



THE

Fenway News

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New Mud Flats, New Headache For Post-Dredging Muddy River

PHOTO: STEVE CHASE



Water in the upper Muddy is now chronically low. That has led to the exposure of unsightly mud flats (pictured), a major concern for Brookline and Boston advocates.

cost solution could be put in place quickly: essentially, restoration of the cofferdam. As she explained at the meeting, any work that disturbs the river bottom would require time-consuming environmental permitting by the State. Using the dam foundation, still in the riverbed, would avoid that delay because it has already received approval.

In 2025, MWI commissioned a hydrology report from the firm Terraphase. It concluded that “a combined grey-green infrastructure approach can deliver improved habitat for wildlife, better water quality and a range of benefits that provide positive impacts to people and businesses within the watershed. Such nature-based solutions—as well as proven ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ engineering—must be a central component of future strategies for maintaining healthy base flow water levels and for mitigating potential flood risk.”

Lisa Kumpf, River Restoration director at the Charles River Watershed Association, leads MMOC’s Water Quality Subcommittee. CRWA is involved because, as its director Emily Norton emphasizes, we can’t make the Charles swimmable until we have a cleaner Muddy (see www.crwa.org/muddy).

Kumpf presented a key takeaway at the January meeting: the need for outside expertise in exploring additional interventions and creative solutions. An alternatives analysis is necessary to determine which approaches have merit.

As MMOC member Sean Lynn-Jones of the Brookline Greenspace Alliance emphasized, “we are guardians of Olmsted’s vision. Finding a solution must be a high priority.”

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

BY ALISON PULTINAS

In March 2023 *The Fenway News* ran a story about completion of the Army Corps of Engineers’ Muddy River Restoration Project. The headline it carried, “Less-Muddy Muddy River,” sounds wrong now. In fact, mud is a major topic in 2026.

After the engineers and contractors left in 2023, lower water levels and exposed mud flats in Riverway Park, also known as the Upper Muddy, immediately concerned advocates from the citizen-led Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee (MMOC; see tinyurl.com/yeyp246k).

That summer, the committee sent a letter about the water level to officials at the State’s Department of Environmental Protection and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. After years of watching and waiting for the water to rise, however, conditions have not improved and MMOC wants a solution.

At MMOC’s monthly meeting on

Jan. 14, members voted to support a study of possible alternatives for dealing with the low water. Based on conversations between advocates and elected officials, some funding for the analysis could come from the state.

The federally funded dredging project removed sediment and opened a deeper channel in the Muddy as a flood-control strategy. During the Phase 1 work to return the former Sears parking lot to parkland with a daylighted river—now called Justine Liff Park—contractors built a flood-control restriction structure (FCRS) known as a cofferdam. It controlled water flow during the dredging and crossed the river roughly parallel to the west (far) end of the Riverside Line’s Fenway Station and near the DCR’s Back Bay Yard. In 2023, the dam’s superstructure was removed, leaving its foundation, and water flowed again, lowering levels upstream. The unintended consequences—exposing of much of the riverbed throughout the year—sparked the latest round of concern.

The exposed mud flats lie along

the riverbanks in the area between the Longwood Avenue Bridge and Park Drive—most noticeably near the Chapel Street footbridge—but not in the Back Bay Fens. Advocates, including MMOC and the Muddy Water Initiative, agree that the mud flats represent a problem. Not only do they not reflect Frederick Law Olmsted’s original plan and not look appealing, but they also pose a health hazard. Concerns include the likelihood that shallower and therefore warmer water will increase mosquito breeding and the certainty that, given the river’s use as a dumping ground for much of its early life, the exposed riverbed contains heavy metals and other toxins.

Opinions differ on potential solutions. Caroline Reeves, leader of the Muddy Water Initiative (MWI) and a member of the MMOC’s Water Quality Subcommittee, believes a low-

Sloppy Development Oversight For 38 The Fenway Degrades Historic District

BY MAT THALL

It’s not widely known that some 20 Fenway buildings sit in a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. The Fenway Boylston Street Historic District runs from Berklee’s administration building at 1088 Boylston St. through the first block of The Fenway to 73 Hemenway St., and includes the Massachusetts Historical Society building. A campaign by the Fenway CDC (now Fenway Forward) led to the district’s creation in 1985 when the CDC wanted to attract private investment available to properties on the National Register as it redeveloped 73 Hemenway into the Fensgate Cooperative.

On Dec. 9 of last year, the Boston Zoning Board of Appeal delivered a critical blow to the Fenway Boylston Historic District when it granted variances to the owner of 38 The Fenway. The decision allowed the addition of four stories to a three-story townhouse that for decades had stood vacant and delinquent in real estate taxes. The New Hampshire-based owners, husband and wife Marc Ehrman and Chee Kwong, also own a Back Bay townhouse, and Kwong is the listed as manager of multiple LLCs that own properties throughout Boston. Ehrman appears to own a home in Lincoln, New Hampshire, and has served on that town’s Zoning Board of Appeal. Kwong and Ehrman, who requires a fully accessible home, have asserted that they intend to live in the building along with their adult children.

The owners bought the property in 2022; a community review process for their renovation plans began in October 2024. The review consisted of three public meetings conducted by the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services in October 2024, December 2024, and October 2025. The developer’s attorney also met with the Fenway Civic Association in 2024.

SEE HISTORIC DISTRICT ON PAGE 2 >

AREA ORANGE LINE STATIONS GET UPGRADES

PHOTOS: KELSEY BRIJUN



The MBTA has begun an overhaul of several Orange Line stations. At Back Bay, which the T shares with commuter rail and Amtrak operations, the Clarendon Street north entrance has closed to allow construction (left). The project should improve wayfinding and pedestrian flow as well as make it easier to get to the Orange Line platforms. While only the Clarendon Street entrance has closed, construction is visible throughout the station (right). Pictures of construction at Ruggles Station appear on page 4.

FENS VIEWS

> HISTORIC DISTRICT FROM PAGE 1

The redevelopment plan called for creation of an owner’s unit—a single-bedroom apartment covering 3,288 square feet with elevator access to a private roof deck—along with three two-bedroom units averaging 1,590 SF; a 500SF studio apartment; and nine parking spaces. The plan would add some 6,000 square feet of new space to the 5,700 square feet in the existing structure. On the front, it would add two stories slightly set back from the façade. At the rear, it would create a six-story about 80 percent as wide as the front addition. The resulting seven-story elevation would be visible from the historical front of the building.

