Chinatown is a neighborhood of contradictions. It has more than 3,000 units of affordable housing, often jammed next to luxury condominiums. Historic buildings, such as the original Quincy School, opened in 1847, are blocks from modern skyscrapers. Once a Syrian neighborhood, a sustained wave of Chinese immigrants make Chinatown their home. Its downtown location is served by the subway, commuter rail and two highways, making Chinatown a hub for Asian Americans.

“Chinatown’s a unique immigrant community. For residents who don’t speak a lot of English, having a community enables them to get jobs and go to class,” said Angie Lious, executive director of the Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC). “People who move to the suburbs still come in on Sunday for dim sum, groceries or to visit grandparents in the neighborhood.”

Chinatown’s public housing stock helps keep residents in the neighborhood. However, families who live in affordable units rarely move out, resulting in waits of years or even decades before a spot opens.

The average apartment rent was $3,998 in Chinatown’s ZIP code 02111 for 2016, according to data from the Massachusetts Multiple Listing Service (MLS). While that ZIP code includes Midtown and the Leather District, along with listings for studios and two-bedroom units, it is higher than Boston’s average rental cost of $2,848 for 2016, from 500 MLS listings.

Buying downtown becomes even more prohibitive. The majority of 2016 condo sales for ZIP code 02111 took place in Midtown for luxury condos at the Ritz-Carlton Residences or Millennium Place, averaging $1,484,528, based on MLS data.

Listings in Chinatown proper, such as a one-bedroom condo in Lofts Avana on 42 Beach Street, sold for $600,600. Homeownership is rare in Chinatown, with many residents choosing to rent or relocate to nearby Quincy and Malden.

“Anecdotally, I’ve heard rowhouse rents are rising, with landlords renovating to collect more rent from medical students or doctors,” Lious said.

Continued on Page 6

Chinatown Resident Association celebrates Chinese New Year

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Chinatown Resident Association (CRA) celebrated the Chinese New Year March 10 at the China Pearl Restaurant. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

State Sen. Joe Boncore said, “Chinatown is lucky to have representation on transportation, housing and service for elders.”


A lion dance was performed by Woo Ching White Crane kung fu, followed by a children’s dance performance by the Boston Chinese Folk and Classical Dance Group.

Three Boston District 2 city council candidates attended the banquet:

Corey Dinopoulos, Michael Kelley and Peter Lin-Marcus. District 2 Councilor Bill Linehan announced February he would not seek reelection.

The mission of the CRA is to advance the quality of life of Chinatown residents and preserve Chinatown as a neighborhood for working families and the elderly. Bilingual public meetings take place the first Wednesday of the month at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School.

By Ling-Mei Wong

Chinatown housing costs are higher than citywide averages. The Chinatown Gate is bordered by Donald W. Winnicott High-rise apartments on the Kendall Square.

How much does it cost to live in Chinatown?

BY LING-MEI WONG

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How much does it cost to live in Chinatown?
Boston health professionals discuss smoking cessation

BY SARA BROWN

The Boston Public Health Commission held a smoking cessation workshop on March 16.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the country, according to research presented by the Health Commission. Smoking can damage every part of the body, not just the lungs.

There are many different ways someone can smoke and take in nicotine. Recently, flavored tobacco has become more popular. Seven out of 10 middle schoolers have admitted to using flavored tobacco products.

At least 50 percent of smokers have tried to quit. Quitting smoking is as difficult as quitting heroin or cocaine, with unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. The cycle of addiction has many layers, which include physiological, psychological, social and behavioral cues.

When someone smokes, it takes 7 to 10 seconds for the nicotine to reach the brain. Smokers have revealed they feel more stimulated, awake, focused and relaxed, and that anxiety is reduced when they smoke.

There are several benefits to quitting smoking. During the first 12 hours of not smoking, the amount of carbon monoxide in the blood is reduced to a normal level.

After two weeks to three months, a recovering smoker will have better circulation and improved lung function. After one to nine months, the individual will have less coughing.

The event was for health professionals to learn more about smoking and its dangerous effects, so they could pass on that useful information to their patients and clients.

Wheelchair hoops comes to Chinatown

BY RUOBING SU

The Josiah Quincy Elementary School (JQES) teachers took on the New England Blazers Wheelchair Basketball Team on March 17 at the school gym. The Quincy Dragons lost by two points, for a 44-46 score.

Several students in wheelchairs watched the match. The game was organized by Thomas Levet, a JQES physical education teacher. One of his first students, Jacob, was handicapped.

“Last year, when I reached out to the young boy, he had passed away — it made me very sad,” Levet said. “I contacted the New England Blazers to hold a wheelchair basketball match to honor Jacob.”

Local shop turns storefront into runway

I Do Weddings hosted a bridal window showcase on March 22 at its 283 Tremont Street location. Models strutted their stuff and a DJ played music. (Image courtesy of Ling Mei Wong.)

Nine graduates complete retail program

The fourth retail skills class graduation celebrated nine graduates on March 17 at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center. (Image courtesy of BCNC.)

Looking for the perfect home?

We are committed to helping you find a home loan solution that is right for you, with competitive rates.

Fixed/Adjustable Rate Mortgages
MassHousing Programs
First Time Homebuyer & Affordable Housing Programs
Financing for Primary/Seasonal Home & Investment Properties
Construction & Rehab Mortgages
Local underwriting & decision-making
Event Calendar

Women's History Month
March 24, Noon to 5 p.m.
288 Washington Street
Quincy, MA 02169

South Cove Manor at Quincy Point will celebrate Women’s History Month with music, painting and hand massage.

Mulan Society classes
Saturday, March 25
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
87 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02110

Mulan Society Center for Women’s Empowerment classes will take place at the Asian American Civic Association, 4F. Refreshments provided. Register with Hengyi Gong at (617) 426-9492 x 216 or hgong@aaca-boston.org.

Boston Young Leaders Summit
Saturday, March 25
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
1309 Hancock Street,
Suite 209
Quincy, MA 02169

Quincy Asian Resources, Inc. will host a free monthly legal clinic addressing individual concerns over immigration law, landlord tenant law, family law, personal injury and criminal issues.

A Taste of Ginger
Monday, March 27
6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
465 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

The 13th annual Tast of Ginger culinary and cultural experience benefits Joslin Diabetes Center’s Asian American Diabetes Initiative. For more information, visit www.aadi joslin.org.

Meeting and film screening
Monday, March 27
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
883 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111

The Chinatown Community Land Trust will hold a community meeting and film showing at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School cafeteria.

Lunch with author
Tuesday, March 28
Noon to 1:30 p.m.
99 Albany Street
Boston, MA 02111

Author Lisa See will have a lunchtime conversation at One Chinatown Art Center. For tickets, visit http://ow.ly/imber-309WD7K.

Free health care service
Every Tuesday
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
First Church in Malden 184 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02144

The Shrewsbury Project offers free, unscheduled health care to the medically underserved populations of the greater Boston area.

Free evening meals
Every Tuesday to Friday
5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
54 Eastern Avenue
Malden, MA 02148

Bread of Life offers free evening meals for low-income families and individuals in the metro North area. Evening meals are served Tuesday at Bread of Life, Wednesday and Thursday at 368 Pleasant Street and Friday at 493 Main Street. For more information, call (781) 397-0404.

End of life choices discussion
Wednesday, March 29
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
64 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

Beacon Hill Village presents “End of Life Choices” at King’s Chapel Parish House. Presentation free and registration required; call Beacon Hill Village at (617) 723-9713.

Special education workshop
Friday, March 31
5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
275 Hancock Street, Suite 200
Boston, MA 02117

UMass Boston professor Sara Brown speaks about special needs children and their rights. To register, contact Grace Lo at (617) 635-5129 x 1039, email grace.ug@bmc.net or online at https://goo.gl/forms/957H9EKvdfrQKhc2.

Immigrants Day
Wednesday, April 5
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133


Chinatown Safety Committee meeting
Wednesday, April 5
10:30 a.m.
821 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111

The Chinatown Safety Committee meeting will take place at the DoubleTree Hotel.

Free immigration clinic
Wednesday, April 5
Noon to 2 p.m.
1 City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

The Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Advance ment offers free private immigration clinics at the Boston City Hall Room 806. For interpreters other than Spanish, please call at least one week in advance at (617) 635-2980.

Chinatown Resident Association meeting
Wednesday, April 5
6:30 p.m.
885 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111

The Chinatown Resident Association meeting will take place at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School cafeteria.

Memorial service for Shu-chung Shen
Friday, April 7
7 p.m.
9 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02111

A memorial celebration for Shu-chung Shen will take place at the China Pearl Restaurant. For more information, call (617) 229-3885 or email thsh-ent88@gmail.com.

ATASK community 5K
Saturday, April 8
9 a.m.
Chesnut Hill Reservoir
Boston, MA 02147

The Asian Task Force Against Discrimination and Violence will host the third ATASK Community 5K Race at the Chestnut Hill Reservoir. For more information, visit https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Boston/ATASKCommuni ty-5K.

Citizenship workshop
Monday, April 10
1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
87 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02111

The Asian American Civic Association naturalization workshop provides free instruction on filing naturalization applications, translated study material and much more. Please register with Melody Tsang at (617) 426-9492 x 2 or melody@aatask com.

The Chinatown Coalition meeting
Thursday, April 13
9:30 a.m.
38 Ash Street
Boston, MA 02111

The Chinatown Coalition meeting will take place at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, 4F.

First-time homebuyer classes
April 22 to 23
2 p.m.
38 Oak Street
Boston, MA 02111

ACDC offers HB101 classes in English, Cantonese and Mandarin. Each session is a nine-hour class over the course of a two-day weekend. Tuition is $50. Registration required, by calling (617) 482-2380, emailing CHOP@asianc dlc.org or visiting www. asiancdlc.org/content/first time-homebuyer-workshop-hb101.
With longer life expectancies than men, in the lives of women for over 80 years.

You can start with a visit to Social Security’s “Retirement Estimator.” It gives you a personalized estimate of your retirement benefits. Plug in different retirement ages and projected earnings to get an idea of how such things might change your future benefit amounts. You can use this valuable tool at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

You should also visit Social Security’s planners section. It provides detailed information about how marriage, career events can affect your Social Security.

Nearly 60 percent of the people receiving Social Security benefits are women, and Social Security has served a vital role in the lives of women for over 80 years. Without longer life expectancies than men, women tend to live more years in retirement and have a greater chance of exhausting other sources of income. With the national average life expectancy for women in the United States rising, many women will have decades to enjoy retirement. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a female born today can expect to live more than 80 years. As a result, experts generally agree that if women want to ensure that their retirement years are comfortable, they need to plan early and wisely.

You can start with a visit to Social Security’s “Retirement Estimator.” It gives you a personalized estimate of your retirement benefits. Plug in different retirement ages and projected earnings to get an idea of how such things might change your future benefit amounts. You can use this valuable tool at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

The Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center promoted better management of chronic disease for Asian elders. The center published a Chinese booklet on heart health and a second one on heart disease, said Megan Cheung, social service director.

South Cove Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center hosted monthly breakfast seminars to provide seniors information to support their health and independent living. Cumulatively 3,000 seniors were served over three years for 236 health stories were published in 72 issues over three years.

The AHI began a new cycle of grant funding for 2017 to 2019 with an emphasis on smoking cessation programs. Programs include antismoking education and phone counseling. The officer spoke with the suspect, who was a marijuana. The officers also observed the Wang YMCA.

The Wang YMCA serves as a community agency to help improve bone density and combat the risk for falls. Participants had to be able to lift a weight of at least one pound, said Dr. Barnwell.

BY LING-MEI WONG

Chinatown crime for March 11 to March 24

BY THE BOSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

All reports are submitted by the Boston Police Department. The time period is from March 11 to March 24 for District A-1, which includes Chinatown.

To report a crime or suspicious activity, call 911. Interpreters are available for Chinese speakers.

Larceny

March 11, 11:37 p.m.: The victim reports a person stole his jacket containing his wallet and $1,000 cash. The restaurant is located on Washington Street.

Robbery

March 12, 5:14 a.m.: The victim reports while walking on Harrison Avenue he was assaulted and robbed by an unknown male.

Threats

March 13, 3:14 p.m.: The victim reports while in the area of Harrison Avenue he was threatened by a loud group and that one of the occupants was carrying a firearm. Upon arrival, the officers observed the suspect leaving the party on the third floor and recovering a firearm from said person. The officers smelled what appeared to be marijuana. The officer also observed another suspect who live streamed распространение. Another weapon was recovered. The officers placed both suspects under arrest. The person in charge of the apartment was issued a city ordnance for a loud party.

CNC evaluates pedestrian safety, neighborhood developments

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Association (CNC) met March 20 at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. A petition to make Chinatown a Slow Streets Neighborhood was presented by Debbie Chen, Asian Community Development Corporation community planner. “Chinatown is a crash hot spot. Kneeland is a nightmare to cross, while Harrison and Oak have blind spots, as the sidewalk walk is too far back to see pedestrians,” she said. The CNC voted to provide a support letter. Pho Mai management, formerly Pho Hoa, at 23 Beach Street, presented plans to convert the top five floors of its eight-story building to affordable rental units. Owner Lan Dinh operates Pho Mai on the first floor, has office space on the second and third floors, and the fourth to eighth floors are vacant.

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“People wanted to rent on the fourth floor, but I couldn’t, because it wasn’t legal,” Dinh said. “So that’s why I want to change it and make it affordable for everybody. I won’t charge rent for an arm and a leg. We started from the bottom, we are still getting people from the bottom.”

A proposal for a massage spa at 213 Harrison Avenue was presented. Owner Mrs. Wang has bodywork experience in China and Boston, who plans to open on the ground floor. The spa needs to add partitions for four rooms and will go before the Zoning Board of Appeals after several community input.

A report on lighting and street repairs was given by Eric Prentiss, administrative assistant for the Public Works Department, City of Boston.

March 13, 2:25 a.m.: The officers responded to 66 Hudson Street on a report of a loud party and that one of the occupants was carrying a firearm. Upon arrival, the officers observed the suspect leaving the party on the third floor and recovering a firearm from said person. The officers smelled what appeared to be marijuana. The officer also observed another suspect who live streamed распространение. Another weapon was recovered. The officers placed both suspects under arrest. The person in charge of the apartment was issued a city ordnance for a loud party.

The Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center presented monthly breakfast seminars to provide seniors information to support their health and independent living. Cumulatively 3,000 seniors were served over three years for 32 health seminars, tai chi classes, and art and music classes.

The Wang YMCA of Chinatown’s Senior Strength and Movement Program (SSAM) provided an exercise program with resistance training to seniors, to help improve bone density and combat the risk for falls. Participants had to be over 60 and more than 300 seniors were served over three years, said Pat Barnwell, Wang Y executive director.

Barnwell said, “We reach across the country have sought us out to replicate the program.”

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Boston strives to preserve affordable housing

BY THE CITY OF BOSTON

Although Boston has demonstrated a strong commitment to affordable housing, with 52,800 subsidized units to help house its low- and moderate-income residents, these critically important assets can become at risk. Boston’s strong real estate market makes it extremely attractive for landlords with expiring affordability restrictions to convert their property to market-rate housing. There are 30,477 affordable units in Boston that are privately-owned that were funded from the state and federal programs over the last 50 years. These units are potentially at risk because must have reached the end of their initial affordability requirements and owners may convert to market rate. While many units are at low risk because of non-profit ownership or already-executed affordability extensions, there are more than 1,400 units considered to be at moderate or elevated risk.

How to prepare your home for a successful sale

BY ELENA M. LAU

In this highly competitive real estate market, it is imperative to be well-prepared and partnered with the right professionals. Before putting your home for sale, here are three key tips to follow:

1. Hire the right realtor

Partnering with the right realtor and other professionals will go a long way.

The right realtor will provide you with the proper guidance to sell your home for top dollar. When hiring the right realtor, you will need to ensure that he/she has a proven and aggressive marketing plan inside the house! You want to display your home as effective buyers as possible, both for pictures and not see the actual features of the house. You want to display your home as pristine as possible. This is a good time to sort out what you want to keep, donate or toss out. This way you can also start packing for your next house.

2. De-personalize and de-clutter your home

Any personal pictures and family heirlooms should be put away. The main goal is to showcase and highlight the features of your home. This will give prospective buyers the opportunity to imagine how the house would be like it is theirs, rather than distracting them with your personal decorations.

If your house is presented messily, prospective buyers will get turned off and not see the actual features of the house. You want to display your home as pristine as possible. This is a good time to sort out what you want to keep, donate or toss out. This way you can also start packing for your next house.

3. Make your home sparkle

Hiring professionals such as a home stager, cleaner, handyman and landscape will make your home look attractive for buyers. This step is critical, as you will want to remove any bad smells, repair any known damage around the house, and properly decorate the house to make the house look brighter, more spacious and neat to appeal as many prospective buyers as possible, both for pictures and in person.

Don’t forget the curb appeal. Buyers will judge the outside even before going inside the house!

To have a successful home sale requires preparation and the right skillset.

You don’t have to do this alone. For further guidance, please contact Elena M. Lau at Elena@UnionRealEstateLLC.com.

The 97 percent retention target means that no more than 161 units can be lost by the end of 2016. With only 61 units lost to date, the City is well ahead of target.

Of the 4,100 units identified as at moderate or elevated risk, 1,013 have been preserved and only 61 units lost.

Nine preservation projects, comprising 376 affordable units, were funded by the City between 2014 and 2016. The City contributed $6.5 million to these projects, which in turn leveraged $123 million in State, Federal and private funding.

There are 600 units in nine 13A developments across the city that are at risk of loss of affordability. Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) staff continues to meet with tenant groups, owners and potential developers in hopes of preserving many of these units as affordable and where that is not possible, to protect the current tenants from exces-

How we’ve done it: Our strategies

• Working with partners at the State, City staff are prioritizing projects most at risk

• For market pressures, financial feasibility, or physical condition. With Community

Economic Development Assistance Corporation and Mass Housing, DND is providing owners with financing options that would allow them to take advantage of programs such as Rental Assistance Demonstration, tax-exempt financing and other resources and tools as encouragement for them to make a decision to preserve tenancies and secure the long-term affordability of the development.

• The City and the State have been reaching out to the owners of the 13A developments, to encourage preservation of the tenancies of low-to moderate-income residents, beyond the protections offered under 40T.

• The City expects to close on the first acquisition of a Boston 13A development by the end of March 2017.

live-in maintenance assistant

Job posting

Live-In Maintenance Assistant

Rogerson Communities has a position available for a qualified Live-In Maintenance Assistant at our facility Hong Lok House in Chinatown, Boston. This person will be responsible for monitoring the overall safety of the building, the grounds, and the residents overnight and on weekends. This individual must be present and available for emergency situations and will be responsible for snow removal.

The Live-In Maintenance Assistant will receive rent and utilities (excluding cable, internet and phone) as part of the agreement in addition to hourly compensation for work completed beyond regular Live-In duties.

This position provides assistance to a fragile population of elderly residents; therefore it is essential that the live in responder possess a sensitivity to issues of aging and the ability to interact well with a diverse and elderly population as well as an awareness of safety and security issues. A satisfactory CORI report is required.

Qualifications:

• Ability to communicate in both English and Chinese strongly preferred

• Friendly and solutions focused

• Physical capacity to handle light maintenance

Affordable Apartments: Cambria Road in Newton

Two 2 br units will be available according to Lottery on May 9, 2017

Income Limits Apply:

1 person 2 persons 3 persons 4 persons

Area Median Income (AMI): $34,350 $39,250 $44,150 $49,050 $53,000 $56,900 $916*

50% Area Median Income (AMI): $17,150 $20,350 $23,550 $26,750 $31,000 $35,100 $590*

60% Area Median Income (AMI): $20,620 $24,770 $28,920 $33,070 $37,220 $41,370 $693*

70% Area Median Income (AMI): $24,090 $29,240 $34,390 $39,540 $44,690 $49,840 $796*

80% Area Median Income (AMI): $27,560 $33,710 $39,860 $45,010 $51,160 $57,310 $899*

* Rent subject to annual change based on local Area Median Income (AMI) and utilities. Rents are not based on each applicant’s income (unless they already have a Section 8 voucher already or similar). Tenants are responsible for paying natural gas (heat, cooking), and hot water and electricity. (~ $118/month). Water/scratcher/lease.

Info session: Thurs., April 13, 6:30 pm

Metro West Collaborative Development, 79-B Chapel St., Newton

To apply, contact Holly at Metro West Collaborative Development, Inc., 617-923-3505 x 8 or for application, or for more information, visit metrowestcd.org/housing/services/information-for-containers/units-for-rent.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE (NOT POSTMARKED) BY Friday, May 5, 2017 by 5:00 p.m.

