Mayoral, city council hopefuls stump in Chinatown

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Chinatown Resident Association and the Governor’s Asian American Commission hosted the fifth Boston mayoral forum with Dan Conley, Suffolk County district attorney, on Sept. 4 at the Josiah Quincy School. City council at-large candidates Michelle Wu, Michael Flaherty and Gareth Saunders also spoke, as the Sept. 24 primary loomed large.

Two of the 12 mayoral hopefuls will be selected at the primary, while four of the 19 at-large city council candidates will be chosen to face off in the Nov. 5 election.

Conley’s paternal grandfather was born on Tyler Street in 1894, making him the only candidate with “roots” in Chinatown. He spoke about his track record in law enforcement to make Boston a safe destination city, along with increasing affordable housing and education reform.

“We need to grow our middle class,” Conley said. “The best way to do that is through education.”

Wu came to Boston as a Harvard undergraduate student. She volunteered at the Asian American Civic Association by teaching citizenship classes, and later worked in Mayor Thomas Menino’s office and on Sen. Elizabeth Warren’s election campaign.

“Chinatown was the reason why I was going to make Boston my home and raising my family here,” Wu said. “It used to do everything to make sure Chinatown is a thriving community with safe, clean streets, and opportunities for children and our seniors.”

Flaherty touted his city council record, voting for Chinese and Vietnameseบอลลิต, a Chinatown library and the Chinatown Crime watch to be replicated in other neighborhoods and business districts.

“I will continue to fight for Chinatown, for our seniors and for affordable housing,” Flaherty said.

Saunders represented Roxbury on the city council from 1994 to 1999, supporting more police officers on the street, youth services, and funding for HIV and aids.

“I will fight to improve the Boston Public School system,” Saunders said. “I will work with small businesses, as there are more of permits and fees, which must change.”

A sixth mayoral forum will take place Sept. 11 with Mike Ross and Charles Yancey.

On Sept. 13, the CRA will host an August Moon Festival celebration at the school.

THE CHINATOWN RESIDENT ASSOCIATION

The Chinatown Resident Association co-chair Marie Moy, Dan Conley, CRA co-chair Henry Yee and two residents join a mayoral forum at the Josiah Quincy School on Sept. 4. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

Parcel 24 ‘One Greenway’ holds construction meeting for residents

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Parcel 24 “One Greenway” project broke ground in August, with a community meeting held August 29 at 38 Oak Street, hosted by developers the Asian Community Development Corporation and the New Boston Fund. Builder Suffolk Construction also attended the meeting for the 362-unit development.

“This is the most affordable large-scale project in downtown Boston,” said Janelle Chan, executive director of ACDC. “It doubles the affordable housing and the government funds in Chinatown.”

Two buildings will be on the site bordered by Kneeland and Hudson streets, with the first 21-story building expected to be completed by summer 2015. A second five- or six-story building along from the existing Hudson Street tenements will be built after the first building is done. The first high-rise building has 217 market-rate units and 95 affordable units for rentals, while the second building will have 50 condos for affordable home ownership. An underground parking lot will have 137 parking spaces, including 50 public spaces.

Construction work will take place from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Parking will be blocked off on Hudson Street, but not south of Harvard Street.

Tao Tang Village chairman Henry Yee asked what flood protection was planned, as TTV was built 40 years ago and experienced sinking foundations 10 years ago. The high-rise building will be built on a foundation and parking lot going 40 feet down, with deep foundation piles or pikes underneath that reach bedrock. Chinatown’s soil quality is poor because the area was formerly sandy beaches.

Suffolk Construction is recruiting Boston residents, minorities and women to work on the site. If they are not union members, Suffolk can help them apply. Interested individuals can submit applications at the job site.