The community meetings drew reasonably large attendance for a seemingly low-impact project. Participants largely expressed concern about whether the renovation would create yet another

unlicensed Airbnb-style short-term rental building in the Fenway. Examples include the recently renovated property at 22 The Fenway, whose cornerstone reads “Private Residence” but which was obviously being used for short-stay rentals. That redevelopment won a variance to add a story to the building. Some neighbors also wanted assurances that the building would not become a private undergraduate dorm. Others expressed concern about parking and maneuverability of vehicles in the public alley behind the property.

Many attendees appeared stunned by the plans and renderings the developer’s architect presented, characterizing the additions as “horrendous” and “hideous.” The fact that the adjoining townhouse at 36 The Fenway—a three-story twin to Number 38 that was not bought by the developer—would remain unchanged made the design especially jarring.

This modification would drastically alter the unified look of the 1890s-era buildings in the neighborhood’s only historic district, yet the owners could likely use historic tax credits to help finance a less drastic renovation. The Mayor’s Office representative and developers’ attorney John Pulgini were nonplussed when I suggested this option at the October 2024 meeting. All Pulgini could say was that the variances would undoubtedly be approved, subject to design review by the Boston Planning Department. Residents knowledgeable about development review countered that BPD design review almost never requires removal or substantial reduction of front and rear additions. Neighbors demanded that the design review happen *before* the hearing on the variances.

At the community meeting on the proposal held in December 2024, the developer disclosed some design changes on the alley side to address vehicle maneuverability and parking, but they presented no design changes on the additions. Participants repeated previous objections about the design and its impact on the historic district.

A final community meeting 10 months later in October 2025 revealed no changes to the design and again elicited very strong opposition to the design. The meeting learned that a Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) hearing would take place in late October.

Following this final community meeting I reached out to Kathy Kottaridis, director of the City’s Office of Historic Preservation, requesting that she intervene. She promised to look into the matter, but repeated calls and emails after that have gone unanswered.

Fenway Forward’s executive director Steve Farrell, who

attended two of the community meetings, notified others in attendance that his organization would leave discussion of design issues to others and focus on FF’s major concerns: restricting short-term rentals and student housing. FF planned to meet with attorney Pulgini to discuss a “good neighbor agreement” on these issues. The Fenway Civic Association did not make its position clear until just before the ZBA hearing.

On Oct. 28, the ZBA granted a request from the developer to defer the matter to its Dec. 9 hearing. At this writing, the City has not responded to a public records request for evidence that notices of the rescheduling had been sent to abutters and advertised.

Several noteworthy things happened at the Dec. 9 hearing:

- The Mayor’s Office reported that in the community process “the abutters were universally opposed to the proposal. They felt the design was not contextual to the area and that the plans were inconsistent with the use proposed.”
- Farrell, of Fenway Forward, testified that his organization was “not opposed,” even though it had not reached a good neighbor agreement to restrict short-term rentals and student housing. He said he hoped such an agreement could be negotiated in the future.
- District 8 city councilor Sharon Durkan submitted a letter of “non-opposition.” She recognized the concerns of neighbors, but argued that adding desperately needed housing was more important, even though it was not clear that the developer was adding to the city’s housing stock or building a duplicate home.
- Fenway Civic Association’s letter of opposition, submitted a day before the hearing, was reported, but Pulgini interrupted that report saying that he had received emails from Fenway Civic saying they were not opposed to the project.
- No testimony or recommendations from various City departments mentioned the property’s listing on the National Register.

The ZBA unanimously approved the variances requested with a requirement for “Submission of the plans to the Planning Department for review with attention to the vertical addition and maneuverability of the proposed parking spaces.” The text of the measure on which the board voted came word for word from a Planning Department recommendation, a document replete with mischaracterizations of the architectural design of that stretch of The Fenway: “the surrounding urban fabric includes several architecturally similar developments, typically created through additions to existing structures that have been converted into mid-rise multifamily residential buildings, commonly rising to six stories. These local precedents often feature both front and rear additions, with front-facing decks located at the uppermost residential levels.”

The ZBA decision became official on Dec. 26. Although because of a technical glitch,” it didn’t appear on the ZBA website until Jan. 15. The window for filing a legal complaint against the decision closed one day after the decision was made available to the public.

Throughout the community process, the developer’s attorney argued that deficiencies in the design could be addressed in the Planning Department’s design review, which could occur at any time—but is not a public process.

Mat Thall lives in the East Fens.

Support Bill to Ban Neonicotinoids to Save Bees

BY PHOENIX DAVIS

The US experienced record-breaking bee losses last year with 1.6 million colonies lost. Commercial beekeepers sustained an average loss of 62 percent between June 2024 and March 2025. One of the main contributors to this is a type of pesticide called neonicotinoids, or “neonics.”

Neonic pesticides are extremely potent and strong, which makes them popular pesticides. However, it also leads to their indiscriminately killing vulnerable pollinators, paralyzing and killing our bees.

The commercial sale of neonics has been banned since 2019. However, a license can be obtained by farms to continue to use these pesticides. Seed companies are now coating their seeds with neonics, causing the pesticides to grow into the plant and contaminate the soil. It is also extremely water soluble and spreads with runoff whenever it rains, impacting nearby fields as well.

While treated seeds are mostly used in the agricultural industry, there are still neonics found on household gardening seeds for flowers and vegetables. Just one of these coated seeds is enough to kill 80,000 bees. The chemical compound in neonics is in the same chemical family as nicotine and targets the same area of the brain as nicotine. It has also been shown in studies to damage

human reproductive systems. Neonics are used on corn, wheat, and soy, major staples of the American diet.

The beloved Fenway Victory Gardens act as a beautiful sanctuary to support our bees, as well as the various other pollinator gardens throughout the tree-covered urban pocket.

However, to take the area’s efforts a step further, residents can help Environment Massachusetts urge Gov. Maura Healey to support the ban on seeds coated with the pesticide, S587, “An Act to protect pollinators and public health.”

These toxic pesticides damage everything from the pollinators helping grow our food down to the people eating that food, and have even been found in multiple studies not to improve crop yields. We deserve better both for us and for our bees.

Phoenix Davis is a student at the Berklee College of Music.

BOB CASE TRIBUTE

Longtime East Fens resident and community leader Bob Case died on Jan. 15. *The Fenway News* plans to run a tribute to Bob in our March issue, and we want to include contributions from residents, friends, and colleagues who knew him best. Please send memories or stories to share to fenwaynews@gmail.com by Feb. 20 to assure inclusion of your thoughts.

THE Fenway News

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

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“Comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.”

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

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Ruggles Baptist Church, A Tale of Two Congregations

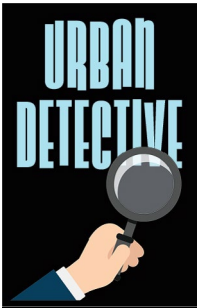
BY ED BALLO

Like the roots of an old gnarled tree, the roots of the former Second Church of Boston (today's Ruggles Street Baptist Church) in Audubon Circle tantalizes with its complexity. Let's untangle the history of these two congregations that span nearly 400 years!

