together for affordable housing and other neighborhood needs. Dinner will be provided. Contact Iruizsanchez@fenwaycdc.org for more information. 6pm to 7:30pm, Fenway Community Center, 1282 Boylston St.

SENIOR EVENTS

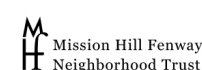
For more information, view the calendar at operationpeaceboston.org or drop by between 11am to 3pm for a paper calendar. Call 617 536-7154 to get added to the mailing list.

- Tue, Feb. 4 at 12pm: **CREATE BLACK HISTORY COLLAGES** with Sam Greene, Community Engagement Coordinator
- Tue, Feb. 4, 11, 18, & 25 from 2pm to 3pm: **MUSIC4WELLNESS** with Berklee College of Music
- Wed, Feb. 5, 12, 19, & 26 at 12pm: **ORAL HISTORY** with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly and Northeastern Students
- Wed, Feb. 5, 12, 19, & 26 at 1pm: **TECH CAFE** with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly
- Thu, Feb. 6 at 11:30am: **COFFEE AND CONVERSATION** with Stan Everett, featuring Emerald Necklace & Muddy River Trivia
- Thu, Feb. 13 at 12pm: **VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY** please bring a dish, dessert or a drink to share!
- Thu, Feb. 20 at 12pm: **INFORMATION SESSION ON MASS SAVE**
- Thu, February 27 at 12pm: **CONVERSATION ON SCAMS AND SAFETY** with Officer Elizabeth Evans

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 March 31, 2025. Please email HELLO@MISSIONHILLFENWAYNT.ORG with any questions.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

Health care workers gathered at Brigham & Women’s Hospital on Jan. 7 to protest the attacks on civilians and healthcare infrastructure in Gaza. The *Globe* estimated the number of protesters at 50. **Tatte, well represented in our coverage area, let roughly 60 employees go after the bakery chain received notice of paperwork discrepancies from the IRS. Tatte said in a statement that it offered the employees**



a chance to meet with immigration attorneys at company expense. On Jan. 13, a federal judge sentenced a former Northeastern employee to a year and a day in prison, plus supervised release, for a bomb hoax. In September 2022, the former employee reported being injured by an explosive device in a university lab, which triggered an evacuation of parts of the campus. A subsequent investigation revealed there was no device and led to his prosecution. **Boston Globe Media purchased Boston**

Magazine, which ICYMI readers know operates out of historic Horticulture Hall on Mass. Ave. Crunching federal data, *Globe* reporter Diti Kohli found that administrative staff grew faster than teaching staff at 20 Massachusetts colleges, 2018-2022. Northeastern topped the list with 500 new administrators, but the proportion of administrators to teachers rose less dramatically than that figure suggests, from 57% more administrators than teachers to 64% more. [A university spokesperson pointed out that Northeastern has absorbed several smaller schools as it builds out a global network of campuses, including Mills College in California and Marymount College in New York, and that graduate student enrollment grew by 83% over a ten-year period that included the study period.] Wentworth posted almost identical figures—57% and 65%—and BU’s imbalance grew more quickly, from 78% to 87%. **The Northeastern women’s ice hockey team beat BU for its third Beanpot title in a row (and 20th overall) before a record crowd of 13,279 fans at TD Garden. We’ll see if the men’s team can match them when it takes place early this month.** MedMen has shut its dispensary on Brookline Ave. Although ICYMI *could* have bought more product there, the closure more likely reflects the fact that the California-based chain filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last spring.

Obituaries for filmmaker David Lynch—known for his films *Blue Velvet* and *Mulholland Drive* and his 1990 appointment-television hit *Twin Peaks*—revealed that he attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in the mid-1960s.

Obituaries for filmmaker David Lynch—known for his films *Blue Velvet* and *Mulholland Drive* and his 1990 appointment-television hit *Twin Peaks*—revealed that he attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in the mid-1960s.

MLK Celebration Ties Sermon’s ‘Midnight’ to Dark Current Events



PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS

Archivist Ford Curran talks with visitors in the MLK Reading Room.

BY ALISON PULTINAS

On Jan. 25, the Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground co-hosted Boston University’s Martin Luther King celebration with the City of Boston.

