Boston housing market reaches record highs

BY LING-MEI WONG

Boston house prices have finally made a comeback this year, surpassing pre-recession levels.

According to Zillow’s home value index, median sale prices — values that fall in the middle of a range of numbers rather than taken as an average of all prices — were $418,300 for February 2014. Back in 2005, the peak median sale price for homes was $384,000.

Boston home values rose 10.7 percent over the past year, which Zillow forecasts will raise another 3.3 percent within the next year. The median price of homes currently listed in Boston is $499,000 while the median price of homes sold was $433,650.

Chinatown tops the list of Boston neighborhoods by median home value, clocking in at $794,000. However, this figure should be taken with a grain of salt, as Chinatown is defined by its 02111 zip code. This encompasses the Theater District and property across from the Boston Common, which is mostly luxury housing. Chinatown has more than 1,000 units of public housing, making it one of the city’s densest neighborhoods for affordable housing.

“There is never ‘enough’ affordable housing,” said Chau-ming Lee, executive director of the Asian American Civic Association since 1982. “However, keep in mind exactly who is eligible for affordable housing in view of real income versus ‘reported’ income in tax return. In addition, there are allegations that some of the occupants are homeowner with rental income. Scrutiny should be made to ensure that all needy people are eligible for affordable housing.”

Luxury apartment developers in Boston must pay into a city linkage fund, which has benefited job training, child care and housing development in Chinatown. These funds also help community groups, such as Asian Community Development Corporation and the Chinatown Economic Development Council develop affordable housing.

The median rent price in Boston is $2,415, which is higher than the Boston Metro median of $2,150. Metro Boston includes Newton, Quincy and Cambridge. Both Boston and Boston Metro rentals are above the national median rent price at $1,307.

While house prices are not as astronomical as Manhattan, Boston’s real estate market is on an upswing.

Top nine neighborhoods in Boston by median home sale price

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Median Zillow home value index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinatown</td>
<td>$794,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>$776,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>South End</td>
<td>$636,200</td>
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<td>$625,800</td>
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<td>South Boston</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Dorchester</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Boston</td>
<td>$283,800</td>
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Source: Zillow.com

HIGHLIGHTS

Walk-in medical facility to open in Malden PAGE 4

Home improvement tips for buyers and sellers PAGE 7

State treasurer Steven Grossman spoke about his gubernatorial bid at 38 Oak Street on March 30. (Image courtesy of the Chinatown Resident Association.)

Gubernatorial candidates Avellone and Grossman visit Chinatown

BY LAN NGUYEN

The Asian American & Pacific Islander Corner Office Forum Series began introducing candidates for Massachusetts Governor to the Asian community on March 4 at 38 Oak Street. A second session with state treasurer Steve Grossman took place on March 10. The forum was hosted by 25 Asian American & Pacific Islander community partners.

Joe Avellone, a Democrat from Wellesley, kicked off the series by touching upon his various leadership roles as surgeon, entrepreneur, Chief Operating Officer for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, as well as Selectman and Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserves’ Medical Corp. Avellone currently works as the Corporate Senior Vice President at PAREXEL International.

Avellone’s motivation to run for Massachusetts Governor stems from realizing that he could make a bigger impact in the community as a leader. If elected, he aims to close the student achievement gap, develop new jobs by bringing in new industries, make healthcare more affordable, increase public safety through various diversion and reentry programs and create an Office of Recovery to combat the state’s growing substance abuse problem. These initiatives arise from his belief that “every person has a chance no matter where they started from.”

State treasurer Steve Grossman spoke about his gubernatorial bid at 38 Oak Street on March 30. (Image courtesy of the Chinatown Resident Association.)
**Event Calendar**

**BCEC ESL and citizenship classes**

Saturdays, March 15 to June 14
9 a.m. to noon
Boston Chinese Evangelical Church
249 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02111

The fee is $25. For more information, call (617) 426-5711.

**A Spoonful of Ginger**

Monday, March 17
6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Museum of Fine Arts, Art of the Americas Wing at the Museum of Fine Arts!

A Spoonful of Ginger will offer guests the opportunity to taste the cuisine of 24 of Boston’s most celebrated restaurants for a spectacular evening sure to delight even the most discriminating taste buds at the beautiful Art of the Americas Wing at the Museum of Fine Arts!

Free monthly legal clinic

Monday, March 25, every fourth Monday of the month.
6 to 8 p.m.
First Church in Malden
184 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

The Sharewood Project offers free, unscheduled health care to the medically underserved populations of the greater Boston area. For more information please call (781) 324-8991 or e-mail sharewood.director@gmail.com.

**Brain Building Community Fair**

Wednesday, March 26
9 to 11:30 a.m.
100 Shawmut Avenue
Boston, MA 02118

Head Start is a full service preschool model that not only provides quality early education to young children, but also provide comprehensive family services to meet a host of family needs. Visit us at www.bostonheadstart.org and www.bostononabudget.org.