The Second Church in Boston (1649-1970)

The church was founded in 1649 when Boston's population spread out along the Shawmut Peninsula to the North End. In its early days, the church was known as the "Church of the Mathers." The Mather family loomed large in Boston's early history and exercised considerable influence in the political, educational, and religious life of the young colony.

Over its storied history, the church occupied eight different church buildings, "hop-scooting" around Boston. In North Square, the *first* burned in 1676, and the British torched the *second* as they were abandoning Boston in March 1776. The *third* was built on Hanover Street in 1779. After the congregation merged with the New Brick Congregation in the 1840s, a new building—the *fourth*—replaced the old. Bedford Street was the location of the *fifth* for a few decades, but it was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1872. Copley Square became the site of the *sixth*, a picturesque and evocative Gothic structure on Boylston Street. Finally, we arrive at the *seventh*, the subject of this article, in Audubon Circle. Lastly the *eighth* would result from a 1970 merger with the Unitarian Universalist First Church, now located at Berkeley and Marlborough streets in the Back Bay.



Ruggles Street Baptist Church (1870–Present)

Ruggles Street Baptist Church drew its name from its original location at 159 Ruggles Street. As mentioned in a previous installment, the Ruggles were wealthy land owners in this part of Roxbury. The church has a history of evangelism and a strong sense of civic purpose and responsibility to the community. It offered an employment bureau, a free lunch room for the unemployed, and a free dispensary with doctors in attendance. The church's commitment to public health led to the founding of the Boston Baptist Hospital in 1893, later known as New England Baptist Hospital. When the hospital was created, Parker Hill was still a streetcar "suburb" considered far enough away from the urban core to provide fresh air and an escape from the noise and congestion of the city, especially helpful for patients who might benefit from long-term rest and relaxation.

The church thrived in Roxbury well into



IMAGE: DIGITAL COMMONWEALTH VIA BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Below left: Drawing of the Second Church, in the North End's North Square, 1677. Right: The Second Church built its seventh home in Audubon Circle in 1914. Since 1970 Ruggles Baptist Church has called the building home.

the 1930s, serving a heavily populated area of low- and middle-income families. Yet the four subsequent decades proved daunting and tumultuous, with increasing crime, parishioners leaving for the suburbs, and a proposed interstate highway that would have run through the church's property. In 1970, the congregation moved into the Audubon Circle building recently vacated by the Second Church.

The Present Church and its Architect, Ralph Adams Cram (1863–1942)

Cram was one of America's most prolific architects. While typically known for his Gothic religious structures, he was a stylistic virtuoso, designing multiple styles as evidenced by this glorious Georgian Revival building from 1914. Sir Christopher Wren himself couldn't have designed better in 17th-century London!

Born in New Hampshire, Cram was educated at Westford and Phillips Exeter academies. At age 18 he moved to Boston, spending five years in the architectural office of Rotch & Tilden. He subsequently left for Rome to study classical architecture. As is the case for many, Rome was a revelation, but not just in the plastic arts—Cram experienced a religious epiphany and spent the rest of his life as an "Anglo-Catholic."

Cram and business partner Charles Wentworth opened their firm in Boston in 1889 as Cram and Wentworth, which became Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson after Wentworth's death in 1897. A turning point for the firm came when it won the commission



PHOTO: ED BALLO

to design the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1902. Cram also served as supervising architect for the campus of Princeton University.

Cram's career climbed to new heights (literally) in the early 20th century with his selection to take over construction of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City. It should be noted that Cram wasn't opposed to stylistic change in his later years. In 1932, his firm designed the John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House in downtown's Post Office Square. Climbing 331 feet and 22 stories, the building remains today a dynamic expression of a stripped-down Art Deco style.

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.

Now In Effect, Zoning Code Changes Constrain Design Commission

BY ALISON PULTINAS

One target of the Boston Planning Department's multi-year effort to modernize Boston's zoning code focused on shortening the review process for large development projects, under Article 80. As of Jan. 1, the amendments approved by the Zoning Commission in August went into effect. While the modernization process continues, the first steps are complete.

The new amendments include changes in communication requirements for public notices for Article 80 projects and BPDA board hearings. They no longer require classified ads in the *Boston Herald* or mailers to neighborhood councils and civic organizations. Electronic filings now become the only method used. The new policy states that notices about proposed projects are available online through the proposed project website hosted by the Planning Department. Article 80 Text Amendment #483 reads, "Whenever the Boston Redevelopment Authority is required to

publish notice pursuant to this Section 80A-2, the Authority shall publish such notice online via the Planning Department website, via an electronic distribution list available to public."

Another finalized step involves removing outdated language and shortening or eliminating reviews with the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC). More complicated and complex goals face the effort to reform community engagement and clarify policies about mitigation versus community benefits. Substituting "should" for "may" removes some former ambiguities, but these seem to be small incremental changes.

Changes for the BCDC also came in the name of efficiency and predictability now more closely define and constrain the Commission's role. The size threshold for projects that go before the panel has increased from 100,000 to 200,000 square feet.

Recent project reviews in the Fenway, including 142-146 St. Mary's St. in Audubon Circle and 165 Park Drive (a proposal for development

of the Holy Trinity Cathedral parking lot) don't meet the 200,000-square-foot threshold. Arguably, the BCDC improved the final design and contributed significant analysis for those projects. What might happen with the proposed 17-story project at 409 Huntington, calculated at 142,812 square feet? If that project advances, will the BCDC be involved?

In Mission Hill, the 13-story residence at 775 Huntington Ave.—just now starting construction—measures at 131,100 square feet. The BCDC discussed it at four meetings in 2021 and 2022. The controversial proposed rental development at 1558 Tremont St., at the intersection of St. Alphonsus and Tremont streets, comprises only 74,596 square feet but has never undergone Commission review.

The revised BCDC bylaws restrict reviews to three meetings except for complex, multibuilding developments such as Longwood Place, planned for the historic Simmons residential campus on Brookline Avenue, or an institutional master plan.

The full Commission meets the first Tuesday of each month. The meetings use a hybrid format and take place

both on Zoom and in person on the ninth floor of City Hall. Starting in January live public comment on presentations are only allowed when a project is introduced, not in subsequent design subcommittee meetings or when a vote is taken. However, BCDC staff say the Commission will welcome written comments (submitted to bcdc@boston), at any point in the review process.

The BCDC final opinion and advisory recommendations now go to the Planning Department instead of the mayor and the BPDA board. Related, deputy director for Urban Design and recently appointed BCDC executive director Seth Riseman noted an increase in staff for the Planning Department.