Every year, Boston’s Age Strong Commission partners with BU’s Government & Community Affairs office to bring residents to campus for this event. The packed hall heard eloquent speakers, including Melissa Gilliam, president of the university, and Segun Idowu of Mayor Wu’s cabinet. Idowu, like King, attended Morehouse College in Atlanta. King later attended BU’s School of Theology. Nicolaus Bates, director of the Thurman Center, opened the program with Nikki Giovanni’s poem “In the Spirit of Martin: the Prince of Peace.”

The theme for this year’s celebration was “The Darkness of Midnight,” drawn from “A Knock at Midnight,” the title of one of King’s early sermons. Author Cole Arthur Riley delivered the event’s keynote; like other participants, she subtly connected the allegorical theme to the political changes coming from Washington just days earlier. Quoting from her own writing, *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human*, Arthur Riley spoke of the midnight in our interior world and the spiritual and moral imperative to know ourselves.

Following the celebration, Mugar Library staff conducted tours of the permanent exhibition in the MLK Reading Room on the third floor.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.



NONPROFIT LAW CLINIC

SPONSORED BY NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

The Office of City and Community Engagement, in partnership with the School of Law, is running a Nonprofit Law Clinic focused on supporting community-based and social change organizations who are interested in filing for 501(c)(3) status. The goal of this clinic is to provide people with education, expertise, legal support, and funding for this filing process.



This clinic will consist of several parts between January and April 2025, such as:

- an information session to learn more about 501(c)(3) status, the benefits, and who qualifies,
- legal support for preparing the documentation needed to file,
- and hands on support through the filing process.

Complete the form on the QR code by February 10th.



New Athletic Complex At Wentworth Approaches Finish Line, But Opening Date Remains Uncertain

PHOTO: WENTWORTH LIVE CAM



Wentworth Institute of Technology has nearly completed construction of its new athletic complex at 600 Parker St., but it hasn't yet announced an opening date. Johanna Sena, Wentworth's director of community and government relations, said that there are "still a lot of details pending completion. We are still aiming for Spring 2025" as an opening date. At press time, final City approval of a 244-car parking garage beneath the soccer field awaited the results of a hearing before the Inspectional Services Department's Committee on Licenses for flammable storage and garages.

CRWA NEEDS YOUR HELP WITH RESILIENCE SURVEY

Emily Norton, executive director of the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA), spoke to the members of the Ward 4 Democratic Committee on Jan. 21. She presented an overview of CRWA's work, including ongoing stewardship of the Muddy River and its currently unfunded ecological restoration work.

Emphasizing citizen action, Norton encouraged all Bostonians to fill out CRWA's Community-Based Flood Resilience and Green Infrastructure Survey at bit.ly/CRWASurvey. Written to be quick and easy to complete, the survey is available in eight languages. Information collected will help the City assign priority to projects that reduce flooding. If you see a clogged catch basin, a pothole, roadway deterioration, or a high tide [all indications of potential flooding], make a note and take a picture.

—CAROL LASKY

The Arts

As Trump Returns, MFA Show Reminds Us How Art Can Define, Defend Democracy

Power of the People: Art and Democracy, at the MFA through Feb. 17, feels way too timely. The 175 pieces on display—all from the museum's own collection—resonated ominously in the first week of Donald Trump's return to office. The exhibition explores how artists reflect and shape the idea and the practice of democracy, which might sound a bit... boring.

Trust me, it's not.

Curator Phoebe Segal and her team have divided the exhibit into three related themes: The Promise, The Practice, and The Preservation of democracy. Each occupies one gallery and brings together multiple media—printing, painting, sculpture, photography, ceramics, and even a bit of architecture—produced over 2,500 years in places as unlike as ancient Sparta, Renaissance-era Florence, 19th-century Paris, and modern Boston. This grandma's-attic approach creates some happily unexpected juxtapositions. But the idle pleasures of viewing art is hardly the point.

Two large-scale works dominate "The Promise" gallery. Posters of Norman Rockwell's "Four Freedoms," produced at the start of World War II, cover most of one wall. The images began as illustrations for *The Saturday Evening Post*, whose enormous circulation at the time—not to mention Rockwell's unmatched skill at boiling complex emotions down to a single scene—made their use as wartime propaganda inevitable. Studying these moving representations of freedom (of speech, of religion, from want, and from fear) can easily bring a lump to your throat, unless you're made of sstop.