FREE TRANSLATION ASSISTANCE: Call Holly at 617-923-3505 x 8; TYI: 711

Supported by citizens of Newton through their Community Preservation Fund.
Four tips to avoid rental scams

BY SARA BROWN

To try and find an apartment can be tough. Boston’s growing population and demand is no match for limited housing stock. With the presence of Craigslist and other sites online, apartment hunting can even more challenging, since there are so many scams and fake listings. Here are four tips to avoid being scammed and find a new apartment successfully.

1) If you are asked to give money before even seeing the apartment.
   This is not a common practice and usually is a sign that something fishy is going on. You should never pay for something you don’t see in person. Also, don’t rely on pictures. They may be digitally edited to look better or completely fake.

2) You don’t need a lease.
   Always, always make sure you sign a lease. Legally, you don’t need a lease but it is common practice. If the landlord doesn’t want to sign a lease, sign a month-to-month agreement. If you don’t sign a lease and pay money, you could be putting yourself in a bad situation.

3) You never meet anyone to see the property.
   It’s better to be safe than sorry.

4) You need to give personal information.
   Never disclose your social security number via email. That is not the professional way of doing business. You should not have to give personal information until you have met with the landlord and seen the apartment. You will need to disclose your personal information for a credit check but there usually is an official form for that. Overall, trust your gut. If something seems off or not right, it probably isn’t.

Chinatown: Housing a growing community in tight quarters

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“Chinatown’s very tight-knit,” Liou said. “It’s nowhere near the housing stock — it built in 1995 — while Quincy Tower’s affordable rentals will be extended for 30 years. It’s very difficult for working families and senior citizens to afford rents in Chinatown,” said Congressman Mike Capuano in the MassHousing release. “Tax-funded programs are a vital and dynamic part of preserving our communities. Keeping rents affordable through Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Section 8 vouchers shows how the federal government can be an important partner in stabilizing communities.”

Malden and Quincy are developing as Asian exurbs, with more Chinese supermarkets and restaurants opening. About 20 percent of Malden residents are Asian, while Quincy is 25 percent Asian, based on the most recent U.S. Census in 2010.

“In talk about affordability, Boston gets it,” Liou said. “In the suburbs, there’s more a mentality of not wanting to build more affordable housing because they don’t want ‘those people’ moving in. Is it Asians? Or just people not from Malden?”

Despite more people moving to the suburbs, Chinatown remains a hub. Chinese individuals choose banking, health care and postal services in Chinatown, as downtown branches employ more Cantonese and Mandarin speakers. People may not live in Chinatown, but for many Asians, it feels like home.

“Chinatown’s very tight-knit,” Liou said. “That’s good because everyone cares.”
How smoking affects your lungs

BY SARA BROWN

Smoking is proven to cause a plethora of health issues throughout the body. However, the lungs are most likely to be damaged by smoking.

When someone smokes one cigarette, many chemicals enter their body through their lungs. Nicotine, carbon monoxide, and tar are some of those chemicals. When tobacco is burned, it produces more than 4,000 chemicals.

According to the American Lung Association, smoking damages lungs and airways by changing them. Some of the changes happen suddenly, while others last a short or a long time before going away. Colds and pneumonia are examples of this. Breathing-related symptoms of smoking are chronic cough, shortness of breath and wheezing.

Other changes happen slowly and last a long time, often for the rest of your life. These are chronic changes. Emphysema is an example of a chronic change. When you smoke, the cells that produce mucus in your lungs grow, causing mucus to increase and be thicker. Everyone has little brown hairs in their lungs called cilia that clean the lungs. When you smoke, cilia slows down and it becomes more difficult to clean your lungs, according to the American Lung Association. Smoking also reduces the number of cilia, so there are fewer cilia to clean your lungs.

It is normal for your lungs not to work as well the more you age. However, the more you smoke, the faster you age your lungs. Your lungs can be destroyed. When lung tissue is destroyed, the number of air spaces and blood vessels in the lungs decreases. Less oxygen is carried to your body.

Smoking during pregnancy causes additional health problems, including premature birth, certain birth defects and infant death. Women who smoke while pregnant are more likely to have a miscarriage, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Babies born to women who smoke are more likely to have certain birth defects, like a cleft lip or cleft palate.

Smoking also causes problems with the placenta, which is the baby’s source of oxygen and food. If a woman smokes during her pregnancy, the placenta can separate from the womb too early, causing bleeding, which is dangerous to the mother and the unborn child.

According to the CDC, smoking can cause an infant to be born with low birth weight or too early in general. If a child is born too light, they are more likely to get sick and have to stay in the hospital longer.

Smoking during and after pregnancy is a risk factor for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is an infant death for which a cause of the death cannot be found.
I couldn’t get out of bed anymore in my sophomore year of college. Depression runs in my family. It was something I knew could be in my genetic makeup and I feared having it one day. I grew up watching family members struggle with it daily and seemingly lose themselves to the invisible predator. I didn’t want that for myself.

However, I didn’t have a choice. My depression would reveal itself during college. Everything was going well. I was getting good grades, had friends and enjoyed my college life. However, things changed during my sophomore year.

I spent the majority of fall semester in bed, either crying or sleeping. I didn’t go to class and almost flunked out of school. It was frustrating because I had no idea why I was so sad. I had no reason to be either.

The worst part was knowing, deep down, what was going on. I knew this had to be depression, but I stubbornly refused to admit it. I was going to be different from my family members. I was just going to push through it and everything would be all right. Everything wasn’t all right and I couldn’t make it on my own. I eventually sought help from my college’s mental health department and went to counseling once a week.

It was tough. I hated counseling at first. However, it helped me by giving me tools to handle my depression. Eventually, over time, things started to get better. I wasn’t crying all day. I was going to classes. I was getting my life back together.

I realize now it was stigma about depression and mental health that prevented me from getting help. I didn’t want people to think I was crazy. If you have a cold or a heart problem, you go to the doctor. The same is true with mental health issues, I now know.

Little did I know, many of my peers felt the same way. One out of every four college students suffers from some form of mental illness, including depression.

My depression is something I live with every day. I have good days. I have bad days. However, through seeking treatment, I now have the skills to handle it. If you or someone you know needs help, please visit www.halfofus.com.
My first taste of Louisiana seafood boil took place in Houston last winter. I fell in love with its mess, spice and tasty seafood combo meals in a bag. Imagine my delight and surprise to discover three seafood boil restaurants opening in greater Boston, particularly Loui Loui. It opened a third location in transportation-accessible Allston in January, only five minutes from the B Green Line.

If you have never been, you are in for an experience, especially if you love eating with your hands. Weekends require a long wait at supper time, but a Tuesday at 6 p.m. was decidedly less hectic. Upon being seated, the seafood boil menu gives you a choice of three sauces—Louisiana, Lemon Pepper or Garlic. Next, you choose the level of spice. (I found “mild” fine and “medium” a tad too strong.) Then you choose from a variety of seafood sold by the pound at market price. You can add a corn cob, andouille sausage and potatoes as well. If the seafood boil is not your thing, there are other options such as fried seafood, clam chowder, jambalaya and raw oysters.

For starters, we got the tasty and creamy clam chowder ($5 a cup) served with a balanced amount of clams and potatoes. The jambalaya ($5 a cup) came topped with rice on a zesty soup and generous amounts of chicken and vegetables, accented with smoky notes from the andouille sausage. The side of cole slaw ($2) with shredded cabbage and carrots had the perfect amount of creamy dressing.

The seafood, we opted for a pound of shrimp (roughly 16 pieces at $15) in the Lemon Pepper sauce and the popular Louisiana sauce for the mussels (12 green ones at 13 per pound). The shellfish were served piping hot, with bibs, plastic gloves and a big pail for shells. The Vietnamese influence is seen in Creole seafood boil’s garlicky, salty and buttery sauces. Bold flavors and heavy sauces are not for the faint-hearted. For dessert, we shared the funnel cake fries ($8) and at the suggestion of our server, we opted for vanilla ice cream and strawberry sauce (additional $2).

Loui Loui is a welcome and much-needed addition to the diverse Allston food scene.

‘Facing Exclusion’ brings Chinese immigrant history to life

Christina R. Chan, directed, wrote and performed a special production of “Facing Exclusion” on March 17 at the Emerson/Paramount Center on March 17. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

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Our Newest Branch is Open in North Quincy!

Discover what great local banking can do

South Shore Bank’s newest branch is now open for business at 275 Hancock Street in North Quincy.

Stop by to check out our new office, meet our friendly staff, and enter to win a great raffle prize. We are open Monday through Friday from 10 am to 6 pm.

For directions to our newest branch or to learn more about South Shore Bank, visit us at southshorebank.com.