In February, Urban Design Chief and ex officio BCDC member Diana Fernandez Bibeau is scheduled to present a preliminary evaluation of some of the Article 80 changes. And two long-term BCDC commissioners have wrapped up their terms: Architect William Rawn left last year after, remarkably, serving 35 years. Landscape architect Mikyoung Kim announced her departure in January.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

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, 2026. Please email HELLO@MISSIONHILLFENWAYNT.ORG with any questions.

GAGGLE OF GESE GOING FOR GOLD



In the run-up to the Winter Olympics, might this group of 21 geese, waddling across the frozen Muddy River, have ambitions of winning a gold medal in ice dancing?

IN MEMORIAM

Suzanne M. Comtois

COMPILED BY RUTH KHOWAIS

West Fens resident Suzanne M. Comtois died on Jan. 12 after a long battle with COPD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Born in the Detroit area, Suzanne attended Kimball High School and Harper College. She moved to Boston in 1978 after a divorce and lived first in the East Fens then in the West Fens. She worked as a pediatric nurse at Boston City Hospital, now Boston Medical Center. After retirement, she continued working overnight private duty.

Suzanne took an active role in community groups. She served on the board of the Fenway CDC (now Fenway Forward) and became a regular at the Peterborough Senior Center. At the Center, she enjoyed Tech Café and educational presentations. She looked forward to the Center’s Book Club with longtime friends and ran a “Current Events” program that generated lively conversations.

Suzanne belonged the Fenway Action Coalition, a grassroots group that opposed Fenway Park expansion in the



late 1990s. She regularly attended protest marches, including the weekly protests against Elon Musk at the Prudential Center’s Tesla showroom. At the final protest she attended before her death, the “No Kings” rally on Boston Common last October, she held a sign saying “We the People are Pissed” while her sister Julie held her oxygen tank.

Suzanne was an avid reader, loved her dogs, loved doing puzzles and following politics in the press and on TV to get different points of view. A passionate gardener and landscaper, she created a rose garden in the front yard of her condominium building on Queensberry Street that inspired others to do the same.

She leaves her sister and two brothers.

A graveside funeral service took place at Mount Auburn Cemetery on Jan. 15, with a Celebration of Life that afternoon at the Fenway Community Center. City Councilor Sharon Durkan presented a tribute that extended the Council’s “deepest sympathy to you and your family in the passing of your loved one.”

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.

ORANGE LINE WORK AT RUGGLES

PHOTOS: KELSEY BRUUN / RENDERING: MBTA



The Columbus Avenue entrance to Ruggles Station (left) will soon close as Phase II of station upgrades makes the entrance ADA-compliant and adds a contemporary porte cochere. Expected to take two years, the work will bring other parts of the station into ADA compliance, upgrade landscaping, improve lighting and signage, and replace escalators and bathrooms. Slated to begin in January, construction hadn’t started as of the 27th, but barriers had appeared throughout the station.

the data at hand

Data Physicalizations of Earth and Space January 21–April 4, 2026

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What A Dump: Biggest Snowstorm in Decades Buries The Area

It wasn't the legendary Blizzard of 1978, but it came close. A massive snowstorm caused transportation delays, shut down Boston Public Schools for two days, and delivered 23.7 inches of snow in Boston on January 25–26. The 1978 blizzard dropped nearly four more inches, but this storm did leave the eighth-biggest snowfall since record-keeping began, according to the National Weather Service, and was the biggest since 2003. The storm made Blue Bikes inaccessible on Huntington Avenue (below), buried cars near Simmons University on Palace Road and Evans Way (right), and blanketed the plaza in front of MassArt's Design and Media Center on Huntington (bottom right).



PHOTOS: KELSEY BRUUN



NEWSLINES

Culpepper, Roxbury Respond Angrily to City's Parcel 3 Reversal

On Jan. 12, the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee learned that the City won't renew the developer designation for Parcel 3, an 8-acre site it owns across Tremont Street from Boston Police headquarters. Designated co-developers HYM Investment and My City at Peace had proposed 1.7 million square feet of development, largely lab space, some retail, and 468 apartments and condos. Strongly shaped by community input, the plan promised to bring 2,700 jobs and wealth-building opportunities for Black-controlled businesses and housing owners. The City argued that the project couldn't move forward because of the plan's emphasis on lab space and said that the land could become the site of a new Madison Park Technical High School. District 7 Councilor Miniard Culpepper said he supports investment in Madison Park but heard widespread community frustration about the change during and after the meeting. "The people of Roxbury are not opposed to progress," he said. "They are opposed to being sidelined. Community input is not a box to check after decisions are framed—it is a foundation that must shape those decisions from the beginning." Another community leader, Rodney Singleton, put it more bluntly in the *Globe*: "This is, fundamentally, taking agency away from the Black community, and frankly, it's just racist."

Final Building Completes Whittier Choice Neighborhood

US Rep. Ayanna Pressley joined other officials to cut the ribbon on the final building in the Whittier Choice Neighborhood redevelopment on Jan. 16. Since 2015, new buildings designed to create a mixed-income community have gradually replaced the aging Whittier Street public housing along Tremont Street across from Ruggles Station. A \$30 million federal grant kick-started the phased project, which has nearly doubled the number of apartments on the site. This final 12-story apartment mid-rise will operate as The Amp at Flat 9. At the ribbon cutting, Pressley spoke about refusing to accept the inevitability of displacement, and District 7 City Councilor Miniard Culpepper talked about the beloved community and praised the persistence of community advocates. Boston Housing Authority director Kenzie Bok hosted the event, which took place—fittingly, as several speakers noted—on Martin Luther King weekend.

Housing Trust Votes to Help Rehab St. Alphonsus Row Houses

With a vote on Jan. 12, the City's Neighborhood Housing Trust awarded Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services (MHNHS) \$1.087 million to rehabilitate vacant row houses—originally built in the 1960s when Harvard owned the former quarry site—on St. Alphonsus Street. Under Mission Hill's zoning created for the parcel, now known as Fitzgerald Park, the houses sit within the Harvard Quarry Conservation Protection subdistrict. Harvard's 40-year lease to local investors for the buildings ended in 2023. The MHNHS rehab will include seven affordable rental apartments for households earning 30 percent of area median income.



PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS

DUGOUT CAFE SELLS LIQUOR LICENSE AND SHUTS ITS DOORS

Near the Boston University Campus, the Dugout Cafe at 722 Comm. Ave. has closed. Known as a "dive bar" since 1934, the Dugout transferred its liquor license to a Seaport restaurant in January.

COUNTRY-FRIED CONSERVATORY?