**Working Wonders benefit**

Wednesday, March 26
6 p.m.
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center
415 Summer Street
Boston, MA

Working Wonders for Tufts Medical Center is an inspiring benefit evening to recognize and celebrate champions of the Medical Center. Proceeds from the event will support compassionate care, leading-edge research and our commitment to treat all our patients as if they are a part of the family. For more information: www.workingwondersfundsmc.org.

**Thank You Charity Benefit**

Saturday, April 5
6 p.m.
42 Vernon Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02458

A celebratory event to thank supporters and partners with food, music and awards. RSVP at http://AWFII2014.eventbrite.com.

**Newton Cantonese School open house**

April 5, Saturday
10 a.m. to noon
42 Vernon Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02458

The school offers both conversational and literacy tracks for learning Cantonese from preschool through 8th grade. Conversational Mandarin class starts at 5th grade on the literacy track. For more information, visit www.newtoncantonese-school.org.

**Working Wonders benefit**

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415 Summer Street
Boston, MA

Working Wonders benefit

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**AppreciASIANS**

Thursday, March 27
6 to 8 p.m.
Tufts Medical Center
800 Washington Street
Boston MA 02111

Asian Breast Cancer Project and Asian Women for Health will host a celebratory event to thank supporters and partners with food, music and awards. RSVP at http://AWFII2014.eventbrite.com.

**Disability Law Center Seeks Two Staff Attorneys**

The Disability Law Center, a public interest law center representing individuals with disabilities, is seeking two experienced disability attorneys. For a detailed description of the position, the application process and our generous benefits package, please go to DLC’s website: www.dlc-ma.org/careers. DLC strongly encourages applications from individuals from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and individuals with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

**Seamstress/Stitcher**

Full-Time

Some experience required

Must have working papers and English Speaking a plus.

Flagraphics, Inc.
30 Alston Street
Somerville, MA 02143
617-776-7549

**Colonial Village Apartments**

Housing for Elderly 1-2 bedroom units
For qualified applicants. Moderate rents $756—$890
Market rents $940—$1035
For application call: (781)337-2777

Financed by MA Housing Finance Agency Units available on open occupancy basis

**Correction**

An article in the Sampan’s Feb. 28 issue, “MAP for Health donates mural to South Cove Community Health Center,” had incorrect titles for Salim Kabawat, MD, and Andrea Machado. Kabawat is New England regional clinical pathology medical director from Quest Diagnostics, while Machado is program manager at MAP for Health. The mural was a community project encouraged to apply.

**Wanted**

Flagraphics, Inc.
30 Alston Street
Somerville, MA 02143
617-776-7549

**ENGLISH SECTION**

**SAMPAN**

A Publication of the AACA

www.sampan.org

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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 (2nd class mail).

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Chinatown meeting roundup: Healthy Chinatown Alliance, Safety Committee and Resident Association

BY KENNY SUI-FUNG YIM

Chinatown Safety Committee
The CSC convened on March 5, with Boston Police Department Capt. Jim Hasson discussing February crime in District A-1, which covers Chinatown. In the last 30 days, there were two robberies, three aggravated assaults and eight larcenies. Of particular note, there were numerous individuals fist-fighting at 19 Edimonial Street, a patient swung a weapon on a nurse on 40 Harrison Avenue and a young Hispanic male on 800 Washington Avenue was set for March 26.

Chinatown Alliance
The HCA had a presentation about bilingual ballots and the Chinatown Stabilization Plan. The bill on bilingual ballots has moved to the Statehouse for a vote. To bring about a more equitable housing distribution, citizens can sign a petition in support of high-rise taxes to go toward building low-income housing and reducing their rent burden. Low-income residents in Chinatown represent the highest proportion among all income groups having to pay more than 50 percent of their income for rent.

Chinatown Resident Association
The CRA met at the Josiah Quincy School on March 5. Four Tufts University students conducted a survey about potential uses for the community space at the new Parcel 24 lot for the Asian Community Development Corporation.

Chinatown Resident Association’s President Richard Hu stated, “I heard some safety issues about Fung Wah, but I didn’t experience any.” According to Hu, he chose Fung Wah for his travel needs, because it was consistently cheaper than its competitors, such as Megabus and Peter Pan. Fung Wah also directly services both cities’ Chinatowns, which was also convenient for Hu. “I heard some safety issues about Fung Wah, but I didn’t experience any,” said Hu.

Fung Wah’s shut down has attracted media attention from news sources such as the Boston Globe and the Daily Beast, but the company itself has remained silent on the issue.

BY CANDICE CHEN

How many cheap buses are still available?

Fung Wah’s dock in South Station has been replaced by Mega Bus. (Image courtesy of Kenny Sui-Fung Yim)

Last month, federal regulators once again denied Boston bus company Fung Wah’s request to resume bus service. In May 2013, the Chinatown bus operator, which provided roundtrip service between New York and Boston, was told to shut down because of safety violations. Fung Wah has tried to resume service multiple times, with little success. As the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration told Boston Globe, “The company is not willing or able to comply with the safety standards we require to protect passengers, drivers and the motoring public.”