But 80 years after their appearance, the posters have a glaring problem: the absence of a single person of color. Across the room, however, a 2021 print by artist Sandow Birk tackles that absence head on. Inspired by a 16th-century plan for a triumphal arch by no less than Albrecht Dürer, "White Out: A Monumental Arch to American History," proposes a multistory gateway celebrating more than 150 people of color central to American culture,

politics, and consciousness. You'll find the usual suspects—Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglass—but far more that you might *not* expect, from Oprah to Bruce Lee to Tisquantum (we know him as Squantum). The gargantuan print covers everyone from indigenous civilizations of the Great Plains dating to 800 BCE to the first Filipino settlement in California (prior to US independence) to Colin Kaepernick.

"The Practice" gallery dives into the mechanisms of democracy, such as public service and the expansion of voting rights, with the abolitionist, suffragist, and civil rights movements all represented. Like the previous room, the exhibit ranges over centuries, from ancient Greek stones describing taxation decisions to the



riveting "Maurice, Louisiana (population 642) Village Council, May 15, 2002."

Photographer Paul Shambroom spent four years visiting tiny American towns to study the meetings where residents and officials hashed out the day-to-day details of governing. In this image, Maurice's five council members look like any random people on a sidewalk, yet their expressions and body language—bolstered by a lush digital printing process—make it easy to imagine them as gods conferring on Mt. Olympus.

Power of the People devotes its final and largest gallery to "The Preservation" of democracy, which focuses primarily on the essential role of freedom of expression. The works document injustice or offer critiques

PHOTO: STEVE WOLF



Left, Eric Avery reworked Paul Revere's familiar engraving in "Uvalde Massacre 5/24/22, 11:30 am." Above, "Strawberry Fields" by Carlos Barberena from the "For Your Colonizer Comfort" series.

of politicians, policies, institutions, and Americans' political inattention. The bulk of these pieces—save for a Sons of Liberty bowl created by Paul Revere—are recent. Some canny MFA staffer, for example, must have decided in the late 1960s to start gathering posters from area antiwar protests and strikes. Graphically punchy and vibrating with outrage, they take up a significant chunk of one wall. Equally interesting (or maybe damning) is the fact that the museum didn't collect similar works from the Black Power movement, going on at the same time. That meant MFA curators had to borrow works from the National Center for African American Artists in Roxbury for this show. Those prints, paintings, and sketches depict revered arts educator and community leader Elma Lewis alongside a Black Panther poster and Afrocentric artworks from the 1970s.

Unlike the antiwar protest posters, much of the remaining art on display takes a more sophisticated path to delivering its

messages. Two printmakers riff on Paul Revere's famous engraving of the Boston Massacre in 1770. You undoubtedly know it, although you might not know that Revere engraved it. In front of the old State House, a group of Redcoats on the right fire rifles point-blank at unarmed civilians on the left, many of whom have already hit the ground, wounded or dead. Smoke billows in the background. (The print's factual distortion and opinion-shaping power, by the way, tell us that fake news predated social media by at least two centuries.)

In 2020, printmaker Bob Tomolillo took on one fake element of Revere's print: the omission of Crispus Attucks, a free black man who died in the massacre. Using Revere's own engraving and hand-tinting methods, Tomolillo re-created the image in 2020 to place Attucks's death at the center of the scene. Just last year, a second artist, Eric Avery, took a different tack, turning Revere's massacre into the ones at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, and the Tops Supermarket in Buffalo. The red on the right side now comes from a vast pool of blood beneath shooting victims, while a phalanx of shooters lines the left side. Avery turns the dusty image we know from history books into a primal scream against gun violence.

This gallery also devotes significant space to artists' exploration of the immigrant experience. Among the most striking is Oscar Moya's black-and-white print of a man scaling a razor-wire-topped fence; giant butterfly wings on his back give him the look of a mythological hero. His work shows the influence of his Mexican cultural heritage: no-holds-barred 19th-century political posters, political mural art of the 20th century, and even a touch of literary magical realism. Striking in a different way, two prints by Nicaraguan-born Carlos Barberena frame dignified portraits of migrant farm workers inside the engraved cartouches found on paper currency. A unifying subtitle, "For your colonizer comfort," underscores America's willingness to turn migrants' labor into profits while refusing to see their humanity.

In these first days of Trump, part deux, we need reminders that democracy has always involved struggle—and that art can provide some of the most stinging responses to injustice, inequality, and abuse. The exhibit runs through Feb. 17; do yourself a favor and see it before it closes.

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.

February

CALENDAR

Now ☞ Sun, 4/13

For the **MASSART ART MUSEUM'S "FUTURE FOSSILS" EXHIBITION**, 19 contemporary artists from around the globe have created "imagined relics" that "suggest the remains of an apocalypse." A provocative idea—and disturbingly on point. 621 Huntington Ave. Thu 12-8pm; Fri-Sun, 12-5pm. Learn more at maam.massart.edu.

Sat, 2/1, Sun, 2/2, & Fri, 2/7

The MFA wraps up its **FESTIVAL OF FILMS FROM IRAN** with three contemporary films. Sat-Sun, 2:30pm; Fri, 7pm. Tickets, \$12 members/\$15 nonmembers. Find film descriptions and buy tickets at mfa.org.

Sat, 2/1, 2/8, 2/15, & 2/22

FREE POWER HOUSE BOXING at the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center. Unleash your power and punch your way to peak fitness in this high-energy boxing class with instructor Donald Houston. Youth session is 10:30am to 12pm, adult session is 12pm to 1:30pm. 1350 Tremont St.

Mon, 2/3

In her book *We Refuse*, **HISTORIAN KELLIE CARTER JACKSON** examines the breadth of Black responses to white oppression, particularly those pioneered by Black women. At Massachusetts Historical Society, Carter Jackson will have a conversation with Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai, discussing force alongside other vital tactics that have shaped the Black struggle, from the restorative power of finding joy in the face of suffering to the quiet strength of simply walking away. This program is part of the annual Massachusetts Historical Society Speakers Fund lecture series. The MHS Speakers Fund supports talks with leading scholars of American history who advance the mission of the Society by nationally contributing to a deeper public understanding of the American experience. This is a hybrid event. It is free for MHS Members. \$10 per person fee (in person). No charge for virtual attendees. The in-person reception starts at 5:30 and the program will begin at 6:00. Learn more and register at masshist.org/events/Speakers-Fund-We-Refuse.

Tue, 2/4

Join **YOUR COMMUNITY COOKS: THE HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNITY COOKBOOKS** for a talk and hands-on workshop with Dr. Megan J. Elias, Director of Food Studies Programs at Boston University, to explore the history of community cookbooks and how they have given women and under-represented people a voice in public culture. 6pm to 7:30pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Registration required at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/675b613617cee02800562719.

Wed, 2/5

- In honor of Black History Month, attend a screening of **4 LITTLE GIRLS**, a documentary film by Spike Lee, followed by a discussion led by Barry Marshall, a senior affiliated faculty member in the Visual and Media Arts Department at Emerson College. The film recalls events that led to a racially motivated 1963 bombing at Birmingham's 16th Street Church in which four children perished. 2-4:30pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Registration required at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/679260f76021a51d62ef5fde.
- Phoebe Segal, curator, takes viewers inside the exhibition **"POWER OF THE PEOPLE: ART AND DEMOCRACY"** to explore the role art has played over centuries in shaping ideas about democracy, its functioning, and its protection. Livestreamed lecture, 6:30-7:30pm. Tickets free (member)/\$8 (nonmember). Register at tinyurl.com/mrcjhp2v to receive the livestreaming link.

- Across Boston, sensors collect information about environmental factors like air quality, water levels, and climate.

PROCESSING THE ENVIRONMENT:

A CONVERSATION ON SENSORS is a discussion about how these sensors work and how the data are used. Moderated by Leventhal Map & Education Center staff Ian Spangler and Emily Bowe (curators of the current exhibition "Processing Place"), with panelists Christian Simonelli (Boston Groundwater Trust), Joe Christo (Stone Living Lab; Boston Harbor Now), Michael Lawrence Evans (City of Boston's Office of Emerging Technology), and Abigail Menendez (City of Boston's Climate Technology Strategist). 6-7:15pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Registration required at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/67647a8ccb66923d003757c8.

- A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO NEWS LITERACY IN THE AGE OF AI** is an online workshop to introduce generative AI, and discuss its implications for news and media literacy, the intersection of misinformation and AI, and ways you can identify and evaluate information that might be created by AI. The workshop will use resources from the News Literacy Project. Read more about National News Literacy Week at newslit.org/news-literacy-week. 12-1:30pm. Register at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6776d7d2f347846dfed8bae6.

Thu, 2/6

Explore ways to help fight misinformation, build digital citizenship skills, and learn tools to identify accurate information on the internet at the BPL's workshop **BUILDING DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS** with a Misinformation Resilience Toolkit. 5pm to 6pm. Central Library in Copley Square. For questions this workshop could explore and to register, visit bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/67780d75de0d01f36119b8f8.

Fri, 2/7

- Join the Boston University Cinema & Media Studies program for a **SCREENING OF TWO SHORT FILMS**. Followed by filmmaker Q&A. 12:30pm. College of Arts and Sciences, Classroom B36, 685-725 Commonwealth Ave.
- MFA FIRST FRIDAYS** combines DJ'd music, dancing, art making, and signature cocktails. Tickets \$27, which includes museum admission...but they're free for members. The event does sell out, so reserve at mfa.org. 6-9pm.

Sun, 2/9

Is one of your goals this year to improve your public speaking skills? Join a community meeting to learn about the **COPLEY TOASTMASTERS**, a local chapter of Toastmasters International, which helps individuals improve their public speaking in a small group setting. 3-4:30 pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Info at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/67647abb74596c36004cf5a6.

Tue, 2/11

Join Dr. Brent Forester, Psychiatrist-in-Chief and Chairman of Psychiatry at Tufts Medical Center, and moderator Dr. Michael Goldberg, Professor Emeritus at Tufts University School of Medicine, for **THE AGING BRAIN**, an online discussion and Q&A about normal brain aging; dementia and how it affects the patient, their family and friends; and behavioral health issues. Presented by the BPL in partnership with Beacon Hill Village's Living Well Ending Well series. 2-3:30pm. Registration required at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/678a6902b4127941006097bf.

Wed, 2/12

Get to know your neighbors at the BPL through the **36 QUESTIONS FOR CIVIC LOVE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION**. Each attendee will be paired with a stranger; pairs will ask each other a series of questions, such as "Who is an unsung hero in your

community?" Attendees will also receive postcard "valentines" to write to their local community organizations and elected officials about anything that is important to them. Valentine's treats and chocolates will be provided. 6-7:30pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Registration required at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/67448b47fea9b97171f82443.

Sat, 2/15

- Mel King was a Massachusetts state representative, Boston mayoral candidate, and civil rights activist. Celebrate his legacy with the guided discussion **BOOK CLUB: MEL KING'S "CHAIN OF CHANGE"**, facilitated by The Mel King Institute for Community Building. First published in 1981, *Chain of Change* is a history of the black community in Boston from the 1950s through the '70s. 2:30-3:30pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Registration required at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/67803770b4127941005f6b62.
- A major Academy Award snub this year involved the acclaimed Indian film **ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT**, which has scooped up more than two dozen awards from film festivals and critics' groups worldwide. See it and judge for yourself at the MFA. Tickets \$12 members/\$15 nonmembers. 2:30pm. Details and tickets at mfa.org.

Sun, 2/16

Haley House presents the **17TH ANNUAL SOUPER BOWL**. Supporting the service agency's housing and food programs, this fundraiser brings together artists from MassArt's Clay for Change group (providing more than 300 handmade bowls) and local restaurants, which provide stomach-warming, mouthwatering soups—and you can sample them all. Seatings at 12, 1, and 2pm. Donations from \$50 and up. At the Roxbury Innovation Center, 2300 Washington Street (Bolling Building, Nubian Square). More info and ticket at haleyhouse.org.

Tue, 2/18 & Wed, 2/19

SOFTBALL HITTING AND FIELDING CLINICS. The program features UMass Boston softball players and coaches and is open to teams and individual players of all skill levels. Ages 10 and up. Register at boston.gov/parks-sport. 2:30-4pm. The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Ave.