On Jan. 18, the New England Conservatory hosted an American Roots workshop and community barn dance to mark the launch of its Expanded Education CMA classes for kids and adults.



PHOTO: IAN DICKERMAN, COURTESY OF NEC

MULTICULTURAL PARTY TIME!

Fenway Forward and the Fenway Community Center co-host a celebration of the wealth of cultural traditions represented in the neighborhood on Saturday, Feb. 21. "One Fenway, Many Cultures" takes place at the Community Center, 1282 Boylston Street, from 2 to 4pm and features a dance performance, a DJ, immigrant-rights resources, and refreshments. Dress to represent your culture for this free indoor block party. Interpretation is available on request. Want to know more? Contact Cassie White at 857-217-4370 or cwhite@fenwayforward.org.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

Celebrity Series of Boston—presenter of marquee musicians at Berklee Performance Center, Symphony Hall, and Jordan Hall—now goes by Vivo Performing Arts. The organization said the new name better reflects its mission and will help it reach more diverse audiences. 🐡 **Kenmore Square-based Whoop, maker of wearable personal trackers for athletes (or, as it likes to call itself, "the human performance company"), announced formation of the Mass AI Coalition to promote AI adoption and "reinforce Massachusetts as a global leader in artificial intelligence."** Whoop will lead the group, which also includes DraftKings, Wayfair, and a bunch of companies with inscrutably hip names that ICYMI has never heard of. 🐡 **The Dorchester Reporter** listed new committee assignments for newly elected Boston City Councilors. District 8 Councilor Sharon Durkan will chair Planning, Development & Transportation and the Committee on PILOT Agreements and Institutional Relations. Newly elected District 7 Councilor Minyard Culpepper will chair a single committee, Civil Rights, Racial Equity & Immigrant Advancement. The assignments did not go down well with At-Large Councilor Julia Mejia, who criticized the choices by new Council President Liz Breadon. "None of the electeds of color were assigned to chair any of the three top most powerful committees," she said, referring to Ways & Means; Government Operations; and Durkan's Planning Committee. 🐡 **Drama definitely topped the menu at TimeOut Market.** In mid-January, Time Out Group announced that it would close its Boston (that is, Fenway) and Chicago food halls due to a post-pandemic decline in traffic. But public outcry prompted a major plot twist [or "chef's surprise," if ICYMI plans to take its menu metaphor seriously]: Time Out announced that Boston would continue operating under a licensing agreement it reached with Samuels & Associates. Samuels originally recruited the market for the redeveloped Sears warehouse now known as 401 Park (which it sold to real estate operator Alexandria for a tasty \$1.5 billion in 2021). Still operating under the TimeOut flag, the food hall reinforces the appeal of many other Samuels properties in the Fenway, including its planned redevelopment of the Star Market site. 🐡 The MFA pink-slipped 33 workers—6.3% of its 520-person staff—in an effort to close a budget gap. On Instagram, UAW Local 2110, the museum employees' union, claims 16 of the staffers as members. It vowed to challenge MFA leadership to demonstrate that they'd done everything possible to avoid the layoffs—including cutting pay for top brass. 🐡



FRANKLIN CUMMINGS TECH OPENS NEW CAMPUS IN NUBIAN SQUARE

PHOTO: MARY ANN BROGAN



On Jan. 22, Franklin Cummings Tech held a ribbon-cutting for its new campus in Nubian Square. The \$75 million, 68,000-square-foot building replaces a 118-year-old facility in the South End and features robotic labs, cybersecurity labs, physics labs, and automotive bays. A bequest from Benjamin Franklin launched the school; it added the Cummings name after the Cummings Foundation made a large gift in 2012 designed to assure that technical training programs remained accessible to students from underrepresented groups.

The Arts

‘Vanessa’ Extends BSO’s Long ‘Concert Opera’ Tradition

BY JOHN ENGSTROM

The Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) has been doing “concert opera” in Symphony Hall for decades. In 1976, I was lucky enough to see Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s romantic opera *Eugene Onegin* in a semi-staged version conducted by Seiji Ozawa and starring the legendary Russian soprano Galina Vishnevskaya. Later concert operas of the Ozawa period included Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck*, Richard Strauss’s *Salome* and *Elektra*, all with renowned German dramatic soprano Hildegard Behrens. Under BSO music director Andris Nelsons, concert opera at Symphony Hall has carried on with distinguished accounts of *Lady Macbeth of the Mtenk District* by Dmitri Shostakovich, *Die Tote Stadt* by Erich

Wolfgang Korngold, and—this Jan. 8 and 10—*Vanessa* (1958) by American composer Samuel Barber and Italian librettist Gian Carlo Menotti. Barber is best known for his *Adagio for Strings* (1936). The opera is a 20th-century classic that has been recorded often—one of the recordings is conducted by Boston’s own Odyssey Opera director, Gil Rose—but seldom revived. *Vanessa* opened at the Metropolitan Opera in 1958, became an original cast recording, and won Barber a Pulitzer Prize. *Vanessa* is attractive to singers because of its melodies and the lyricism of Barber’s vocal writing, backed up by lush, romantic orchestration (rendered exquisitely by an orchestra in excellent form). The soloists of Jan. 8 and 10 included some heavy-hitters. As Vanessa’s mother, the Old Baroness, we had Swedish mezzo Anne Sophie von Otter,

familiar to audiences around the world for her recordings of opera, lieder, and even a pop collaboration with Elvis Costello on the Deutsche Grammophon label. BSO audiences also remember von Otter for her participation in Berlioz’s two-part, epic cycle *Les Troyens* conducted by the late James Levine. Vanessa herself was sung vibrantly by American soprano Jennifer Holliday, whose career has been gaining traction in Europe on the strength of her performances of works by Wagner and Strauss. Top-of-the-line American baritone Thomas Hampson was announced for the Old Doctor, but withdrew because of illness. He was replaced by the American baritone Patrick Carfizzi, a Metropolitan Opera veteran. Capable American lyric tenor Ganson Salmon, singing with the BSO for the first time, took on the part of Anatol, Vanessa’s

suitor and future husband. Rounding out the cast was Chinese bass Wei Wu as the Major Domo. Choral duties were carried off magnificently by Tanglewood Festival Chorus and Boston Lyric Opera Chorus. The semi-staging was overseen by BLO theater director Alexandra Dietrich. As long as you could tolerate the extremes of Menotti’s libretto—a bizarre mash-up of the divestiture of a country estate in Europe by a noble family (not unlike the bittersweet break-up of the family household in Anton Chekhov’s drama *The Cherry Orchard*) and lurid melodrama in the form of illicit pregnancy and a suicide attempt by one of the leading characters—*Vanessa* offered a good time at the opera, however concertized, and at the historic hall. *John Engstrom lives in the West Fens.*

