Chinatown meeting roundup: CSC and CRA

By KENNY SUI-FUNG YIM

On April 2, the Chinatown Safety Committee welcomed the newly installed president of Tufts Medical Center, Michael Wagner, MD. He had been serving as interim president for six months. Afterwards, Capt. Ken Fong introduced himself. He has worked with the Boston Police Department for 27 to 28 years, and was happy to serve as commander in Area A-1 and protect the neighborhood.

There followed a presentation by Good Chemistry on a proposed Marijuanada Dispensary at 575 Stuart Street. At the moment, the space is occupied by an adult bookstore. According to Chief Operating Officer Jaime Lewis, its principle is to serve patients. It is seeking a license to operate. She cited her previous success at starting a business in Colorado.

According to Capt. Fong, there were two major assaults in the month of March. The first on 800 Washington Street, where a female victim trying to use the bathroom at Tufts Medical was assaulted by a man all in black who snatched her cell phone and cut her face. He fled the area, and she was treated in the hospital. The second happened at 682 Washington at 9:27 p.m. The victim was pepper-sprayed by a 5’6” man with a slim build who took $250 from her side pocket.

Chinatown Resident Association

The CRA also met on April 2. Leverett Wing told the residents about the American Association for Retired People conference coming to Boston in May. If more Chinese sign-up, they will have events in Chinatown and translators. Events will involve health and well-being, financial literacy and computer new technology.

The Chinese Progressive Association gave a presentation on construction projects in the area. While many projects are going on, including at Parcel 24, 45 Stuart Street, 300 Harrison Avenue, 275 Albany Street and more, there are few Chinatown residents working at the construction sites.
Event Calendar

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon
April 11 to May 11
Wheelock Family Theatre
180 Riverside
Boston, MA 02215
Wheelock Family Theatre presents the East Coast premiere of Grace Lin’s Newbery honored novel about one Chinese girl who embarks on a journey. For tickets, please call (617) 879-2300 or visit https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pr/924456.

Xiang Yu violin concert
Sunday, April 13
3 p.m.
Jordan Hall
30 Gainsborough Street
Boston, MA 02215
Xiang Yu, 2010 winner of the prestigious Yehudi Menuhin International Violin Competition, performs with the Discovery Ensemble. For tickets, please call (617) 585-1260 or visit www.discoveryensemble.org.

Gubernatorial forum with Charlie Baker
Monday, April 14
5:15 to 6:30 p.m.
Viet-Aid
42 Charles Street
Boston, MA 02122
Speak with the candidate about the election, the issues and his vision for our Commonwealth.

Understanding China’s past, present and future
Monday, April 14
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Harvard Allston Education Portal
175 North Harvard Street
Allston, MA 02134

Harvard China Forum
April 18 to 20
7:30 to 10:30 p.m.
Charles Hotel, Sanders Theater
Harvard China Forum 2014 is pleased to offer nine panels addressing issues in social innovation, technology and entrepreneurship, and urbanization. This year’s conference theme is “Can China Lead?”

Job Opening

For more than 40 years, the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Inc. (BCNC) has been a vital link energizing the Asian immigrant and Asian American community of Greater Boston. BCNC’s Acorn Early Education and Care Program is currently seeking a full-time (37.50 hours per week) Bilingual Early Education and Care Teacher.

Qualifications Required:
Excellent oral and written skills in Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin). Must have understandable English oral skills and with comprehensible English writing skills.

Preferred:
Bachelor Degree or higher in ECE or related field. Experience working with young children in a bilingual setting.

To apply, e-mail cover letter and resume to: cynthia.wong@bcnc.net

BCNC is an equal opportunities employer.
Position will stay open until filled.

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www.sampan.org
87 Tyl er Street
Boston, MA 02111
Tel: (617) 426-9492
Fax: (617) 462-2316
Editor: Ling-Mei Wong
lingmeiwong@sampan.org

ENGLISH SECTION

Contributors:
Candice Chen
Kenny Sui-Fung Yim

Translators:
Amy Chen
Weijia Lu
Marliha Ma
Morris Ma
Stella Wang

Proofreaders:
Amy Chen
Erica Zhang

Advertising:
Amy Chen
Teresa Cheong
ads@sampan.org

Production:
Ling-Mei Wong

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Running for unfinished dreams: Boston University Chinese community honors marathon victim Lu Lingzi

BY CANDICE CHEN

Lu Lingzi. (Image courtesy of Baiyun Yao.)

Mikein Wagner named president and CEO of Tufts Medical Center in permanent capacity

BY TUFTS MEDICAL CENTER

The Tufts Medical Center board of trustees announced April 3 it voted unanimously to appoint Michael Wagner, MD, FACP, as president and CEO of Tufts Medical Center and Floating Hospital for Children on a permanent basis. Wagner, a nationally respected physician executive and health care thought leader, has held the title of interim president and CEO since September 2013. He had previously served as president and CEO of the 550-member Tufts Medical Center Physicians Organization and Tufts MC’s chief medical officer.

“The board has been extremely impressed with Doctor Wagner’s performance in the interim CEO role over the past six months,” said Thomas Hollister, chairman of the Tufts Medical Center board of trustees. “Doctor Wagner is a wise and innovative leader who understands the complexities of health care from so many angles as a primary care physician, a private sector executive and a patient safety advocate. This expertise will be invaluable as Tufts Medical Center builds on its rich tradition of health care innovation and transforms how care is delivered as the health care industry continues to change. We are very pleased that Doctor Wagner, who began his career here in our primary care offices, will now be our chief executive officer.”

“IT IS a tremendous honor to have the opportunity to lead this historic institution at this exciting time,” said Wagner. “I look forward to continuing to work closely with the board to ensure that Tufts Medical Center will be a leader in health care through our work at academic medical centers, community hospitals and in the private sector. At Tufts MC, Wagner began his career in the internal medicine practice nearly 25 years ago.
Asian American Women for Health honors three women

BY KENNY SUI-FUNG YIM

Asian Women for Health (AWFH) and Asian Breast Cancer (ABC) Project held their annual “AppreciASIANs” hosted by AWFH held their annual “AppreciASIANs” event at Tufts Medical Center’s Wolff Auditorium on March 28. The event was hosted by the Tufts Cancer Center. Oncologist Jack Erban opened up by welcoming all and expressing the Center’s commitment to partnering with AWFH. Founder Chien-Chi Huang, keynote speaker Pauline Alighieri, executive director of Friend of Mel Foundation, expressed how proud she was of all Huang has accomplished. Huang said she finally found the words to explain what AWFH does: “Create a community of information and support so Asian women can live happily and healthily.”

True to the event’s name, Huang called forward a trio of women to be recognized for special appreciation. The first award for ABC Peer Leader went to Jia Zhen Lu. Huang said of her, “I am always checking on other people, but she is the one that checks on me”. Lu reciprocated by saying although Huang is physically small, she does big things. Together they have worked together on crafts projects, and most recently, making cut-out daffodils. To Huang, the story of a California woman who slowly but surely planted a field of daffodils served as inspiration that small consistent labor will surely plant a field of daffodils served as inspiration that small consistent labor can cause change. Another honoree was Bik-Fung Ng of Boston Main Street, who won a Community Champion Award. Ng expressed admiration for the great progress in cancer research. The big difference in treatment even within the last 19 years has been remarkable — initially, patients couldn’t eat after two weeks, but now their appetites can return much sooner.

Breast cancer oncologist Han Ting Lin, who Huang described as the “ideal doctor to have when you’re sick,” received the next award. Lin also happens to be Huang’s personal oncologist. For Lin, what makes for a good doctor is the ability to listen. Vocal Chinese music led by Jean Foo also performed two special songs, “Grateful Heart,” and “you Raise Me Up.”

Police Sgt. Tom Lema moves from District A-1 to police headquarters

BY THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Boston Police Department (BPD) Sgt. Tom Lema moved from his post as community service supervisor for District A-1 to BPD headquarters with the hackney unit, due to his promotion to lieutenant. “Lt. Lema had been head of the Community Service Office for A-1 for 18 years before being promoted,” said Sheriff Dong, director of Community Health Improvement Programs at Tufts Medical Center. “In that time he always made himself available to the community.”

Other community leaders spoke at the reception, including Bill Chin. Lt. Lema’s duties in District A-1 will be taken over by Sgt. Jimmy Chin, a Chinatown native.

Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Summit convenes at UMass Boston

BY KENNY SUI-FUNG YIM

The East Coast Asian American Student Union organized the first Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Mental Health Summit at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Students from as far as University of Connecticut, Storrs (UConn), as well as local students and professionals took part on March 29.

According to the summit planning committee members, their goal is to foster dialogues that will then ripple across the Asian American community. The forum is specifically aimed at bringing together students, facilitators, and community organizations in New England, so they can network and engage in meaningful discussion.

Workshop leaders at the summit were active members of the health community. Event attendees had a wide selection of topics to choose from, including “Debunking, Intervention, and Prevention (Awareness): Depression and Suicide with Dr. Aileen Lee,” “Challenges and Strengths: Asian American College Students with Dr. Karen Suyemoto,” “API Body Image and Mental Health with Alex Kim,” and “Reclaiming Mental Health with Dr. Julie Yen.”

Many individuals talked about making new connections and finding new words to describe the experiences of mental health. Two students from UConn, who hadn’t known each other, met at the conference. One was a nursing senior year student, while the other was exploring diversity, including taking classes on gender and sexuality in Latin culture and family psychology. They were nervous about job prospects but excited by the summit opening their minds to potential areas of interest.
Mass. author’s book comes to life at Wheelock Family Theater

BY LING-MEI WONG

Author Grace Lin just wanted to fit in. “I was born here and grew up in upstate New York,” she said. “I was the only Asian girl in my school apart from my sisters. I pretty much rejected my Asian culture when I was younger.”

Today, Lin has penned and illustrated more than a dozen books, including “Dim Sum for Everyone!” and “The Ugly Vegetables.” Her novel, “Where the Mountain Meets the Moon,” was published in 2011 and will have its East Coast premiere at the Wheelock Family Theater tonight.

“A lot of people think I write about my books because I know so much about Chinese culture,” Lin said. “My books are actually a way for me to learn about my culture.”

“The Mountain Meets the Moon” is described as the Chinese “Wizard Of Oz.” A girl, Min Li (“quick wit”) is trying to find the Old Man of the Mountain. “I’m excited about this role — it ties into Asian culture, but it’s not a stereotypical role,” Tow said. “We were real excited it was coming and we could be together in a book that they love.”

The Chinese Historical Society of New England will host a premiere reception and book signing with Lin at 1 p.m. on April 18, Newton North High School. Tickets are $5 for members and $10 for nonmembers, with details at www.chsne.org.

Seven tips for filing income taxes

BY LEO GUEN

My Uncle Albert was a big Red Sox fan. When not watching Red Sox games, he professionally did estate tax examinations for the Internal Revenue Service.

Like baseball, minimizing taxes is one of America’s favorite pastimes, but it is less fun. Everyone is relieved to complete the filing of income tax returns before April 15.

Filing tax returns is complicated, because the tax code has been patched together over many years, so there is no clear logic.

Here are seven helpful tips:

1. If you can use a computer, TurboTax is an effective way to calculate and file your tax return. There is no version in Chinese. You pay more for versions providing more capability. There are separate costs for software and e-filing.
   a. A basic $40 version includes software to work with the IRS Federal tax return and one federal e-file (no printing or mailing to the IRS).
   b. A $50 version adds a family-friendly four more federal e-files and software for any one state of your choice.
   c. An $80 version adds software for small business.
   d. Each additional state software costs $40, plus there is an optional $20 e-file each state tax return. I print and mail my state returns.

2. Or, you can pay a tax preparer to do your taxes. Using a tax preparer significantly reduces the probability that the IRS will audit your federal tax return.

3. If you can’t afford a tax preparer, community organizations can help.

4. For 2013, if you were single and under 65 and earned less than $10,000, you are not required to file an income tax return. The earnings threshold is higher for widows ($16,100), married couples ($20,000), and head of household ($12,850). The thresholds are higher if you are 65 or older.

5. However, even if not required, it is usually worthwhile filing a tax return:
   a. To recover federal, state and local taxes withheld or overpayments from estimated tax payments or prior year tax payments.
   b. To potentially receive an “Earned Income Tax Credit” (EITC) — depending on your income and number of children.
   c. To potentially receive an “Additional Child Tax Credit.”
   d. To potentially receive an “American Opportunity Credit” — up to $2,500 per student for up to four years of post-secondary education, depending on your income.
   e. To potentially receive a “Health Coverage Tax Credit” that expires in 2013.
   f. To provide documentation of your income if you or your children are applying for financial aid for education.

6. If you are an employee, your employer pays half of the Social Security (FICA) taxes and the other half is withheld from your pay, and you see this on your annual W-2. Some employers unfairly take advantage of immigrants and give the worker a 1099 form that says the worker is self-employed, and that the worker is responsible for paying all the FICA taxes. If this happens, seek assistance at the Multi-Service Center.

7. The easiest way to save money is to file your taxes on time. If you can’t, simply file for an extension.

Electronic proposals for the following project will be received through the internet using Bid Express until the date and time stated below, and will be posted on www.bidx.com for at least 14 days prior to a scheduled bid opening date.

Electronic bids for MBTA Contract No A90CN05, DOWNTOWN CROSSING STATION (DTX) SEWER RELOCATION, DOWNTOWN CROSSING STATION, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS CLASS 1, GENERAL TRANSIT CONSTRUCTION, PROJECT VALUE - $2,593,200.00, can be submitted at www.bidx.com. Bids will be opened and read publicly forthwith after the bid submission deadline. No paper copies of bids will be accepted. Bidders must have a valid digital ID issued by the Authority in order to bid on projects. Bidders need to apply for a digital ID with Bid Express at least 14 days prior to a scheduled bid opening date.

The project scope includes the relocation of a Boston Water and Sewer Commission owned 30” Combined Sewer inside of the existing Burnham Building (formerly Filenes Basement). The project is the first phase of a multi-phased project to provide modifications, including additional elevators, to the Downtown Crossing MBTA station.

The project also includes staged construction and/or by-pass of existing combined sewer, demolition of B2 flooring, temporary elevator walls, two new Special Structures and structural supports, new 30” ductile iron combined sewer pipe (concrete encased), demolition of old 30” cast iron (concrete encased) pipe, and the relocation of an existing sub-basement level 3” under drain. The majority of the work is within the B2 and B3 level of the Burnham Building currently under renovation. Minor work will be required in the MBTA Downtown Crossing Station on and adjacent to the Orange Line Northbound platform.

The DBE Goal is 10%. This Contract is subject to a financial assistance Contract between the MBTA and the Federal Transit Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation. FTA Participation 71.5 percent. The Authority has secured $10 million from the Federal Transit Administration’s TIGER Grant program.

Additional information and instructions on how to submit a bid are available at http://www.mbta.com/business_center/bidding_solicitations/current_solicitations/
Obesity: Why we should care

BY CAROLINE JOUTHOURIAN, MD AND KATHLEEN VIVEIROS, MD, TUFTS MEDICAL CENTER

The trend in rising body weight is an important public health problem globally. In the United States, more than 60 percent of adults are overweight or obese. Excess of body fat for your height is measured through the “body mass index” or BMI. Knowing your BMI is key. BMI plus your family history helps determine your risk for future diseases.

Normal body weight is a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9, overweight is a BMI between 25 and 29.9, and obesity is defined as a BMI more than 30 kilograms per square meter. There are ethnic differences in BMI — for Asians, the cutoffs are lower!

In Asians, overweight is defined by a BMI more than 23 and obesity is a BMI more than 25 (not 30). Where a person carries excess weight is important. Centrally distributed body fat (around the belly) leads to more risk of health problems than fat on the hips and thighs.

How to prevent obesity:

Diet and exercise

Your diet is a key to avoid body fat and your risk for being overweight or obese. Fast food, sugary drinks and high-fat diets contribute to obesity. Even lower calories has been shown to be effective in weight loss. With the increased use of electronics, people have a more sedentary lifestyle. We often sit in front of computers and TVs rather than doing physical activities. We use cars rather than walking or cycling. We sit in front of computers for hours instead of doing physical activities. Eating fewer calories has decreased the rates of obesity. Eating fewer calories has decreased the rates of diabetes and heart disease.

Diabetes and high cholesterol can also predispose you to fatty liver. You can drop your risk for developing fatty liver disease by exercising regularly, taking weight loss and blood sugar control if you are a diabetic, and decreasing your consumption of fatty foods such as fast food.

Obesity is a common, growing medical problem. The key to preventing diseases due to obesity is to lead a healthier lifestyle: exercise and eat healthy!


Kathleen Viveiros is a liver doctor at Tufts Medical Center who specializes in liver diseases such as fatty liver, autoimmune liver disease and viral hepatitis. Her contact information is (617) 636-5883 and email is kviveiros@tuftsmedicalcenter.org.

Caroline Jouhourian is a clinical fellow in the division of gastroenterology/hepatology at Tufts MC.

Prehypertension increases stroke risk

HOWARD LEWINE, MD, CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR, INTERNET PUBLISHING, HARVARD HEALTH PUBLICATIONS

How bad can a little high blood pressure be? It turns out that it might be worse than we thought.

In 2003, the rule of thumb for a healthy systolic blood pressure (the top number of a blood pressure reading) was 100 plus your age. Today, a healthy blood pressure is below 120/80. High blood pressure (what doctors call hypertension) is any pressure above 140/90. In spring 2003, an expert panel appointed by the National Institutes of Health created a new category — prehypertension. It covers the 25 percent of Americans in the gray zone between normal blood pressure and hypertension, who have systolic blood pressures between 121 and 139 and/or diastolic pressures between 81 and 89.

Some doctors and pundits scoffed that this new definition was “disease mongering.” A study to be published in the April issue of the journal Neurology indicates that we should take prehypertension seriously.

Blood pressure basics

When the heart contracts, the pressure in the arteries rises — your systolic pressure. When the heart relaxes between beats, the pressure in the arteries falls — your diastolic pressure. The difference between those two pressures is the heart's pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart’s pumping abilities thus your heart's pumping abilities.

Sealing out tooth decay: What are sealants?

BY ANNA BAK, TUFTS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE STUDENT

What is one of the No. 1 chronic diseases affecting children today? Believe it or not, the answer is actually found in their teeth. Dental caries (tooth decay) affects 25 percent of children ages 2 to 5, and 50 percent of 12 to 15 year olds. The decay is caused by acid from bacteria in the mouth that eats away at a tooth over time.

Lifestyle changes lower health risks

The size of the study and the length of the follow-up make the results believable. They don’t mean prehypertension is a disease. But they do signal that we need to take it seriously.

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The size of the study and the length of the follow-up make the results believable. They don’t mean prehypertension is a disease. But they do signal that we need to take it seriously.

One-third of North American children have cavities by age 6, and the second molar at age 12. Some teens who are at high risk for caries may also benefit from sealants. Sealants do not replace the need for good oral hygiene, but in combination with proper care, sealants can help keep teeth healthy for longer!
My experience at Mass. Youth in Government

BY KENNY SUI-FUNG YIM

George King, MD, sat down to tell me more about the man behind the doctor’s coat.

Born in Taiwan, he grew up in Rich mond, Va. He studied at Johns Hopkins University and then went on to Duke University’s Medical School. He contin ued his medical education by training at the National Institutes of Health, where he developed his interest in diabetes. King joined Joslin Diabetes Center and Har vard Medical School in 1981. He is cur rently a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and the chief medical officer/director of research at Joslin Dia betes Center. In 2000, King, with four other families, founded the Asian American Diabetes Initiative (AADI).

Before 1980, diabetes had a low prevalence in the Asian population. It is a “disease of abundance” that commonly occurs more in developed nations. There are 26 million diabetic patients in the United States now, with 25,000 of them treated at Joslin annually. The numbers are even more alarming in China, which has a much larger population. This is worrying because nobody knows exactly why so many Chinese have the illness without being overweight. King suggested it may have to do with fat in the abdomen, which is often hidden in Chinese and Asian populations.

Unlike many other countries, China has never had a “disease of abundance” that commonly occurs more in developed nations. There are 26 million diabetic patients in the United States now, with 25,000 of them treated at Joslin annually. The numbers are even more alarming in China, which has a much larger population. This is worrying because nobody knows exactly why so many Chinese have the illness without being overweight. King suggested it may have to do with fat in the abdomen, which is often hidden in Chinese and Asian populations.

The yIG program gradually instilled me with a sense of optimism, and most importantly, I see myself different about myself. Now, whenever I see this roll of film, I stand at a podium and speak on behalf of my family and community. I became not just a year; it contained so much meaning, and I see change. I never planned on making Chinese and Asian populations.

A chat with George King, Asian American Diabetes Initiative founder

BY LING-MEI WONG

When Tom Carter came to China in 2004, he had no idea it would become home for the next 10 years. Carter arrived as an English teacher in Shandong and Beijing, then undertook a backpacking adventure spanning all 33 provinces of China in 2006. The two-year journey was documented in his 2008 photography book “China: Portrait of a People,” a collection of the 56 Chinese ethnic groups.


“Foreigners come here to pursue their dreams, to have experiences and adventures that are just not possible in the West,” Carter said. “The past decade in China has been its greatest decade of change. I never planned on making China my home, but the way America has become in the last decades, I don’t have an immediate desire to return.”

“Unsavoury Elements” looks at China with brutal honesty and a sense of humor. Matthew Polly’s account of nearly losing his shirt from selling Shaolin kung fu T-shirts in “Paying Tuition” is side-splittingly funny, while “The Shadow” by Kay Bratt illustrates the life of a disabled child in an orphanage.

However, the two stories that have generated the most buzz among readers and critics take place during nights of excess: “Empty from the Outside” by Susie Gordon about her evening out with wealthy sons of businessmen in Shang hai, and “Unsavoury Elements” by Carter ends party-goers at a brothel.

“My novel intertwines Chinese and Asian populations.

“Unsavoury Elements: Stories of foreigners on the loose in China,” Earnshaw Books, 2013. with China’s elite,” Carter said of Gordon’s chapter. “It’s a rare experience that resonated with a lot of Westerners who never conceived China was this wealthy.”

“As for my own story, it’s a bit of a contrast. I could have been disin gerous to leave a story about prostitution of any kind, but as I wanted to cover all the experiences foreigner have in China, including the naughty ones.”

The book has enjoyed rave reviews for its candidness from the Western press, but a decidedly cooler response from Chinese media. As editor, Carter had hoped to convey the universal nature of putting down roots in a new place, rather than stressing the otherness of the foreigner experience.

“Suan tian ku la (酸甜苦辣) was always the overall arcing theme I had on my mind when I was editing this anthology,” Carter said. “I wanted the stories to capture the sour, bitter, sweet and spicy of our experiences here. This demonstrates China is like anywhere in the world — nothing is purely great experiences, but it’s not all bad either.”
A food aficionado:
Ki Bistro

BY ANNA ING

In 2013, the ramen burger was born and now it has arrived in the Boston area. Located conveniently near the Boston University campus, Ki Bistro, a small and unpretentious take out lokale, is home to this delicious burger novelty, which uses savory ramen noodles to create the signature ramen burger bun.

I ordered the Kimchi Burger ($5.95) with the ramen bun, which came with a juicy beef patty. The kimchi, made from scratch, was not overly spicy. If you want the usual kick, you won’t find it.

Next was the Stuffed Cheesy Hamburger ($6.25) with the ramen bun, one of their top sellers. The ramen bun on this burger was a bit difficult to eat. It was not as crispy as expected, and was even unseasoned and soft in some parts due to the sauce and meat. The rest of the burger, which includes cheese, peppers and caramelized onions, was fabulously paired with an aioli sauce, or garlic mayonnaise.

The Banh Mi burger ($5.95) also made for a delicious meal, particularly when paired with a fried egg (cage free and $1 extra) with runny egg yolk. Unfortunately, the burger and sauce overpowered the pickled vegetables, jalapeños and cilantro rather than complementing the flavors.

My companion raved over the teriyaki sauce along with pickled veggies. The soft, eggy brioche bun contrasts well with the saucy meat, though the pickled veggies were lost in the shuffle again. We paired it with sweet potato fries ($3.25), which gave great crunch with flavor.

For drinks, we enjoyed the iced Vietnamese coffee ($2.95), pleasantly sweetened by condensed milk. If you’re a fan of green tea lattes, they are available on my visit.

Aside from the food, the owners are friendly, hardworking and receptive to ideas. They are working on having daily specials to add more variety to the menu. The ramen for the buns is specially ordered and the beef is high quality. If you want the rice bun, you need to order 24 hours in advance as it is time consuming to make.

Be aware that the ramen bun, rice bun and other fixings such as fried egg are all an extra charge ($1 to $1.50). Everyone is, however, made to order.

After three visits, I am nowhere near done with Ki Bistro — I still need to try the rice and noodle bowls. This restaurant is definitely worth checking out if you are even the slightest bit curious about the unique concept of a “ramen burger.”

South End art show challenges identity and femininity

BY JAMES MURRAY

The opening reception of Mujeres: Iron Maidens on March 28 took place in a tight South End space filled with effusive goodwill and an iconoclastic range of fashions. Curators Anabel Vázquez Rodríguez and Ximena Izquierdo Ugaz created a well-balanced exhibit that, despite the small space, has depth as well as breadth.

At the heart of the exhibition lay a number of challenges to certain notions of what it is to be a woman — and not just in physical terms, though this aspect of femininity was definitively represented by Ivette Salom’s curiously grotesque animation “Ice Cream,” which depicts a character that repeatedly lactates a ball of ice-cream onto a cone, and by Migdalia Luz Bens-Vera’s featureless nudes. Other exhibits included commentary on the social and historical position of women, such as Corazon Higgins’s series of paintings re-imagining the celebrated Vietnamese Trưng sisters as scantily clad prostitutes. The sisters are considered heroines in Vietnam after their stand against Chinese rule, but had they grown up in the same neighborhood today, Higgins contended, this might have been their fate.

Perhaps the most intriguing piece set out to tackle the broad issue of identity. “I’m American (Happy 4th Edition)” is an audio recording in which Joanna Tam, who was born in Hong Kong but has spent her adult life in America, repeatedly yells “I’m American” against the backdrop of the 4th of July fireworks for a solid 17 minutes and 20 seconds. While she was recording, people interacted with her in different ways, which varied from hugging her to telling her that she is not American. These interactions might suggest that the piece is simply a social experiment, but it goes far beyond just that as one listens to Tam’s voice strain to repeat the words. The voice’s natural modulation, sometimes wild, sometimes weary, lends the listener wondering what the words do in fact mean.

Mujeres: Iron Maidens is on display at La Galería, 85 West Newton Street, Boston, until April 20. It is open Wednesday through Friday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free.

BLUE LEDGE CO-OP & FRANKLIN PARK VILLA CO-OP
AFFORDABLE LIVING AT ITS BEST!

These active senior co-ops are within walking distance to shopping, banks, and parks, and are located near MBTA bus lines.

Rent is based on 30% of income (income limits apply) to qualified seniors 62 and older.

Social events such as: Luncheons, Holiday Parties, Day Trips & More!!

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