Thu, 2/20 & Fri, 2/21

- OPEN GYM** is available to students, families, and community members to play pick-up sports such as kickball, wiffleball, soccer, football, run laps, and more. The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Ave. 10am to 12pm.
- BASEBALL HITTING AND FIELDING CLINICS**. The program features UMass Boston baseball players and coaches and is open to teams and individual players of all skill levels. Ages 10 to 14. Register at boston.gov/parks-sport. 4:30pm to 6pm. The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Ave.

Sat, 2/22

Handel & Haydn roll out Bach's crowd-pleasing **BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS**—all six of them—co-directed by Aisslinn Nosky and Ian Watson. 7:30pm at Jordan Hall. Tickets \$15-140 (but limited supplies remain). H+H will also perform the program at Sanders Theater in Cambridge: Fri, 2/21, 7:30pm and Sun, 2/23, 3pm. Details and tickets at handelandhaydn.org.

Sun, 2/23 ☞ Sat, 3/15

DINE OUT BOSTON returns with fixed-price menus at more than 100 restaurants. Participating near the Fenway and Mission Hill are Bar 'Cino in Audubon Circle; Blue Ribbon Brasserie in Kenmore Square; the three restaurants at Eataly; Porto and Wagamama (Prudential); Sonsie on Upper Newbury St.; Summer Shack on Dalton St.; and Longwood Grille & Bar (inside the

Inn at Longwood). Prices generally run \$22-27 for lunch and \$36 for dinner, but be sure to check your specific location's price, as they do vary. A full list on meetboston.com provides hours and prices.

Tue, 2/25

- The Leventhal Map and Education Center and Transit Matters, a Massachusetts-nonprofit that fights for better public transportation, host a **TRANSIT EQUITY MONTH TRIVIA NIGHT**. Participate individually or as a member of a team, and use your knowledge about Boston's rails, routes, streets, stations, and more. Prizes of maps will be awarded to winning teams. Transit Equity Month honors Rosa Parks's legacy and highlights issues, including environmental justice, labor rights, and racial equity, in support of better transportation for all. 6-7:30pm. Newsfeed Café at the Central Library in Copley Square. Registration required at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6785902eb4127941005ffe2a
- The BPL's **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS OPEN HOUSE: REVOLUTIONARY BLACK ARTISTS** highlights items by Black creators, across all genres and forms of art. Staff will be available to answer questions as you explore collection items up close. No reservation required. 2-4pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Info at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/673dfe7b55d11a280007c805.

Wed, 2/26

From Black Patriotism in the American Revolution to the fight for emancipation, The National Park Service's online presentation **EMANCIPATION IN MASSACHUSETTS** will review the colonial-era individuals who impacted early rights for Boston's Black citizens and use early art pieces to help capture the stories of these early freedom fighters. 6pm to 7pm. Registration required at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/67882b5a5ca5ec68c1c1c81c.

Thu, 2/27

- Historian David Levering Lewis discusses his new book, **"THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW: A FAMILY HISTORY AS THE AMERICAN STORY, 1790-1958"** in an online conversation with Professor Kendra Field, associate professor of history at Tufts University and chief historian for American Ancestors' 10 Million Names Project. A recipient of the National Humanities Medal, Lewis received the Pulitzer Prize for each volume of his W.E.B. Du Bois biography. *The Stained Glass Window* chronicles his family history in the context of the antebellum South and the subsequent era of marginalization and resistance. 6-7pm. Register at bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6792c1e5cb66923d003cc5a2.
- Massachusetts Historical Society hosts a virtual program entitled **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE AND CONCEPTIONS OF CHILDBIRTH IN EARLY AMERICA—A PANEL DISCUSSION**. This panel brings together two projects on reproductive healthcare and childbirth in early America. As Nora Doyle's work shows, scholars of early American and Atlantic World history have shown particular interest in the link between perceptions of childbirth pain and the nascent concept of race. Yet by focusing primarily on racial ideology formation, historians have missed opportunities to understand the rich medical cultures in which these women were participants and practitioners. Doyle and Jennifer Reiss, whose paper places early American medical and social approaches to impregnation, gestation, parturition, and mothering in the context of early American disability history, will discuss this topic in-depth. 5-6:15pm. Learn more and register at masshist.org/events/childbirth-early-america.