Debut Novel Focuses on Young Lives Buffeted by Poverty and Violence



BY ALISON BARNET

Nikki Flionis, a Fenway resident for more than 40 years, has just published her first book. The intriguing novel intertwines teenage street crime, police, and an agency’s kindness and effectiveness in working with youth. *By the Sea* begins after a 6-year-old shoots a 7-year-old and no one knows where the gun came from. Had it been hidden in 15-year-old cousin JaQuan’s room? He goes on the run and is eventually rescued by Niecy and

Mickey of The SAFE (MissionSAFE, of which Nikki, in real life, is executive director). Niecy must be Nikki. It’s also about Boston-area neighborhoods—though not the Fenway. As a long-time South Ender, I particularly liked the accuracy of her descriptions of the South End and its history. I remember years ago when Nikki worked with low-income South End tenants “struggling to preserve housing.” I admired her take on things back then, and still do! In the book’s acknowledgements, Nikki writes: “The issues here remain very real, even if how and where they play out has changed. But by playing with time, I hope I give a thoughtful look at where Boston and its people were, and where we are today. This is a work of fiction and all its characters and happenings are fiction, though they are drawn from the experiences of a quarter of a lifetime working with young people and in neighborhoods hit hard by poverty and violence.” The book features several inspiring statements. Shelley, who writes press releases, says she “by now was aware of the beauty and history that could be found in all the city’s neighborhoods, even when desperation and poverty

obscured them.” Police detective Cassie “was beginning to understand that poverty, multigenerational and concentrated in particular areas, bred a lawlessness that came partly from hopelessness and desperation, and partly from an attempt to maintain pride and respect.” My only criticism of the book is that it’s hard to keep up with all the names, especially since some characters have more than one. JaQuan is known on the street as Q and sometimes Jakey or Malachi. Matthie is MD, Bookman is Boo, and Michele—co-founder of The SAFE—is Mickey. And then, of course, there are the OGs (Original Gangsters).

Alison Barnet lives in the South End. Purchase “By the Sea” on-line at Amazon and Barnes & Noble or visit flionisbooks.com.

LAST CALL

Ends Sun, 2/8
Martin Puryear: Nexus
A master of multiple media, Puryear creates objects (“sculptures” seems to simplistic) inspired by nature. Each of the 45 pieces offers surprising views from virtually every angle. mfa.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NIKKI FLIONIS

East Fens resident—and now novelist—Nikki Flionis

ARTSLINE

Boston Public Library Celebrates 250 Years of Ameria
The Boston Public Library has launched “Revolutionary Ideas: Boston250,” a year-long celebration with art exhibits, lectures, activities, events, and more. Current art exhibits include

- Through March 29, *Terrains of Independence* features maps, stories, and artifacts that reveal Boston’s Revolutionary-era history across geographic scales.
- Through April 21, *Revolution! 250 Years of Art & Activism in Boston* brings together more than 100 artworks and documents from the BPL’s Special Collections. The exhibit showcases both familiar and lesser-known stories about America’s ongoing struggle for freedom, civil rights, and belonging. Find the full list of programs at bpl.org/revolutionary-ideas.

MFA Spotlights Hindu Prints Rarely Seen in the U.S.
Divine Color: Hindu Prints from Modern Bengal explores the origins of these popular prints and how they’ve shaped Indian pop culture, religion, and society. The first exhibit of its kind in the U.S., *Divine Color* focuses on creation of these works by Bengali artists in 19th-century Calcutta. With more than 100 objects, the show includes other prints, paintings, sculpture, and textiles. The exhibit continues through May 31.

MassArt Art Museum Opens Two Exhibits
The MassArt Art Museum (MAAM) has two new exhibits. *Press & Pull: Two Decades at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop* features more than 35 prints that honor Blackburn’s pioneering workshop and its lasting impact on American printmaking and community-building. *Masako Miki: Midnight March* transforms the Paine Gallery into an immersive, site-responsive installation featuring vividly colored, needle-felted sculptures inspired by Japanese folklore. Both exhibits are free and open to the public.

TheArts

MFA OBSERVES MLK DAY WITH FREE OPEN HOUSE

The Museum of Fine Arts offered free admission for Massachusetts residents in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 19. With entry offered on a first-come, first-served basis, many visitors waited patiently in the long lines that along Huntington Avenue. Special events included a guided tour of art works that celebrated Dr. King's legacy. "A Little History" by Castle of our Skins—Boston-based creators of Black cultural experiences through music and education—celebrated Black historical figures like Phillis Wheatley, Barack Obama, and George Washington Carver through poetry accompanied by music. Tours, lectures, other musical performances, and art events helped round out the day.

— MARY ANN BROGAN



PHOTO: MARY ANN BROGAN

Line Dancing Is Having A Moment On Lansdowne At Loretta's

BY MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

Even Cowgirls Get the Blues"? If author Tom Robbins had met the legions of exuberant ladies who braved freezing temperatures to arrive with dancing boots at the last country-music bar in Boston, he might have given his classic novel a different title.

The bar in question is Loretta's Last Call, a countrified venue on Lansdowne Street with a swing and line dancing schedule that's dense enough to pass muster as the exercise regimen to satisfy all your New Year's resolutions.

On a recent Wednesday night, crews of cowpokes attended a night of line dancing, hosted by the New Hampshire-based dance school 603 Productions. The outfit has been presenting dance nights at the venue on Sundays and Wednesdays since December.

"We dance to all kinds of music," said 603 Productions owner Kathleen

Crocker. "Sunday is more of a mix of genres because it's a DJ night, but Wednesday is mostly country since it is dancing to a live band."

There was no mistaking the country tilt to Wednesday night. The floor was full of 20- and 30-somethings, mostly female, bedecked in complimentary LED "light-up" cowboy hats. Dance instructor Kim Carpentino situated herself center stage, mic in hand, and called out the steps. Cries of "king step," "v-step," "rocking chair," and "paddle turn" swam above dancehall remixes of chart-topping country stars like Shania Twain. The dancers responded with good cheer and according to their skill level, ranging from true beginners to a more advanced crowd.

In between the instructional blocks, the Pat Kennedy Band took over, playing on theme with a country- and rock-flavored setlist that included Kenny Loggins' "Footloose," Tom Petty's



PHOTO: MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

The Pat Kennedy Band at Loretta's

"American Girl," and "Johnny B. Goode" by the legendary Chuck Berry.

Pat Kennedy said his band has been performing at "Last Call Line Dancing" since late last year. The series keeps growing in popularity: "[We] started out with five to 10 people showing up last November, and it has been getting bigger and bigger every week, almost filling out the dance floor now!"