For more information, individuals can contact Ernie Carrier of Suffolk Construction at (617) 799-1170 or ecarrier@suffolkconstruction.com and Brian McPherson at (617) 517-4446 or bmcperson@suffolkconstruction.com.
Event Calendar

English tutoring
September to November
Good Neighbor Lutheran Church
308 West Quincy Avenue
North Quincy, MA 02171

The Good Neighbor Lutheran Church will host an English tutoring class, with different sub-class levels for different levels of English learning.

BCEC Fall English/citizenship class
Saturday, Sept. 7
9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
249 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02111

Boston Chinese Evangelical Church will hold a Fall English/citizenship application program. The program includes classes (9:30 a.m. to noon every Saturday) starting from Sept. 7 to Dec. 14. Fee: $25 per person. For more information, please contact (617) 426-5711.

Public safety awareness workshop
Saturday, Sept. 7
10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
38 Oak Street, Metropolitan Community Room
Boston, MA 02111

Boston Police Department Sgt. Tom Lema will inform the public about the community crime rate, enhance public safety and stimulate public awareness of crime.

Boston Arthritis Walk
Sunday, Sept. 8
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Artsesi Park
1255 Soldiers Field Road
Brighton, MA 02135

This is a great opportunity for members of the community to help support the Arthritis Foundation in their mission to prevent, control and cure the more than 100 types of arthritis and related diseases. Participant of all ages and abilities are encouraged to join.

Diabetes outpatient intensive program
Thursday, Sept. 9
Joslin Diabetes Center
6 Joslin Place
Boston, MA 02215

This four-day program is an intensive interaction between the diabetes management experts at the world-renowned Joslin Diabetes Center. It will provide education and tools for controlling diabetes. Please call (617) 390-2628 for more information.

Boston mayoral candidate forum
Wednesday, Sept. 11
6:30 p.m.
Josiah Quincy School
885 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02112

Gov. Deval Patrick’s Asian American Commission Council will host a forum with two mayoral candidates: Mike Ross and Charles Tansey.

The Chinatown Coalition will hold its monthly meeting at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center. The public is welcome to attend.

Chinatown Resident Association
August Moon Festival Friday, Sept. 13
6 p.m.
885 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02112

The CRA annual Moon Festival Celebration will take place at the Josiah Quincy School auditorium. Traditional music and dance performances will take place. Refreshments will be provided. For more information, please contact Terry Yin at chinatownresidents@gmail.com or (617) 851-1701.

Films at the Gate
Sept. 15 to 17
7 p.m.
Chinatown Park
185 Kneeland Street
Boston, MA 02112

The Asian Community Development Corporation will be hosting its 8th Annual Films at the Gate. It is a free outdoor theater, showing kung fu and other classic Chinese language films.

NAAAP Boston second annual leadership forum
Saturday, Sept. 14
12 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Hilton Back Bay
40 Dalton Street
Boston, MA 02115

The National Association of Asian American Professionals-Boston chapter will host its second annual forum featuring a career and information fair with 15 to 20 companies and networking opportunities. Tickets are available with discounts for students. For more information, please visit www.naaapboston.org/LeadershipForum.aspx.

Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council meeting
Monday, Sept. 16
6 p.m.
90 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02112

The Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council will hold its monthly meeting at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. The public is welcome to attend.

*Community Conversation* speaker series: Lisa Wong
Thursday, Sept. 19
6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
38 Ash Street
Boston, MA 02111

Gov. Deval Patrick’s Asian American Commission and the Chinatown Residents Association will host a discussion featuring Fitchburg Mayor or Lisa Wong.

Princess Changing
Cantonese opera Saturday, Sept. 21
6 p.m.
John Hancock Hall
180 Berkeley Street
Boston, MA 02116

The Que Sheng Chinese Music & Opera Group will present the Cantonese opera “Princess Changing.” Tickets are $15 or $25. For more information, please call (617) 901-2861.

East meets West: Kite and Cultural Festival Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 28 to 29
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Pope John Paul II Park
Hallet Street
Boston, MA 02124

The 11th East meets West: Kite and Cultural Festival will feature the best kites, kite-flying demos and a kite-making workshop. For more information, please visit www.emw21.com or call (508) 863-7389.

Contest winners announced
September 6, 2013

SAMPAN is New England’s only bimonthly bilingual English-Chinese newspaper. It is nonprofit and nonpartisan. Founded in 1972, SAMPAN is published by the Asian American Civic Association. SAMPAN is distributed free in Chinatown and the Greater Boston area. All donations to the publication are tax deductible. Subscription: $60/year (1st class mail), $30/year (3rd class mail).

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State secretary of education supports two-way language immersion schools

BY HAO LU

Matthew Malone, Mass. secretary of education, hosted an ethnic media roundtable on August 29 at the Statehouse. (Image courtesy of Hao Lu)

Matthew Malone, Mass. secretary of education, is a big fan of two-way immersion schools, as he said he is working to put multilingualism as an option. “It is not only a solution to engage second language learners to learn English, but also a great model for English speakers to learn a second language,” he said. “Kids can graduate from high school, being able to speak English, Spanish and Chinese.”

Malone explained strategic goals of the Executive Office of Education, which was established in 2008 and is responsible for achieving Gov. Deval Patrick’s vision for public education in Massachusetts.

“Our first goal is to accelerate innovation throughout our public education system,” Malone said. “We will spend time to create new models to engage young people to look at how we deal with second language learners and get them ready and prepared for college and work.”

The EOE team also looks forward to creating direct pathways for students to college and careers, and to closing achievement gaps, specifically reading proficiency.

Malone said that by enhancing the early education standards, increasing kindergarten readiness, and building a birth through grade three assessment system, the office will accelerate reading proficiency for all students by the end of third grade.

In terms of better education for second language students, Malone said he is a big fan of two-way immersion schools, and hope both schools and parents would like to put multilingualism as an option.

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Chinatown crime down but homelessness, drug issues rise

BY LING-MEI WONG

Capt. Tom Lee of the Boston Police (right) discusses local crime at the Chinatown Safety Committee meeting Sept. 4 at the Doubletree Hotel. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong)

The Chinatown Safety Committee met Sept. 4 for its monthly meeting at 821 Washington Street.

South Street restaurants Les Zygomates and Sorriso will be under new management by Anthony Botta. Both are currently managed by chef-owner Ian Jost.

The Courtyard by Marriott Hotel at 275 Tremont Street will be undergoing renovations. The Encore Lounge closed and will be renovated as a library and reading room for hotel patrons. Another space, the Caprice Restaurant and Lounge, closed and will be rented to a retail tenant such as a cafe or frozen yogurt shop, said Cathleen Wardley, general manager at the Courtyard by Marriott Boston Downtown.

Boston Police Department Capt. Tom Lee reported crime was falling in District A-1. A total of 10 larcenies occurred in the past 30 days, with overall larcenies down 20 percent compared in 2012.

Officers made 50 arrests in the past month, including 22 arrests for drugs. Lee called the community to call 911 about individuals seen publicly sleeping on park benches, publicly drinking or using drugs.

As schools are back in session, traffic issues should be reported to the police, said Sgt. Tom Lema. Tour buses in Chinatown that are illegally parked should also be reported.

Chinatown Main Streets has partnered with the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association’s street cleaning program. It is raising funds to hire two cleaners to sweep Chinatown every day.

Applications available for pick up at: Attleboro City Hall and Attleboro Public Library, 93 County Street.

Housing Lottery

 Applications may be picked up in person at 315 A St., BOSTON, MA 02210 or online at: www.massaccesshousingregistry.com

Applications must be postmarked by 10/4/2013. Selection by lottery. Asset, Use & Occupancy Restrictions apply. Preference for Boston Residents. Preference for minimum household size of 1 person per bedroom. Applicants are encouraged to attend. Applications available for immediate occupancy upon approval. The two bedroom accessible unit is on the 2nd floor. For more information, contact Delphic Associates at 410-401-2000.
Martin Luther King Day protest unites Boston community groups

BY LING-MEI WONG

The 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and Martin Luther King’s legendary “I have a dream” speech drew community advocates to the Boston Common on August 28. The Chinatown Resident Association and the Chinese Progressive Association participated in the protest, holding signs for affordable housing and greater diversity on construction sites.

“Dr. King talked about economic inequalities and the rights of workers,” said Hakim Cunningham, director of organizing for the Boston Workers Alliance. He urged for a higher minimum wage, supporting the fast food workers strike for a $15 per hour wage. Other groups at the protest included ethnic, labor and LGBT advocates.

Taiwan official visits Boston’s Chinatown

BY LING-MEI WONG

Roy Yuan-Rong Leu, vice minister of the Overseas Community Affairs Council of Taiwan (front row third from left), visited the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of New England on August 28 at a community event. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

A Taiwan trade delegation visited Boston’s Chinatown on August 28 and 29, including the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of New England.

Roy Yuan-Rong Leu, vice minister of the Overseas Community Affairs Council of Taiwan, thanked the overseas Chinese community for its support. He also appreciated their efforts to promote Chinese culture in the United States.

Backlog of family immigration cases poses continuing problem

BY SYLVANA CHAN

Immigration reform has lain stagnant since the legislative recess in June. While the House of Representatives will reconvene in September, the future of immigration reform remains uncertain. Fervent discussions continue, with the earliest legislative sessions expected for October.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the nation’s largest legal and civil rights organization serving the Asian American community, supports immigration reform to eliminate the backlog of current family-sponsored immigrant visas and provide a more effective system for Asian Americans to reunite with their relatives abroad.

The Family Visa Waiting List

Of the 4.3 million applicants for these family-based visa numbers, nearly half are from Asian countries. These applicants wait years — some times decades — to receive their green cards. AAJC has urged the House to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill that strengthens the ability for U.S. citizens to reunite with their loved ones in a timely manner, stressing family reunification as a cornerstone of America’s immigration system.

In addition, family-based visa quotas are drastically outdated. AAJC has pointed out that the system has not been reformed in over 20 years, imposes an unconscionably narrow concept of family on ethnic groups, and is out of touch with the current needs of families.

Immigration reform will allow immigrant families to come to the United States in search of opportunity — working hard, paying taxes, buying homes and starting job-creating businesses — directly benefiting the U.S. economy.

Arlington 360

Arlington 360 is a 164 unit rental apartment community located in Arlington at 4105 Symmes Circle. There are Twenty Six (26) Affordable apartments available to households with incomes at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Nine (9) Middle-Income apartments are available to households with incomes below 120% of Area Median Income (AMI). Apartments include designer finishes such as plank flooring, stainless steel appliances and designer cabinetry in the kitchens, tile floors in the baths, and in-unit washers and dryers. Community amenities include a pool, fitness center, clubhouse, two business centers, tot lot, sport court, community garden and easy access to two public parks. Please note that apartments may be converted to condominiums. The date of conversion is unknown but eligible tenants in the units will be given the first opportunity to purchase their unit at affordable or middle-income prices. Please see the Information Packet for more details.

Affordable Apartments for Households Under 80% AMI

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Completed Applications and Required Income Documentation must be received, not postmarked, by 2 pm on Nov 5th 2013. A Public Info Session will be held on Oct 8th, 2013 at 6:00 pm in the Arlington Senior Center Main Room (27 Maple Street, next to Town Hall). The Lottery will be held on Nov 18th 6 pm in the Arlington Senior Center Main Room.

For Lottery Information and Application, or for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, go to www.s-e-b.com/lottery or call (617) 782-6900 x3 and leave a message.

The Family Visa Waiting List of the 4.3 million applicants, nearly half are from Asian countries.

T h e U.S. fam i l y - b a s e d v i s a s a r e g r o u p e d i n t o t w o c a t e g o r i e s: i m m e d i a t e r el atives and fam i ly p refer ence. I m m e d i a t e r el atives have close family relationships with U.S. citizens and generally include spouses, parents, and unmarried children under 21 years of age. The family preference category are for specific, more distant, family relationships with a U.S. citizen and some specified relationships with lawful permanent residents or green card holders, including adult children and siblings of citizens, and spouses and unmarried children of green card holders.

The majority of Asians immigrating to the United States do so through the family-based immigration system. In 2012, 86 percent of immigrant visas issued for Asian countries were family-based.

Arlington 360 Affordable and Middle-Income Housing Lottery

Arlington, MA www.s-e-b.com/lottery

www.LiveArlington360.com

Affordable and Middle Income Housing Lottery

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Did you know? Five facts about smoking and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

SUBMITTED BY STATEPOINT

For many of the 12 million Americans with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, breathlessness, coughing and mucus production may not be symptoms of a nagging cold, but serious, daily effects of a progressive, irreversible lung disease that includes the respiratory illnesses chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

While COPD is a leading cause of death and disability in the U.S. and worldwide, many Americans are not aware that the disease even exists.

“Awareness is important to help ensure people are being diagnosed and treated properly,” said Antonio Anzueto, a pulmonary specialist and professor of medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. “Symptoms of COPD such as shortness of breath and a lingering cough — can often be attributed to something else. With increased awareness, we are able to diagnose and treat COPD earlier, which can limit the amount of lung damage and help improve the quality of life for patients.”

Facts you should know about COPD

• COPD is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. and kills more than 120,000 Americans each year. That’s approximately one death every four minutes. In recent years, COPD death rates for women have risen steadily. Today, more women than men die from COPD each year.
• Only half of the people living with COPD in the U.S. have been correctly diagnosed, potentially leaving an additional 12 million Americans with undiagnosed COPD. One reason for under-diagnosis is that the symptoms of COPD can be mistaken for other conditions, such as asthma, another chronic inflammatory lung disease. While COPD and asthma have similar characteristics, they are two distinct conditions with varying treatment options.
• Smoking is identified as the most common risk factor for COPD. However, as approximately 20 percent of smokers develop COPD, it is believed that genetic and environmental factors can also influence the risk of developing COPD. It is also now recognized that 10 to 20 percent of patients have never smoked. Nonetheless, smoking accounted for as much as 90 percent of COPD-related deaths.
• The assessment of COPD should determine the severity of airflow limitation in the lungs, the impact of symptoms on a patient’s health and a patient’s future risk of events, such as a flare-up or exacerbation that could lead to physician office visits or hospitalization. This evaluation helps determine the progression of disease and guide therapeutic recommendations for each patient.

Secondhand smoke kills

SUBMITTED BY BOSTON ASIAN YOUTH ESSENTIAL SERVICE

Secondhand smoke kills 600,000 people worldwide and 42,000 in the United States annually, according to 2011 CNN reports. Here in Massachusetts, 1,000 people (from secondhand smoke) die each year. We don’t want the Chinatown community to be a part of these statistics, but we’re afraid we might be more vulnerable than other populations because of the role smoking plays in our culture. In Asian cultures, people greet one another with a cigarette as a sign of respect. This tradition is still part of life in Chinatown.

We are smoke-free youth educators from Boston Asian Youth Essential Service. We are concerned about the health of our community. We want to raise awareness about the negative health effects of living in an environment where one is exposed to secondhand smoke. We support smoke-free housing policies to protect the health of Chinatown residents.

We aren’t alone in our concerns. Residents living in Tai Tung Village and Mass Pike Towers want healthier homes and smoke-free developments for themselves and their families too. In 2011, a Boston Asian YES survey conducted by youth found 65 percent of Tai Tung Village residents and 71 percent of residents in Mass Pike Towers are concerned about secondhand smoke.

Residents in these two housing developments have good reason to be concerned. There are 7,000 chemicals in tobacco, with more than 250 proven to be harmful and at least 69 carcinogens. Carcinogens are substances that can cause all types of cancer. Secondhand smoke can cause chronic diseases like lung cancer.

There is also evidence suggesting secondhand smoke may be linked with childhood leukemia and cancers of the larynx (voice box), pharynx (throat), brain, bladder, rectum, stomach and breast.

Secondhand smoke is when a person inhales smoke from a smoker indirectly. Many people know that smoking is unhealthier; however, they don’t know that secondhand smoke is also extremely harmful. Studies show that 21 million or 35 percent of children live in homes where residents or visitors smoke on a daily basis. The majority of U.S. children — 50 to 75 percent — contain the breakdown of nicotine in their blood. We don’t want Chinatown’s children to be part of those figures, but unfortunately our surveys indicate they are.

We want more smoke-free homes in Chinatown. We support residents living in Tai Tung Village and Mass Pike Towers who want healthier and smoke-free living for themselves and their families.

In smoke-free environments in Boston that are smoke-free have great support from the residents. It has even helped some long-term smokers quit smoking, and it may help prevent a new generation of smokers.

By informing residents of the harmful effects caused by secondhand smoke, we hope it will encourage owners and policy-makers to support smoke-free housing, which will reduce the impact of secondhand smoke.

Image courtesy of Flickr user Justin Shearer.
Most people know smoking can do extreme harm to their lungs and hearts. However, few of them have ever thought about other common overlooked side effects of smoking, which are the effects of tobacco use on their eyes, hair and oral health.

How smoking harms your vision
Smoking has been linked to cataracts and macular degeneration, which are two of the leading causes of vision loss. Cataracts have been considered as an age-related condition which occurs when the eye’s naturally clear lens grows cloudy, and patients develop blurry vision and cannot see things clearly. Smoking alters the cells of the lens through oxidation, which means the more you smoke, the more likely you will develop cataracts. Heavy smokers who puff 15 cigarettes a day or more have up to three times the risk of cataracts as non-smokers, according to the Department of Health in New York.

Studies also show that risk of smokers developing age-related macular degeneration, a disease causing “blind spots” and impairing central vision, is three times higher than nonsmokers.

Smoking and hair loss
Smoking not only hurts your eyes, but your hair too. Studies show that smokers have thiner hair than nonsmokers, since the toxic chemicals in smoke can damage the DNA in hair and genes that control cell-damaging free radicals. For men, that means smoking will increase their risk of baldness.

Thin hair may sound OK to some people, but hair loss should be a big threat to heavy smokers. Smoking contributes to hair loss by slowing down your hair growth rate while speeding up the rate at which your hair falls out. When you smoke, the toxic byproducts go into your body, making it difficult for your hair cells to reproduce into healthy ones.

Smoking and oral health
Smoking can actually make you four times more likely to develop oral cancer, which also brings bad breath, stained teeth, teeth discoloration, decreased sense of taste and smell, and poor healing of mouth sores.

Some young people believe that smokeless tobacco products, like chewing tobacco, can be safer to use, which is not true. Chewing tobacco releases a variety of chemicals into the body, potentially leading to cancer of the throat, mouth and gums. Smoking tobacco can irritate your gum tissue, causing it to recede from your teeth. Once it recedes, the teeth roots will become exposed, leading to an increased risk of tooth decay.

How smoking harms your oral health
Oral health is not the only thing smoking can hurt. You might have heard of its effects on the lungs. However, few of them have ever thought about other common overlooked side effects of smoking, which are the effects of tobacco use on their eyes, hair and oral health.

Thin hair may sound OK to some people, but hair loss should be a big threat to heavy smokers. Smoking contributes to hair loss by slowing down your hair growth rate while speeding up the rate at which your hair falls out. When you smoke, the toxic byproducts go into your body, making it difficult for your hair cells to reproduce into healthy ones.

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Image courtesy of Flickr user Sudipto Sarkar.
Ask Dr. Zhao: Understanding tendon disease

BY PEI-SHAN ZHAO

Q: Reader Mrs. Lee has a friend who suffered a swollen wrist, a bent middle finger and hand swelling. An orthopedic specialist diagnosed her with:

1. Trigger finger (recommended surgery)
2. Ganglion cysts
3. DeQuervain’s tenosynovitis or tenosynovitis

Mrs. Lee has never heard of these conditions and wonders if she can get a second opinion for her friend. What happens if she does not get surgery? Are there specialists in Chinatown who can treat her?

A: After consulting with hand surgery expert Jennifer Hoffman, your friend’s diagnoses are probably right. Although you have never heard of these conditions, they occur often. People of all ages get them, but they are more common in women than men. The diagnosis is often made by complaints from the patient and exams by the doctor. Occasionally, the doctor asks for X-rays to look for problems in adjacent joints, such as arthritis with joint inflammation. Doctors are not sure what causes these diseases, but the good thing is they are not cancerous and will not spread to other areas.

Ganglion cysts are lumps in the hand and wrist, occurring close to joints or tendons. The most common locations are front (palm) side and back side of the wrist. It is like a water balloon filled with clear fluid or gel. Ganglion cysts differ in size, and they may or may not be painful. If the patient does not feel pain, one can see how it goes. Sometimes, the cyst goes away itself. If the cyst is painful, splints can limit movement of the joint and ease the pain. Patients can also take over counter medicines like Tylenol, aspirin or ibuprofen. Aspiration of the fluid from the cyst can be done in a doctor’s office. Release of pressure within the cyst may ease the pain, but the cyst often comes back. If nonsurgical treatment does not provide pain relief or if the cyst occurs again, surgery can be done.

Trigger finger or trigger thumb, also known as Stenosing tenosynovitis and De Quervain’s tenosynovitis, are tendon diseases. Tendons are the ropes that connect the muscle to the bone. Pulleys are a series of rings that form a tunnel through which the tendons slide. In the finger, these pulleys hold the tendons close against the bone. The tendons and the tunnel have a slick lining that allows easy movement of the tendon through the pulleys. When the tunnel becomes narrow, the finger feels “sticky” and the finger begins to trigger or lock when it bends. So, the “trigger finger” involves the pulleys and tendons that flex the fingers. One of the signs of trigger finger is often tender to local pressure. A small lump sometimes also exists in this area.

Patients with De Quervain’s tendinitis have painful tendons on the thumb side of the wrist because the tunnel where the tendons run becomes narrower than normal. Movement of the hand and thumb causes pain, especially when one grasps something.

Because movement of the hand, finger or thumb results in pain, doctors often use a splint to stop you from moving your finger, thumb and wrist to ease the pain. In the meantime, patients can take nonsteroid anti-inflammatory drugs also. Corticosteroid injections into the tendon compartment are helpful for relieving pain and triggering. Whether the patient’s symptoms get better varies. Sometimes repeat injections are necessary to fully improve the symptoms. If rest, medication and steroid injections do not work, surgery is needed to open the tunnel and make more room for the tendons.

These surgeries often are done in a day surgery center under local anesthesia and patients can go home short-ly after the surgery. Whether your friend needs surgery depends on her symptoms and what treatment she had before. We have excellent hand surgeons and anesthesia teams at Tufts Medical Center in Chinatown. Your friend can see Dr. Hoffman by calling her office at (617) 636-5155.

Pei-Shan Zhao is an attending anesthesiologist and director of the Asian Community Outreach Program in the department of anesthesiology, Tufts Medical Center. He is a graduate of Peking University’s School of Medicine, and trained at Peking University and Cartitas St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center in Boston.

Healthy Chinatown Coalition discusses child care, nutrition and safety

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Healthy Chinatown Coalition met August 21 to discuss childhood and community health at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center.

The coalition was formed by Asian Women for Health and BCNC, through a one-year grant from the Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum. It found most children ate fruits and vegetables, based on an eating habits survey of 198 Boston-area families with preschool children. However, more than half of the children drank fruit juice as well.

“I’m concerned about the high consumption of juice for children, along with TV and computer viewing for long periods in the community,” said Kathy Cheng, program director for the Acorn Center for Early Education and Care at BCNC.

The group discussed the survey results and how to address childhood nutrition concerns. Members wanted to find existing services for child care and make sure the community is aware of them, such as the federal Women, Infants and Children voucher program.

Public safety was a concern for child care providers, as Chinatown playgrounds frequently had litter issues and homeless individuals loitering. The coalition planned to invite the Boston Police Department and identify its top three concerns at its next meeting.
A food aficionado: Ribelle

BY ANNA ING

Chef Tim Maslow returned from David Chang’s Momofuku to open Ribelle, an Italian restaurant in Washington Square. Maslow handled the dinner menu of Strip T’s in Watertown and made it a dining destination. Now this solo effort in the former Tamarind Bay space launched with much anticipation.

Oh, a warm summer night, the front windows are open to the simple space with a big communal dining table in the middle. One wall is decorated with grass and tables lined against it. A suble “Ribelle” neon sign in red informs diners they are in the right place. Reservations are for 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. only. Ribelle currently serves dinner only and is closed Tuesdays.

The menu is small and simple, with a drinks menu. The by-the-glass selections are a mystery but have intriguing descriptions. We got the option #1 sparkling wine ($15 a glass), which was the André & Mireille Tissot Crémant du Jura from France. I’m usually not a fan of extra brut, but it was fantastic complement to our meal after a long workday.

Our server Paul was knowledgeable and friendly. The simple menu focuses on fresh and local ingredients of the season. Polenta ($13), an Italian conmeal, is usually boring but not at Ribelle. It came stuffed in a corn husk with amusingly sweet corn and colorful diced peppers. Each mouthful was an explosion of flavors topped with fresh shaved parmesan.

Next came the lobster salad ($20) that had claw and tail meat with fregola sarda (a nutty Sardinian pasta that looks like Israeli couscous) in a delightful light dressing and fresh sweet corn. The pickled fennel on the dish was a great contrast to the corn’s sweetness. The roasted cauliflower ($12) was surprisingly served cold with melted Fontina cheese. Its intense walnut flavor with high-quality olive oil hit the right notes all together.

Next came the pappardelle ($18), which was recommended as a heartier dish. House-made pasta in Bolognese sauce with bits of crunchy pork rind along with kale rounded off this dish. This would also be great on a cold night.

The angolotti ($17), or ravioli from the Piedmont region of Italy with veal and kale rounded off this dish. House-made pasta in Bolognese sauce with bits of crunchy pork rind along with kale rounded off this dish. This would also be great on a cold night.

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Kwong Kow Chinese School celebrates summer program graduates

BY HAO LU

The Kwong Kow Chinese School summer program closing ceremony was held on August 23. (Image courtesy of Hao Lu.)

The Kwong Kow Chinese School summer program closing ceremony was held on August 23 at the school auditorium. About 100 students and their parents attended the ceremony.

After an opening song “Friday” with guitar accompaniment by one of the teachers, the program started with the Chinese drum and violin, followed by skits and dances.

The eight-week summer program started on July 1. Nearly 150 students from kindergarten to eighth grade were divided into eight classes. Students came from a variety of cities in the greater Boston.

“Some of the students live really far. Some of them have to take the commuter rail between home and school for this program, but they still love to come,” said Chengzhen Song, one of the teachers.

Song said that the school made significant change to this year’s program by letting students take classes by themes and adding more scientific knowledge to the courses.

“Our principal has been planning for the program for over two months. I think it is a big success,” Song said. “Students learned a lot about language, culture and logic, finished assigned projects, and enjoyed our science club and the field trips.”

Starting this fall, the school will work closely with the public school system to design new classes. Students will be able to take SAT or other tests upon graduation, Song said.

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