Fung Wah had been the cheapest bus company in South Station — only 15 dollars per ticket. During weekends and holidays, Fung Wah had buses departing every half hour.

The cheap prices and the convenience factor were what attracted customers such as Frank Hu, a Chinese student in Boston.

According to Hu, he chose Fung Wah for his travel needs, because it was consistently cheaper than its competitors, such as Megabus and Peter Pan. Fung Wah also directly services both cities’ Chinatowns, which was also convenient for Hu.

“I heard some safety issues about Fung Wah, but I didn’t experience any,” said Hu.

Fung Wah’s shut down has attracted media attention from news sources such as the Boston Globe and the Daily Beast, but the company itself has remained silent on the issue.

Now, Fung Wah’s ticket office in South Station has been replaced by Lucky Star, another Chinatown bus service that runs between Boston and New York.

Lucky Star’s price is $25 per ticket, with the exception of the 2 a.m. departure from Boston, which is $30. Lucky Star’s buses depart every hour and run from 2 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The other Chinatown bus service at South Station is VO! Bus. Aside from the route between Boston and New York, the company also runs trips between New York and Philadelphia. The price of a one-way trip from Boston to New York is $20 per ticket, but the company departs only every two hours between 7-45 a.m. and 8 p.m.
Walk-in medical facility to open in Malden

BY LING-MEI WONG

By the end of this month, Malden residents will have a new health care option just three blocks from the Malden T stop on the Orange Line.

Doctors Express, an urgent care facility, is slated to open at 219 Centre Street on March 21. It will operate seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. No appointments are needed.

The new center boasts X-ray machines, on-site test laboratories and six treatment rooms to diagnose patients quickly. There are currently nine Doctors Express Centers in the state of Massachusetts. It is the first in Malden. “If you are having a life-threatening emergency, then you need to go to the emergency room,” said Scott Sheridan, Malden native and co-owner of Doctors Express Malden. “If it’s something acute — you need to be seen quickly — however if it’s not life-threatening, urgent care can be a great alternative. For a primary care physician, it can be hard to get an appointment the same day.”

The center accepts most forms of insurance and two self-pay options of $149 and $239. A self-pay visit of $149 covers a physician visit, X-ray and lab tests, which would likely cost more than an emergency room visit.

“We’re typically a fifth of the cost of emergency rooms,” Sheridan said. “Our average patient pays $135, while the emergency room may cost the patient several hundred dollars — and they’re waiting. We think emergency rooms are an essential part of the health care system, but if we can alleviate some of the stress to take non-life threatening illnesses and injuries, that frees them up to concentrate on the true emergencies.”

First Chinese lawyer in Mass. honored at alma mater

BY KENNY SUI-FUNG YIM

The Asian Pacific American Law Student Association installed the Harry H. Dow lecture on Immigration Law at Suffolk University Law School on March 4. The event was kicked off with a dinner discussion by the Suffolk Law APALSA executive board, which wanted to do something to honor an important Asian-American member who had graduated from Suffolk Law School.

Harry Dow was born on March 13, 1904 in Hudson, Mass. This was the period of paper sons, and the Chinese Exclusion Act was still in place, so anti-Chinese attitudes were rampant. Many Americans viewed the Chinese with suspicion, as many entered the country illegally by buying their identities.

By working hard, Dow succeeded in school. He graduated from SULS in 1929 and became the first Chinese-American admitted to the bar in Massachusetts the same year. Dow continued to work within the Chinese community in New York and Boston at Shawmut Avenue, although he left private practice in 1963.

He served in World War II as a captain in the Army Intelligence Corps and in the Chinese community in New York and Boston at Shawmut Avenue, although he left private practice in 1963.

Fred Dow highlighted moments of his father’s life using documents from personal family files and photos. These artifacts have been generously donated to the SULS archives, and will be cataloged and digitized in the Moakley Institute.

After the tribute, representatives of the APALSA board launched the fund-raising drive for the Memorial Scholarship Fund. APALSA President Jessy Yip said donating to the fund would create an endowed scholarship for the academic year 2014-15 that would be self-sustaining.

Fred Dow highlighted moments of his father’s life using documents from personal family files and photos. These artifacts have been generously donated to the SULS archives, and will be cataloged and digitized in the Moakley Institute.

The next lecture, titled “The Impact of Immigration Law on Boston Communities,” will be held Oct. 21 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. in the First Floor Function Room at Suffolk University Law School.

Notice of two-bedroom apartment available at James Steam Mill

The James Steam Mill apartment building is for elderly/disabled persons. It has a two-bedroom apartment available. Applicants must be age 62 or over, and applicants UNDER age 62 must be handicapped or disabled to qualify. Applicant must also qualify by income (annual income must be less than $37,650). JSM is a Section 8 building, and residents pay 30% of their income toward rent. Close to downtown Newburyport. Non-smoking building, limited parking.

Worcester Voke Lofts
New Affordable 1,2, 3 Bedroom Apts by lottery

Rents starting at $452 to $1,304, rents include H/WH/AC. Application(s) available 3/10 thru 5/10 at the following locations; Voke Lofts 21 Salisbury St, WAM 55 Salisbury St & Coes Pond 39 1st St, Income restrictions apply.

The lottery will take place Mon, May 12, 2014.

Call 508.755.1733 or visit www.LiveVokeLofts.com for more information

Worcester Voke Lofts New Affordable 1,2, 3 Bedroom Apts by lottery. Rents starting at $452 to $1,304, rents include H/WH/AC.
Gee How Oak Tin rings in Year of the Horse

BY THE EDITORIAL TEAM

The Gee How Oak Tin gala took place March 4 at Empire Garden. (Left to right) City council president Bill Linehan, city councilor Michelle Wu at-large, Mayor Tom Menino and his wife Angela, along with Boston Mayor Marty Walsh. City council president Bill Linehan and city councilor, Michelle Wu at-large also spoke during the dinner.

The evening included karaoke and community “red envelope” gifts to the Chinese Community of New England, Chinese Greater Golden Age Center, South Cove Manor Nursing Home, Kwong Kow Chinese School and Kew Lup Chinese School.

Chinese Progressive Association celebrates New Year

BY THE EDITORIAL TEAM

The Chinese Progressive Association held its 2014 Lunar New Year Banquet on Feb. 28 at the China Pearl. More than 350 guests celebrated the Lunar New Year, along with the CPA's Chinese Youth Initiative’s 20th anniversary. Unity in Action Awards were presented to (left to right) former city councillor Felix Arroyo, former rep. Charlotte Golar Richie and former school board member John Barros by Mel King, pictured with CPA Executive Director Lydia Lowe and CPA Community Organizer Karen Chan. (Image courtesy of the Chinese Resident Association.)

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center holds annual banquet

BY KENNY SUI-FUNG YIM

The Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) held its 26th annual Chinese New Year Banquet on March 7 at Empire Garden in Chinatown. David Brown, a former TV meteorologist, served as the Master of Ceremonies, and he kicked off the event by introducing the Gund Kwok Cubs, a Children’s Lion Dance, also known as “young pups with punch.”

BCNC Board president, Selina Chow, then explained two major organizational developments: first, the election of new Executive Director, Giles Li, who is “someone from within the community,” and secondly, the expansion of adult ESL programs to Quincy.

Next, the Friends of the BCNC Award recognized Stanley and Josephine Chen, who came separately to Boston for school but have found a common purpose in expanding educational opportunities, like college access programs. The Chens support BCNC in offering valuable information about application, financial aid and campus life.

Stanley accepted the award, saying, “Thank you, thank you, BCNC. We are honored to receive this award and feel lucky to be in the US. In learning the trade of construction, I have fulfilled my American Dream, and am lucky to be in the position to help.”

Li then reiterated his hope that BCNC welcomes all, so they “do not have to go through anything alone.”

Windsor at Oak Grove

Luxury Apartment Community

1 bedrooms starting at $1800
2 bedrooms starting at $2250

Call 877-368-4209 for more information!

Princeton Westford Apartment Homes
16 Littleton Road, Westford, MA

Ten 1BRs @ $726, Thirty 2BRs @ $851
No Utilities included except sewer

Princeton Westford Apartment Homes is a 200-unit community nestled into a forested preserve off of Littleton Road in Westford, MA. The community will include five four-story garden-style apartment buildings. A state of the art clubhouse outfitted with a fitness center, meeting space, swimming pool and Wi-Fi Café will also be part of the apartment community. 40 of the units will be rented to households with annual incomes not exceeding 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) adjusted for family size as determined by HUD. The first units will be ready in Spring/Summer 2014.

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<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Allowable Income Limit</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$40,850</td>
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<td>$45,350</td>
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A Public Information Session will be held at 6 pm on March 18th, 2014 in the 2nd floor meeting room of Westford Town Hall (55 Main Street)

Completed Applications may be mailed, faxed, emailed, or delivered in person. Completed Applications and Required Income Documentation must be received by 2:00 PM on April 17th, 2014.

The Lottery will be held on April 30th at 6 PM in same location as the info session above.

For Applications and Details on the Lottery or for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, call 617.782.6900x3 or go to www.s-e-b.com/lottery. For TTY Services dial 711. Free translation available.

Applications and Info also available at the JV Fletcher Library on 50 Main Street, Westford, MA (Hours: M-Th 10-9, F 1-5, Sa 10-5, Su 2-5).
Newton resident and gestational diabetes survivor Ann Wong will co-chair "A Spoonful of Ginger" a third time for diabetes awareness efforts. (Image courtesy of Ann Wong.)

Local Asian Americans work to cure diabetes

BY JOSLIN DIABETES CENTER

Newton residents Ann Wong, and Wesley and Summer Chen, are no strangers to the far-reaching effects diabetes can have on a family. Ms. Wong and the Chens will once again join efforts to spread awareness and raise funds to find a cure for the disease as co-chairs of the 10th annual "A Spoonful of Ginger" event to benefit Joslin Diabetes Center’s Asian American Diabetes Initiative (AADI). Asian Americans are nearly twice as likely to develop diabetes as the general population in the United States, and this problem is growing at a tremendous rate.

This year marks Ann Wong’s third year of involvement, and second year co-chairing the culinary and cultural occasion. Ann has personally felt the effects of the disease after experiencing gestational diabetes during her second and third pregnancies.

“During my last pregnancy, it was uncontrollable,” says Ann. “I needed to receive insulin shots to help regulate it, and I would stress about the finger pricks every day. Since then, for the past twelve and a half years, I have exercised regularly, maintained a healthy diet and monitored my glucose levels in order to prevent the disease later in my life.”

Not only has Ann experienced diabetes directly, but she also understands its effects from her father, Empire Garden restaurant owner and fellow Joslin supporter, David Wong, who is living with diabetes. It is prevalent among her husband’s side of the family as well. As a mother of three children, Ann is concerned for the younger generations; she ensures that her own children eat healthy, exercise and become aware that both sides of their family have a history of diabetes.

For Ann, diabetes’ pervasiveness in her family was reason enough to help support Joslin’s efforts to prevent its onset, to control it for those living with it and to work toward a cure.

Wesley Chen and his wife Sum are well aware that they, too, are at a greater risk of diabetes in the future. Along with his father and many of his relatives who are “borderline diabetic,” Wesley’s paternal grandmother has been living with Type 2 Diabetes for over 30 years. Now 91 years old, the family credits Ah-Pao Chen’s resiliency to the care she has received at the world’s most prominent diabetes research and clinical care organization, the Joslin Diabetes Center. Last year, Summer’s father was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes, and both her great-grandfather and great-grandmother lived with the disease.

Wesley is the Executive Chef of the Lotus Cuisine chain of restaurants, which he owns and operates with his four uncles and two aunts. They recently completed a beautiful renovation and created a new menu at their Cambridge restaurant, Changsho; Wesley credits all of his family’s successes to his grandmother.

“We’ve always considered grandma our boss, the CEO of the company, and this will probably be the final project for her. We added more diabetes-friendly recipes to the menu, a lot of dishes that she normally eats. She is still very healthy and very strong because the one thing we really focus on is her diet.”

One of Wesley’s trademark dishes, the lobster taco, will be prepared and served at “A Spoonful of Ginger” on March 17.

Why should we sympathize with criminals?

By Vicki Ngan

Criminals — cruel, heartless, scheming, the very animals that decent humans would not want visiting their homes, especially at night. The image of one is seemingly clear, seemingly easy to condemn, yet, if one was to perhaps know a criminal personally, inside and out, would any criminal, no matter what the crime, be sentenced to the death penalty? After all, these human-shelled murderers have killed another of our own species, whether purposefully or unintentionally — the criminal conviction is still the same.

However, the line between whether one should sympathize for a misguided person is not so defined. Instead, it is fuzzy, and depending on how much one knows, one can turn away in utter contempt — or choose to shed tears over the tragedy of it all. In the end, the results might be the same — sympathy can only reach so far, and even then, there might be a limit to how much is actually put forth.

As one comes to know another person, multiple feelings about the person exist, and indeed, repugnance of one is seemingly clear, seemingly unnerved, this feeling conquers the results might be the same — sympathy can only reach so far, and even then, there might be a limit to how much is actually put forth.

As we explore the minds of criminals, undeniably we might feel a spark of pity, of connection to the pain the killer went through. But, what should override that is the perspective of the victim. If you can put yourself in the killer’s shoes, why can’t you see your self in the shoes of the dead? A back-pedaled view at the larger picture will, undoubtedly, give us the clearest feeling — that there was a murder committed and a scar that will not fail to exist.

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Price: $146,500

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Call MCO Housing Services:
(978) 456-8388

Pick Up:
Melrose City Hall, Planning Office
Melrose Public Library

APPLICATION AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: www.mcohousingservices.com

MELROSE AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Home improvement tips for buyers and sellers

BY STATEPOINT

Buying or selling a home in today’s real estate market? Go about it properly. From home inspections to home improvement, take your advice from leading experts.

Home inspection

Because the industry is unregulated, be wary when hiring a home inspector. Protect yourself with these tips:

• Get referrals from family, friends, your real estate agent and contractors. Interview everyone on your list.

• Ask for qualifications and certification. Double-check credentials.

• Inquire about Errors and Omissions insurance, which can protect you from mistakes.

• Avoid conflicts of interest. Don’t hire someone who performs repairs or refers contractors.

• Are the inspector’s sample reports longer than a few pages? Lengths of reports vary, but most range from 20 to 50 pages.

• Ask how long your inspection will take. Most take at least three hours. Lack of thoroughness and errors can result in you losing the house.

• Does your home inspector charge for re-inspection? Attend the inspection. Ask questions about noted problems.

Painting

Whether you’re prepping your home for market or improving your new purchase, nothing brightens a home like a fresh coat of paint. Signs mean it’s time for a paint job:

• Chalking: A formation of fine powder on paint surfaces that can cause color fading if left unattended.

• Scaling or cracking: Often caused by multiple layers of old paint, the only remedy is complete removal.

• Flaking: loosened peeling paint chips.

• Allergiating: Deep fissures caused by long-term cracking. Complete removal is the only treatment.

Flooring

New flooring can give a home an instant lift affordably. Get more for your buck without compromising style and quality with these tips:

• Hardwood: A classic look that complements almost any style home, furniture or décor. Mix and match species of wood, finishes and widths for a unique look.

• Vinyl: Luxury vinyl flooring, or PVC, looks like wood but is more durable and heavier duty. Easily-maintained, PVC makes a great choice for high-traffic households.

Steps to take before your home inspection home for market or your new home for better living.

What you need to know to financially protect your family from flooding

BY STATEPOINT

When it comes to protecting your family from the devastation of unexpected events, you may think homeowners insurance is all you need to be covered. However, most standard homeowners insurance policies don’t cover flooding, the No. 1 natural disaster in the United States.

“If it can rain where you live, it can flood,” says Jeanne Salvatore of the Insurance Information Institute. “Just because you haven’t experienced a flood in the past, doesn’t necessarily mean you won’t in the future. Flood risk can change rapidly from year to year.” Experts advise to do your family a favor and prepare for the worst. Here are some tips to help you keep your head above water as you make plans to prepare for a flood.

• Know the causes: May not think of flooding in winter, but the season can bring weather that can cause devastating floods, like heavy rains, rapid snowmelt and winter storms. Also, areas that have experienced a wildfire are at a significantly increased risk of flash flooding for up to five years.

• Be proactive: Just a few inches of water can cost tens of thousands of dollars in damage, and federal disaster assistance is usually a loan that must be paid back with interest. Additionally, disaster assistance is only available if the president signs a declaration of disaster. Not all floods are declared a disaster, so get flood insurance before catastrophe strikes.

• Don’t wait to get covered: Typically, there’s a 30-day waiting period before flood policies take effect. Don’t wait until the storm clouds gather to get insured.

• Insure wisely: Flood insurance, which is recommended for almost everyone, is available through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to homeowners, renters, condo owners and business owners. While rates are set and don’t differ from company to company or agent to agent, opting for a flood savings account means you will get your questions answered properly.

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PINE OAKS VILLAGE PHASES 1 AND 2
61 JOHN NELSON WAY, HARWICH, MA 02645

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR PLACEMENT ON WAIT LIST

Pine Oaks Village is sponsored by MidCape Church Homes Inc. Phase 1 is an apartment community designed for elderly (62 and over) persons. Phase 2 is designed for elderly (62 and over) and also for disabled persons who may be under 62.

Phase 1 is subsidized by the HUD Section 8 Program. Phase 2 is subsidized by the USDA Rural Development Rental Assistance Program. Most residents pay 30% of their adjusted annual income for rent. Some residents may pay more than 30% based on availability of subsidy and on income.

PHASE 1 INCOME LIMITS: VERY LOW

1 Person $30,100
2 Persons $34,400

PHASE 2 INCOME LIMITS: VERY LOW

1 Person $30,100 $44,750
2 Persons $34,400 $51,150

Pine Oaks Village Phases 1 and 2 are beautifully landscaped communities close to beaches, shops, doctors, churches, police and fire stations and public transportation. All units are ground level. Interested parties may call (508) 432-9611 or TDD 1-800-545-1833 x 132 or may write to the address listed above.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
Acupuncture and cancer care

BY YI LUO, ACUPUNCTURIST, LAC, NCCAOM, DIPL.
SPONSORED BY HARVARD PILGRIM HEALTH CARE’S EASTERN HARMONY PROGRAM

Acupuncture and cancer care

Cancer. It’s a diagnosis that no one wants to hear. But there is more medical care offered now than ever before to care for cancer or slow it down, to ease its symptoms and help you live a healthier life.

It’s also key to know that you have other choices besides standard medical therapies. Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) have been used for thousands of years to treat a wide range of illnesses. They can safely be used to naturally support your body and mind as you go through usual cancer care.

How acupuncture and TCM can help

Acupuncture and TCM can help you stay healthy and treat illnesses. TCM specialists work to treat the lack of balance in the body’s qi, or vital energy, using fine, clean needles at exact acupoints. Since acupuncture has few side effects, it can be safely used as a complement to traditional cancer care. In fact, in many cancer cases, it’s highly recommended as a way to soothe cancer symptoms as well as the side effects of cancer treatments.

As the National Institute of Health points out, acupuncture has been found to be useful in easing:

• nausea
• vomiting
• fatigue
• after-surgery pain

Acupuncture and TCM can also help lessen pressure, depression and anxiety, which can greatly improve quality of life during this tough time. In addition to acupuncture, your TCM specialist may also offer massages, acupuncture treatment, nutritional guides or an exercise program designed to help you stay as healthy as you can. He or she may also suggest herbal medicines and vitamin supplements. Don’t forget to always consult with your healthcare providers before taking any new drugs or medications to decrease the risk of problematic reactions.

Treating the person, not just the disease

Acupuncture specialists take a holistic view toward cancer care. This means that they not only treat your illness, but also deal with your living habits, state of mind and general health. Your whole being will be taken into account, not just the cancer. When you work with your specialist to better your health, you are not only helping yourself get the most out of your main medical care; you’re also once again taking charge of your own life.

Alternative medical care is used to help your body to heal naturally, but it is not meant to take the place of your main medical care. You should speak with your doctor about trying alternative medical care to see what is best for you.

To learn more about Yi Luo, visit www.eastwayherbs.com or call (617) 792-2136. To learn about Harvard Pilgrim Health Care’s Eastern Harmony program, visit www.harvardpilgrim.org/easternharmony or call (617) 509-8015.

Family violence: 10 things not to say to children

BY BERNADETTE DAVIDSON, DIRECTOR OF CHILD CARE SERVICES, BOSTON CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

1) Never tell a child s/he was a mistake and the birth was unplanned. All children need parents to celebrate their birth and to love them. The most critical element in a child’s development is his relationship with the parent. It is important that the parent and child fall in love. It is in the serve and return of that relationship the architecture of the brain builds its foundation.

2) Never tell a child that you hoped for a boy child or girl child and their birth was a disappointment. Feeling secure in yourself and your identity is part of what makes for success. You do not want your child to see themselves as a disappointment because of their sex.

3) Don’t promise things to children that you can’t fulfill. Developing trust in adults is part of feeling secure that the world is a good place and you can depend upon parents to tell the truth.

4) Don’t tell a child not to cry. Crying, a natural expression of sorrow, frustration and loss helps in the healing. Part of what makes us human is our ability to cry. Boy children especially can be damaged by this because they learn to internalize their feelings and this later can lead to heart disease and early deaths.

5) Never tell a child s/he is a baby. Labels become self-fulfilling. If you want a child to act at an age-appropriate level catch the child doing good and compliment her. Build confidence and self-esteem in the ways that you interact.

6) If someone passes away, never tell the child that person is sleeping or has gone on a long trip. It will create a fear of falling asleep or travel anxiety. Coming to grips with death is a lifelong process and begins with honesty.

7) Don’t compare children. Each child is born with his/her own gifts, temperament and talents. Parents need to value each child for who s/he is. Then s/he will be able to fulfill her potential.

8) Don’t always tell the oldest child s/he needs to be the one to compromise. Each child should have a special place and rights in the family.

9) Never leave without saying goodbye to your child or saying you’ll be right back and then not returning. Children will then become anxious you’re going to slip away and become more clingy and not trust you.

10) Never put down an absent or divorced parent because that parent is part of the child’s self identity. Find something honest and positive to say about that person so the child does not feel ashamed.
Ask Dr. Zhao: Should I stop smoking before surgery?

BY PEI-SHAN ZHAO, MD

As studies show, smoking is clearly a major risk factor for many diseases. Quitting smoking at any time leads to health benefits although smokers must realize the immediate change in some physical symptoms compared to when they were smoking. Some studies have shown that smokers feel less anxiety or stress after smoking than before smoking. Surgery and anesthesia make most patients anxious or nervous. Anesthesiologists often give patients some sort of sedatives before taking the patient to surgery. If you feel extremely anxious a few days before or on the day of surgery, some anesthesiologists, including myself, would tell you go ahead and have a cigarette since anxiety does nothing good for surgery and anesthesia. Having said that, studies also showed that smokers generally experience an improvement in their moods immediately after smoking, they also experience a decline in their moods between cigarettes. As such, smokers will continue to smoke cigarettes to reverse this mood impairment. This repetitive cycle of mood reversal is the rationale for repetitive or addictive cigarette smoking. The better way to relieve anxiety before surgery and anesthesia is to talk to your doctors and sometimes friends to get your concerns addressed and questions answered.

Anesthesiologists used to tell patients “you do not need to stop smoking for only a brief period before surgery (often defined as less than eight weeks) because this may actually increase the risk for lung problems after surgery. Smokers have a higher incidence of ST depression in their EKG during anesthesia and waking up. The risk of intraoperative heart and lung problems is two to five times greater in smokers than in the general population. Smokers have more coughing, breath-holding, bronchospasm, laryngospasm, and rapid development of hypoxemia during induction of general anesthesia and waking up. The risk of intraoperative heart and lung problems is two to five times greater in smokers than in the general population. Smokers have a higher incidence of ST depression in their EKG during anesthesia, which is a sign of lack of blood flow to the heart (cardiac ischemia).

Compared with nonsmokers, smokers are twice as likely to suffer a heart attack within one month after surgery. They also have a higher risk of lung cancer and perhaps a higher chance of developing pneumonitis, a 40 percent greater risk of sepsis, and are 30 percent more likely to die from post-surgery problems.

Ideally, cessation would begin at least six to eight weeks before surgery for maximum benefit, such as improved lung function and immune function, better wound healing, and a reduction in overall perioperative morbidity. However, even a short cessation time can still be beneficial to the patient during and after surgery. Sputum production decreases within one to two weeks of cessation and Carboxyhemoglobin (COHb) levels are normalized within two to three days. A decrease in nicotine-association tachycardia (fast heart beat) is seen within 12 to 24 hours.

Hemoglobin (Hb) is the oxygen-transport protein in the red blood cells in our body. It binds Carbon monoxide (CO) 250 times stronger than its binding for oxygen, meaning that small amounts of CO dramatically reduce hemoglobin's ability to transport oxygen. COHb is formed when HB binds CO which is inhaled from cigarette smoking. Because the time for nicotine and COHb to drop to 50 percent of their beginning blood levels (the “CO elimination half-life”) is between 14 and 24 h, respectively, stop smoking even the day before surgery will decrease blood COHb level and improve O2 delivery. Another fact that people do not often hear is that smokers tend to experience less nausea and vomiting after anesthesia. But while this may sound like a reason to continue smoking prior to surgery, you should not continue to smoke to get this benefit because there are better medications available to prevent and treat postoperative nausea and vomiting.

Likewise, I have told you all the secrets I know that can reduce your anxiety. Are you going to throw away the half cigarette in your hand? I hope so.

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• Stay safe: What’s even more important than protecting your home during a flood, is protecting you and your family.

Be sure to know the do’s and don’ts of flood safety. If flooding occurs, go to higher ground, avoid flooding-prone areas on the way. Never attempt to walk across flowing streams or drive through flooded roadways. Listen to a battery-operated radio for information. Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if advised to do so.

Remember, flood water can contain harmful substances like gasoline and bacteria. If you’ve come in contact with floodwater, wash your hands with soap and clean water.

More flood safety tips can be found at Ready.gov.

To assess your current risk for flood and to locate an agent serving your area, visit FloodSmart.gov or call 888-226-9499.

FloodSmart.gov or call 888-226-9499.
Restaurant Review: Hello Kitty Kitchen and Dining, Taipei

BY LING-MEI WONG

If you think the Hello Kitty fandom has yet to reach outside the walls of a Sanrio store, the owners of Hello Kitty Kitchen and Dining are out to prove you wrong with their restaurant tribute to the popular Japanese character. Thou shalt bow before the Cat with No Mouth at this cult shrine in Taipei’s trendy East Side.

Formerly known as Hello Kitty Sweets before it was renovated in 2013, the wildly pink exterior is matched by Sanrio’s “kawaii” cat printed on every imaginable surface: floors, walls, ceilings, napkins, mugs, dishes and even the staff uniforms. It’s a Hello Kitty fan’s dream come true, and is unsurprisingly patronized by mostly women and their devoted husbands or boyfriends. Even I was charmed by the sheer adorableness of the Hello Kitty décor.

Afternoon tea dominates the menu, with a wide selection of cakes and drinks all marked with Hello Kitty’s signature face. The appeal of these desserts admittedly lies much more in themed presentation than taste. Heartier fare includes spaghetti, burgers with buns shaped like Hello Kitty’s head and pizza in dinner sets ranging from NT400 to NT450 (roughly $12 to $15).

For their noodles, the pesto shrimp noodles had large juicy shrimp in an overly creamy sauce. Salmon noodles were also drowned in the cream sauce. The most enjoyable entrée was the spicy chicken cream noodles, which packed more kick and flavor.

A typical meal comes with salad, soup, a bread roll imprinted with Hello Kitty’s face, your choice of appetizer (buffalo wings, duck breast slices, baked vegetables and roasted rice), an entrée, custard (again in the shape of Hello Kitty’s face) and a drink. Food is, however, secondary to ambiance in this unbearably “kawaii” restaurant. The restaurant staff is more than happy to help visitors take pictures and the renovated space is kid-friendly. It is an all-Chinese menu, so make sure you go with friends fluent in Mandarin.

Bottom line: If you’re in Taipei, don’t miss out on this mecca of Hello Kitty worship.