Boston is a city with many fine offerings, but it's not generally ranked high for nightlife. What draws a Bostonian out for a night of communal dancing?

"It's fun," says Mission Hill resident Sarah Prusik. "I don't feel like I need to know all the moves." Prusik has previously participated in communal dance events like the Boston Urban Ceilidh at the Boston Celtic Music Festival. She suggests that the cultural aspect of communal dance, whether it draws from southern or Celtic tradition, is "a plus." For some, the cultural dimension of communal dance is the ultimate icebreaker that helps them cut loose and not take themselves too seriously.

Another draw? In the words of lifestyle blogger Claire Mac: "no partner, no problem." Unlike pair-oriented dance styles, you can show up to line dancing alone, or with a group of friends, without having to poke the hornet's nest of social demands required to find a dance partner. It also leaves you free to hitch your wagon to someone new, if that's what you're wanting.

Despite the music, dancing, and all of the bar's deep fried decor—Jack Daniel's promotional posters, a stray Florida license plate, a neon cowboy boot, and wagon wheel chandeliers—the reality of living in a Northeast metropolis never quite gets lost in the Southern fantasy in Fenway.

The Celtics were on the TV. Sam Adams was on tap. And a pair of women at the bar were dealing each other "Bush cards," a satirical deck of playing cards that roasted George W. Bush during his

first term (a liberal deep cut, if there ever was one). Try that in a small town.

But nobody said the Southern fantasy needs to last forever. Just long enough to get through one glorious evening, and let the music, cowboy hats, and hard seltzers take you where they will. Giddy up!

Michael Gutierrez lives in Mission Hill. He is the editor of Hump Day News (humpday.news).

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The Effort Of A Full Loved Life

A poem in memory of Matti Kniva Spencer, 1951-2021

There are the shadows of two people walking
across the marshes or on a granite cliff,
wool hat covering your naked skull,
creases in your cheeks as you smile
in five fluent languages.
All those cafes and diners
serving fried clams, potatoes and sausages
swallowed with a grin
after reciting grace.
Unity reads your jacket,
Naughty or nice on your t-shirt.

Arms wide open, hugging the air,
the homeless veteran of the street,
the diabolical neighbor in need,
the old woman with the parrot,
the neighborhood in need of rousing,
the rebel in need of attention.

I want you to know
you are always with me
when I eat pancakes for breakfast.
Have you really gone from this planet?
Your open heart still sustains us.

—SUSAN SKLAN

February

CALENDAR

Now ➔ Sun, 2/22

The MFA presents the Boston **FESTIVAL OF FILMS FROM IRAN**, “a nation that has consistently produced some of the world’s most compelling cinema in spite of stringent artistic censorship.” The lineup includes two classics and six new titles, including *It Was Just An Accident*, fresh off its Palme d’Or at Cannes and up for two 2026 Academy Awards. Various times; film details and tickets (\$12 members/\$15 nonmembers) at mfa.org.

Now ➔ Thu, 2/29

THE DYE IS CAST: INTERESTS & IDEALS THAT MOTIVATED THE BOSTON TEA PARTY. Massachusetts Historical Society commemorates the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party and showcases historical artifacts. The exhibit features individuals—such as Paul Revere, Phillis Wheatley, and more—whose stories give insight as to why the Boston Tea Party happened. **masshist.org/exhibitions.** 10am–4:45pm, Mon, Wed, Thu–Friday, 1154 Boylston St.

Now ➔ Sun, 3/3

The Huntington presents **STAND UP IF YOU’RE HERE TONIGHT**, an interactive play written and directed by John Kolvenbach. Jim Ortlieb plays a man desperate for connection, bent by isolation, and deeply in love with the audience itself. This underground experience in the, 150-seat Maso Studio blurs the line between audience and performer. Maso Studio, 264 Huntington Ave. The performance runs for approximately 65 minutes and is followed by a social hour where audiences interact with members of the cast and creative team and with each other. A beverage during the social hour is included in the price of the ticket. Visit huntingtontheatre.org for showtimes and tickets.

Wed, 2/4

Join Fenway Forward’s Organizing Committee for a **HOUSING JUSTICE DINNER WITH DELEGATES**, a panel and Q&A with state legislators for the Fenway. We’ll be talking to our legislators about what

we need for our neighborhood to be an affordable place to live. Dinner provided. Contact jculbertson@fenwayforward.org for more information. 6pm to 7:30pm, The Guild House, 20 Charlesgate West.

Sat, 2/7

Vivo Performing Arts presents **MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO**, “one of music’s most original and captivating voices,” performing music from her 2024 album, *The Gospel of James Baldwin*. Berklee Performance Center, 136 Mass. Ave. Details and tickets (\$49.50-98.50) from berklee.edu/BPC/events/meshell-ndegeocello

Fri, 2/6 & Sat, 2/7

- **BOSTON CONSERVATORY AT BERKLEE COMMERCIAL DANCE MAJORS** perform world premieres by choreographers Marcus Allen Cobb, Bo Park, Ray Mercer, and Dance Division faculty—plus the reconstruction of an iconic Bob Fosse work. Part of the Conservatory’s Center Stage Series. Fri-Sat 7:30pm; Sat 2pm. Huntington Theatre, 264 Huntington Ave. Tickets at bostontheatrescene.com.
- **CABARET OF THE FENWAY: !DREAM ROLES!** A lineup of musical theater favorites, produced and performed by the Colleges of the Fenway Theater Ensemble students. The second annual Cabaret of the Fenway features performers’ dream roles—any role from any musical. Celebrate the joy of their theater community and revel in students’ exciting acting, singing, dancing talents. 7:30pm. Tickets at eventbrite.com/e/cabaret-of-the-fenway-dream-roles-tickets-1977090569114.

Thu, 2/12 ➔ Sun 3/15

In **WE HAD A WORLD**, a dying woman wants her grandson to write a nasty, grudge-settling play about their family. Despite that grim premise, The Huntington’s artistic director, Loretta Greco, calls this a comedy “full of laughter, truly awful behavior, and enduring love—in other words, it’s just like family!” Tue-Thu 7pm; Fri-Sat 7:30pm; Sat-Sun 2pm. Calderwood Pavilion, 527 Tremont St. Details and tickets (\$29-150)

at HuntingtonTheatre.org. Use code WORLD20 for 20% off through 2/12.

Sat, 2/14

What better movie for Valentine’s Day than Wong Kar-Wai’s influential 2000 romance **IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE?** The yearning, atmospheric film takes place in early-1960s Hong Kong. 2pm, Remis Auditorium, MFA. Tickets (\$12 members/\$15 nonmembers) and details at mfa.org.

Sun, 2/15

BLACK COACHES CLASSIC 2026. The mission of the Black Coaches Classic is to promote increased representation of Black coaches and administrators in senior-level positions of scholastic sports. A full day of high school basketball, with the first game at 12pm and the final game at 6:30pm. The games will feature music, crowd energy, and giveaways. Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, 75 Malcolm X Blvd.

Fri, 2/20

- The BSO presents a **COMMUNITY CONCERT**, its long-running series of small ensembles made up of top BSO musicians. Bottesini’s *Gran Duo for Violin and Double Bass* and Schubert’s *Piano Quintet in E-flat*, Op. 44. Fenway Center (former St. Ann’s Church) at St. Stephen and Gainsborough streets. 1:30pm. Reserve tickets at tinyurl.com/bdf9pp48.
- Music For Food presents **A BENEFIT FOR THE WOMEN’S LUNCH PLACE.** The concert features MFF founder and New England Conservatory faculty member Kim Kashkashian, joined by Marc-André Hamelin and other members of the Conservatory faculty. Program includes works by Bach, Bartók, Fauré, Kurtág, and Shostakovich. Suggested donation \$40 adults/\$15 students. 7pm, Jordan Hall. Details at musicforfood.net.

Sat, 2/21

- **ONE FENWAY, MANY CULTURES.** Creating spaces of belonging, community connection, and celebration is more

@THE CENTER

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

- **Tuesday, Feb. 10 & 24, 5:30pm: BASIC SPANISH PHRASES.**
- **Friday, Feb. 27, 4pm to 5:30pm: SOUND MIND EXPERIENCES WITH MOIRA.** Gentle, trauma-informed wellness sessions integrating therapeutic sound, mindful movement, breathwork, and deep listening practices.
- **Thursdays, 4:30pm to 5:30pm: MOVEMENT MATTERS.** Dance inspired low-impact exercise with a Boston Conservatory student instructor.

- important than ever. Attendees are invited to wear clothing that represents their culture while enjoying dance performances and DJ, interactive activities, resources for immigrant rights, and light refreshments. Interpretation is available upon request; contact Cassie White at 857-217-4370 or cwhite@fenwayforward.org. Fenway Community Center, 1282 Boylston Street, 2–4pm. FREE
- Hundreds of Bostonians will brave the cold in their underwear during **CUPID’S UNDIE RUN**, the nation’s largest pantsless party and mile-ish run for charity. The event raises awareness of neurofibromatosis (NF), a genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow on nerves throughout the body and raises funds for NF research through the Children’s Tumor Foundation. Find out more at join.ctf.org/event/2026-cupids-undie-run-boston/e705277.

Thu, 2/26 ➔ Sat, 2/28

Judging by the long list of warnings (Nudity! Violence! Simulated sex acts!), the benign-sounding **GOOD BREEDING** will deliver some memorable theater. Playwright Robert O’Hara moves the action of the classical Greek *Orestieia* to a debauched Studio 54 and retells it from the female characters’ points of view. Thu-Sat 7:30pm; Sat 2pm; Boston Conservatory Theatre, 31 Hemenway Street. Details and tickets \$21.50-36.50 at berklee.edu/events/boston-conservatory-theater.

Sat, 2/28

The Boston Ward 4 Democratic Committee convenes its **ANNUAL CAUCUS** to elect delegates to the 2026 State Democratic Convention (May 29-30 in Worcester). The public is warmly invited. Live registration 10:30–11:15am; call to order at 11am; nomination and election of delegates at 12pm. At Union Church, 485 Columbus Ave. Register at bit.ly/Ward4DemsCaucus_2026. For more information, contact info@bostonward4dems.org.

COMMUNITY meetings

TUE, FEB. 3 Join the Boston Planning Department for a public meeting to discuss the proposal for **154 TERRACE STREET IN MISSION HILL**. The meeting will consider the Notice of Project Change filed on Dec. 9 and its potential impacts. Please register for the meeting using this link: bosplans.org/154TerraceSt-0203.

WED, FEB. 4 The Boston Public Library Fund hosts a webinar featuring Scott E. Squillace, Esq., for an in-depth exploration

of **ESTATE PLANNING FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES AND NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILIES**. LGBTQ+ individuals face evolving questions about marriage rights, legal protections, and long-term planning. The program will trace the history of LGBTQ+ rights and the development of key case law, examining how these legal changes affect estate planning today. This webinar is essential for same-sex couples considering marriage and for professionals advising

them on estate planning strategies. Includes a question and answer portion. 12:30pm. Register at bplfund.org/events.

THU, FEB. 12 Join your neighbors for the February meeting of **FENWAY FORWARD’S ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**, neighbors interested in advocating together for affordable housing and other neighborhood needs. Dinner provided. Contact lruizsanchez@fenwayforward.org for more information. 6– 7:30pm, Fenway Community Center, 1282 Boylston St.

ARTHUR ROSE CELEBRATES 107TH BIRTHDAY



On Jan. 28, District 7 City Councilor Miniard Culpepper, left, joined East Fens resident Arthur Rose for Arthur’s 107th birthday celebration at Church Park. Councilor Culpepper brought a resolution from Boston City Council “hereby recogniz[ing] Arthur M. Rose, a longtime resident of the city of Boston and a distinguished World War II and Korean War veteran, for his extraordinary life and service.”

SENIOR CENTER EVENTS

- The Pererborough Senior Center operates as a drop-in center. Join us for a program or two and bring your friends! The Senior Center is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12pm to 3:30pm.
- For more information call Tracey or Ariana at 617-536-7154.
- Tue, Feb. 3, 12pm: **BLACK HISTORY TRIVIA & BINGO**
 - Thu, Feb. 5, 12pm: **MENTAL WELLNESS WITH MARIA TUMANG**, Brigham & Women’s Hospital
 - Tue, Feb. 10, 12pm: **FILM SCREENING OF “THE WAY WE WERE,”** a 1973 romantic drama starring Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford
 - Thu, Feb. 12, 12pm: **VALENTINE’S TRIVIA WITH POLICE** from District 4

- Thu, Feb. 12, 1pm: **MAKE A VALENTINE’S CARD** for someone special
- Thu, Feb. 19, 12pm: **SOCIAL HOUR WITH PANCAKES** (bring your favorite topping)
- Thu, Feb. 26, 12pm: **CITY OF BOSTON AGE STRONG AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS PRESENTATION** with Joseph Goncalves, Volunteer Program Director
- Tuesdays, 2pm: **MUSIC4WELLNESS** with Berklee College of Music
- Wednesdays, 12pm: **TECH CAFE** with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly
- Wednesdays, 1:15pm: **INTERGENERATIONAL CITYSITES** with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly