Castle Square celebrates diversity at Black History and Chinese New Year party
BY VALERIE LI

Castle Square Tenants Organization held its Black History and Lunar New Year celebration on March 2 at Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology. The event attracted more than 100 guests to attend despite a nor’ester that brought pouring rain and gusty winds to the city.

Featuring lion dance, string orchestra and a variety of cultural performances, the event emphasized inclusion and diversity. CSTO executive director Deborah Hecks and board president Ann Moy wished all the residents “a happy and prosperous Year of the Dog.”

WinnCompanies board president Lawrence Curtis announced the designation of the Eva White Apartments as permanently affordable. The 102-unit senior housing community is also on Tremont Street, next to Castle Square.

CSTO has three youth development initiatives: Square Tech, Teen Program and Square Roots. The Square Tech staff and interns danced to “Uptown Funk,” one of many highlights of the night.

“I’m excited for the tech program because it provides so many resources for our kids to get involved with computer science at an early age,” said Terrence Woolfork, board vice president, of the Square Tech program.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Housing, library planned for Tremont Street land parcel
BY SHIRA LAUCHAROEN

The Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) held a community meeting on the development of Parcel P-12C on Feb. 28 at the Josiah Quincy School cafeteria. The plan from 288 Tremont Street Partners includes affordable housing and a permanent home for the Chinatown branch of the Boston Public Library.

“Our objective was to create a dense, mixed-use development on an underutilized parcel and create a vibrant streetscape on the ground level,” said BPDA senior manager for disposition services Reay Pannesi.

The project calls for 171 residential units that will be income restricted. According to the proposal, 45 rental units will be for households at 30-60 percent of area median income (AMI), while 126 homeownership units will be for households with an average AMI of 80 percent. The proposal calls for an expansion of the Doubletree Hotel owned by Corecoran Jemison and the Tufts Shared Services parking lot, which will acquire 262 new parking spaces.

It will also create space for storefronts along Tremont Street, as well as a pedestrian plaza as an extension of Eliot Norton Park. While Chinatown currently houses a temporary library at the Chinatown Trade Center, the proposal suggests that a new branch be based at the Parcel P-12C location.

“The permanent home for the Chinatown branch of the BPL will help community to reclaim and reinforce the Chinatown identity along Tremont Street,” said Angie Liou, executive director of community developer Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC).

The proposed project site, which is currently used as a surface parking lot, is located on Tremont Street and measures about 30,000 square feet.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3
Event Calendar

Academy of the Pacific Rim dinner: Friday, March 9 6:30 to 9 p.m. 9 Tyler Street Boston, MA 02111 The Academy of the Pacific Rim will host its Lunar New Year Celebration and Benefit Dinner at the China Pearl Restaurant. For details, contact Imani Jean at jean@pacrim.org.

Pajama drive March 9 to March 15 2 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02116 The Chinatown, North End and West End branches of the Boston Public Library is collecting 15,000 pairs of new pajamas for babies, children and teens in need.

Chinese chat group Fridays, Tuesdays 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. 67 Huntington Avenue Boston, MA 02115 A Cantonese conversation group will meet Friday at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Kresge 201 on 2F. A Mandarin chat group will meet Tuesday, 67 Huntington Avenue at www.meetup.com/bostonchina/.

Free health seminar Saturday, March 10 10 a.m. 38 Oak Street Boston, MA 02111 A free monthly interactive health seminar on chronic kidney disease will take place at the Metropolitan community room. Reservations provided. RSVP with May Lu at (617) 482-2380 x 8212 or may.lui@asiancdc.org.

Mulan Society classes Saturday, March 10 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. 87 Tyler Street Boston, MA 02111 Mulan Society Center for Women’s Empowerment classes will take place at the Asian American Civic Association, 4F. Registrations provided.

Free meditation classes Free meditation classes will take place Sundays and Thursdays 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Boston Bodhi Meditation. People with limited mobility are welcome to join. For more information, call (781) 874-1023.

Intermediate English information session Monday, March 12 8:30 a.m. 87 Tyler Street Boston, MA 02111 The Asian American Civic Association offers a free Intermediate English program (Next STEP) for people who need to improve their English to attend college or working. Applicants must come on time to one of our scheduled information sessions and take the assessment, which lasts 2-2.5 hours. No one else will be admitted once the test starts. For more information, call (617) 426-9492 x 250 or email jco@aaaca-boston.org.

Free immigration clinic Mondays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 275 Hancock Street 2F North Quincy, MA 02170 Chinese American Citizen Right Alliance will help clients at Quincy Asian Resources Inc. to provide information and referral services to Chinese Americans. For more information, call QARI at (617) 472-2200.

EMT information session Monday, March 12 11 a.m. 87 Tyler Street 4F Boston, MA 02111 An information session on being a Boston emergency medical technician will take place at the Asian American Civic Association. Register at employment@ aaaca-boston.org.

Job fair Monday, March 12 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. 87 Tyler Street 4F Boston, MA 02111 A job fair for ABM Aviation will take place at the AACA. Register at employment@aaaca-boston.org.

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 at 368 Pleasant Street and Friday at 493 Main Street. For more information, call (781) 397-0404.

First-time homebuyer classes March 17 to 18 8 a.m. 38 Oak Street Boston, MA 02111 ACDC offers HB101 classes in English and Chinese. Each session is a 9-hour class over the course of a two-day weekend. Tuition is $50. Sign up for a workshop, graduate and receive a certificate, and become eligible for discounted mortgage products. Registration required, by calling (617) 482-2380 x 208 or 202, emailing CHOP@ asiancdc.org or visiting https:// asiancdc.org/hb101.org. All are welcome to attend at the BCEC auditorium, the former South Cove Manor location. Refreshments provided. For more information, call Tanya Yin at (203) 893-7963.

Asian health symposium Friday, April 6 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. 99 Albany Street Boston, MA 02118 All are welcome to attend at the BCEC auditorium, the former South Cove Manor location. Refreshments provided. For more information, call Stanley Thang at (617) 423-0590.

Free immigration clinic Wednesday, March 21 Noon to 2 p.m. 1 City Hall Square Boston, MA 02201 The Mayor’s Office for Immigration Advancement 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.

CPS New Year celebration Friday, March 23 6 p.m. 690 Washington Street Boston, MA 02111 The Chinese Progressive Association’s Year of the Dog Spring Banquet will take place at Empire Garden. For tickets, contact (617) 357-4499 or justice@c pbaoston.org.

Let’s Talk forum Saturday, March 24 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. 13 Appian Way Cambridge, MA 02138 The third Let’s Talk forum focuses on understanding mental health-related issues as experienced by Asian college students. Register at https://bit. ly/2E2XacWN.

Breakfast seminar Thursday, March 29 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. 120 Shawmut Street Boston, MA 02118 All are welcome to attend at the BCEC auditorium, the former South Cove Manor location. Refreshments provided. For more information, call Tanya Yin at (203) 893-7963.

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Mass. Attorney General Healey speaks up for immigrants, gun control

BY LING-MEI WONG

March 9, 2018

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey held a press briefing on March 6 at her office. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

The office recovered more than $200,000 through 17 free wage theft clinics, which have been expanded from Boston to New Bedford. Healey also filed a suit in support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) in September after President Donald Trump tried to dismantle it, which was blocked by two federal judges.

The Supreme Court upheld both rulings from the lower courts.

“Dreamers are Americans,” Healey said. She added that a Maryland court has ruled DACA application information cannot be used by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to pick up undocumented parents.

Healey met with student survivors of the Parkland shooting in Washington, D.C. last month. While Massachusetts has strong gun laws and robust enforcement, more than 60 percent of guns in the Commonwealth come from out of state. Healey said she favored universal background checks to stem the flow of weapons between states.

Development of the space, ACDC held public meetings to discuss a plan for the project site. The triangular land parcel is owned by the BPDA. Funds for the affordable housing complex on Tremont Street. It houses more than 1,500 residents, who are mostly Asian. Now in its ninth year, the joint celebration of Black History Month and Lunar New Year connects residents through food and culture.

Committee discusses massage parlors

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Chinatown Safety Committee met March 7 at the DoubleTree Hotel. Boston Police Department District A-1 Capt. Ken Fong gave an update on local crime. A man was arrested for trespassing on Tyler Street on March 6.

Diva Beauty Salon at 40-42 Harrison Avenue sought community support to add massage as a primary use, which is currently zoned for accessory use. The salon opened in 2008 to sell beauty products and added massage services in 2011, said owner Ming Ying Wang. Boston Police had raided several massage parlors in 2014 and one arrest included an unlicensed massage therapist at Diva Beauty Salon, who had offered illegal prostitution services. Wang said she was unaware of the illegal activity and does not condone it. Capt. Fong said Chinatown has more than 25 massage parlors.

St. James Church is looking into its substance abuse program. Chinese calligraphy, crafts and a Lion dance are part of the festivities. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) has ruled DACA application address information cannot be used by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to pick up undocumented parents.

The well-received spoken-word performance by the Teen Program painted some light on self-identity and mistreatment that the minority youths would face in their lives.

DIVERSITY: Castle Square comes together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The well-received spoken-word performance by the Teen Program painted some light on self-identity and mistreatment that the minority youths would face in their lives.

Boston City Councilor Ed Flynn wished every guest a healthy new year and delivered a citation from Mayor Walsh’s Office. Castle Square is a 500-unit affordable housing complex on Tremont Street. It houses more than 1,500 residents, who are mostly Asian. Now in its ninth year, the joint celebration of Black History Month and Lunar New Year connects residents through food and culture.
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK) held its annual meet-
ferrals from community providers, such as
“We’ve seen a 70 percent increase in re-
addition, it provided 7,000 individu-
resources due to language barriers. In
800 clients, most of whom are domes-
tic violence survivors unable to access
49th year serving fami-
the agency’s work on March 6 at the Pao Arts Center. (Image courtesy of
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK) held its annual meet-
ing on March 6 at the Pao Arts Center. Launched in 1992, ATASK has grown from providing service in one language to more than 20 languages and dialects. The agency serves 40 ethnicities in greater Boston and Lowell.
In 2017, ATASK served more than 800 clients, most of whom are domes-
tic violence survivors unable to access resources due to language barriers. In addition, it provided 7,000 individu-
als with emergency beds at its shelters. “We’ve seen a 70 percent increase in re-
ferrals from community providers, such as the police, health care providers and schools,” said Cristina Ayala, co-execu-
tive director of ATASK. Asians make up about 6.7 percent of the state’s population, representing the fastest growing group in Massachusetts since 2010. “The Asian community in Massachusetts speaks over 60 languag-
es and dialects. However, 27 percent of them have limited English proficiency,” said co-executive director Dawn Sauma. Moving forward to next year’s agenda, ATASK is hoping to “center on our mar-
s and ensure Asian needs are heard on individual, community and systemic levels through our outreach, ESOL, clinical programs,” Ayala said. ATASK acknowledged the achieve-
ments of its staff: Cambodian advocate Van Chey and Chinese advocate Carmen Tung. Community leaders Jennifer Nel-
son of law firm Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Fer-is, Glovsky and Popeo, and Nick Chau of Tai Tung Realty were also recognized.
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence co-executive directors Dawn Sauma and Cristina Ayala spoke about the agency’s work on March 6 at the Pao Arts Center. (Image courtesy of Valerie Li.)

By Valerie Li

Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence generates hope for new year

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center held its Chinese New Year Banquet on March 2 at Hei La Moon. About 550 guests celebrated with the agency on its 49th year serving fami-
lies in greater Boston.
“At BCNC, we have to maintain the loyalty we have to the families that we serve, and we do this by supporting a diverse range of services to help them achieve their dream of a better life in America,” said Giles Li, BCNC execu-
tive director.
The BCNC Chinese New Year Ban-
quet raised more than $400,000 to pro-
vide essential family-centered services to more than 3,000 people each year. The agency recognized three constitu-
ants it had served. Chloe Mai received the Bank of America Youth Leader Award, Elaine Wong received the Capital One Adult Student Award. Fanggin Chen received the Tufts Medical Center Strong Family Award with her three children. (From left) BCNC executive director Giles Li, Tufts MC’s Sherry Dong, Chen’s daughter, Fanggin Chen, Chen’s son and daughter, BCNC board president Eugene Mahr. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

By Ling-Mei Wong

BCNC celebrates 49 years of serving families

BCNC celebrates 49 years of serving families

By Ling-Mei Wong

Boston’s councilwomen unite for community forum

The six female Boston city council-
ners came together on Feb. 27 at Roxbury Community College. About 60 attend-
ees came out for the “Conversation with Women Who Lead,” hosted by Suffolk County Sheriff Steve Tompkins. Tomp-
kins moderated the event, asking coun-
cilors for their thoughts on gun control, immigration and criminal justice.
Council President Andrea Campbell, Councilor for District 4, spoke about how the Council worked with Mayor Marty Walsh. “We’re not going back, we’re going forward,” she said. “Proposals for the Community Preservation Act and the plastic bag ban came from the Coun-
cil, then the Mayor got on board. There should be dialogue. … We do not always agree, but we still move forward.” Tompkins asked At-Large Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George, a former high school teacher, about proposals to arm teachers. Essaibi-George said, “A teacher should never be put in position when they are asked to pick up a weapon against their students. You never stop having love for a child.”

The border wall was met with skepti-
ticism. At-Large Councilor Michelle Wu spoke about growing up as a child of immigrants from Taiwan and how xenor-
phobic statements from the White House have hit close to home. “How can we be the best city if we do not use the talents of all groups? How can we say we do not want the next sci-
entist or president?” Wu said.
At-Large Councilor Ayanna Pressley added that she supported Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. Pressley is running for Con-
gress, against District 7 Congressman Michael Capuano.

Continued on Page 5
Chinese Women’s Association of New England hosts health workshop ahead of Women’s Day

BY VALERIE LI

The Chinese Women’s Association of New England hosted a women’s health workshop on March 2 at Empire Garden. (From left) CWANE Co-President Megan Cheung, Dr. Jenny Ruan, CWANE Co-President Alice Lee. (Image courtesy of Valerie Li)

In light of International Women’s Day, the Chinese Women’s Association of New England hosted a women’s health workshop. The event was held on March 2 at Empire Garden. It welcomed about 150 guests, who were both women and men.

Jenny Ruan, an obstetrician and gynecologist from Tufts Medical Center, discussed osteoporosis, cancer screenings and pap smears for adult women.

“It is highly recommended to get a pap smear every three years between the age of 21 to 29 and every five years between the age of 30 to 65 for cervical cancer cells,” Dr. Ruan said.

For breast cancer, Dr. Ruan suggested mammograms to effectively detect abnormalities. There are no screenings for uterine and ovarian cancer, but women who experience uterine bleeding should seek medical attention. A pelvic ultrasound and biopsy can be conducted if the symptoms persist. Women in menopause face higher risk of developing uterine and ovarian cancers.

Apart from women’s cancer, Ruan also discussed how women are at elevated risk of osteoporosis compared to men, which results in brittle bones and possible fractures. There are many factors contributing to osteoporosis: low calcium intake, vitamin D insufficiency, excessive alcohol intake and smoking. Ruan recommended 1000 milligrams of calcium daily for women age 19 to 50 and 1200 milligrams daily for women over 50. For vitamin D, women should consume 600 international units per day for those under 70 and 800 international units daily for women over 70.

The workshop was delivered in Cantonese and English. “This is a great event for me because now I have valuable information to share with my wife,” said Hung-Wei Ou, director of the Culture Center of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston.

FORUM: Councilors tackle city issues

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“I will never barter or negotiate with the lives of children for a wall,” Pressley said. “We need a clean Dream Act. We do not need a wall to protect us from immigration.”

District 7 Councilor Kim Janey spoke about supporting small businesses to revitalize neighborhoods.

She recalled her childhood growing up in Dudley, which was the second most lively business area after downtown, but has fallen into decline.

“Businesses are a way to build wealth and pass it on to future generations,” Janey said. She hoped the city could offer subsidies or lease public spaces at an affordable rate to small business owners.

Campbell spoke about securing funds in Boston’s budget for youth development programming, which passed in 2017. She also spoke about her criminal justice reform work to honor her twin brother Andre, who died in the custody of the department of correction while living as a pretrial detainee. Poor individuals who cannot afford bail are often held as a pretrial detainee. Poor individuals who cannot afford bail are often held as a pretrial detainee. Poor individuals who cannot afford bail are often held as a pretrial detainee. Poor individuals who cannot afford bail are often held as a pretrial detainee.

Pressley joked she wanted the ability to live in the Year of the Dog.

Community Health Care celebrated Chinese New Year on Feb. 27 at its headquarters. Members of the 2017 “Dragoons” dragon boat team posed with artist Petit Ng (front), who painted the team. Organizer Levelin Chan is second from the left. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care celebrates Chinese New Year on Feb. 27 at its headquarters. Staff played mahjong, a game of Chinese origin with 144 tiles which is frequently part of Lunar New Year family gatherings. Artist Peter Ng wrote auspicious Chinese calligraphy and unveiled his commissioned painting of the 2017 Harvard Pilgrim Health Care “Dragoons” dragon boat team, marking Harvard Pilgrim’s 10th year participating in the Boston Dragon Boat Festival. Artist Bingrong Liang crafted dough figures by hand. Harvard Pilgrim staff enjoyed hot tea, fruit, candy and refreshments. Levelin Chan, project administrator at the Center for Inclusion Initiatives, has organized the celebration since its inception and brought her stuffed animals to ring in the Year of the Dog.

A friendly mahjong game takes place. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

North Village Condominiums
Douglas Affordable Housing Lottery
www.s-e-b.com

3BR Duplex-style Homes for $183,300

This is a lottery for the 31 affordable duplex-style homes. These 31 homes will be sold at affordable prices to households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income. The first affordable homes will be ready in July 2018. For details on the lottery, go to www.s-e-b.com

Completed Applications and Required Income Documentation must be delivered, or postmarked, by 2 pm on April 23, 2018. Applications postmarked by the deadline must be received no later than 5 business days from the deadline. An Info Session will be held on March 13th at 6 pm at Simon Fairfield Public Library. The Lottery for eligible households will be held on May 8th, 2018 at 6 pm in the same location.

Applications and Info Packets also available in the Simon Fairfield Public Library (290 Main Street, Douglas MA). Library hours: Mon: 10AM-5PM, Tues: 11AM-8PM, Wed: 10AM-5PM, Thurs: 11AM-8PM, Sat: 9AM – 1PM.

Learn Chinese

Wind

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fēng

BY LING-MEI WONG

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care’s Center for Inclusion Initiatives will celebrate the Chinese New Year celebration on Feb. 27 at its Wellesley headquarters.

Staff played mahjong, a game of Chinese origin with 144 tiles which is frequently part of Lunar New Year family gatherings. Artist Peter Ng wrote auspicious Chinese calligraphy and unveiled his commissioned painting of the 2017 Harvard Pilgrim Health Care “Dragoons” dragon boat team, marking Harvard Pilgrim’s 10th year participating in the Boston Dragon Boat Festival. Artist Bingrong Liang crafted dough figures by hand. Harvard Pilgrim staff enjoyed hot tea, fruit, candy and refreshments. Levelin Chan, project administrator at the Center for Inclusion Initiatives, has organized the celebration since its inception and brought her stuffed animals to ring in the Year of the Dog.

A friendly mahjong game takes place. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

Harvard Pilgrim celebrates Chinese New Year

http://www.compassnorthrealty.net/north-village-condominiums.html

The Maximum Income Limits for Households are as follows: $47,600 (1 person), $54,400 (2 people), $61,200 (3 people), $68,000 (4 people), $73,450 (5 people), and $78,900 (6 people).

Households cannot have more than $75,000 in assets.

For more information on the Development, the Units or the Lottery and Application Process, please visit: www.s-e-b.com/lottery or call 617.782.6900 (press 2 for homeownership and then press x1 for North Village Condominiums).
Providers must routinely integrate smoking cessation services into TB, HIV, alcohol and mental health care

BY THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Secondhand smoke has no risk-free level of exposure. Establishing 100 percent smoke-free environments are the only way to protect nonsmokers. (Image courtesy of Flickr.)

Ventilation does not effectively protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke

BY THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Secondhand smoke is the combination of smoke from the burning end of a tobacco product and the smoke breathed out by the user. Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals; hundreds are toxic, and about 70 can cause cancer. There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke, and even brief exposure can cause immediate harm. Establishing a 100 percent smoke-free environment is the only effective way to fully protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke.

U.S. Surgeon General

In 2000, the U.S. Surgeon General released a report titled “The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General.” The report stated that scientific evidence now supports the following major conclusion: “Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposures of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.”

This conclusion was substantiated, in part, by the following facts:

● Conventional air cleaning systems can remove large particles but not the smaller particles or the gases found in secondhand smoke.

● Current heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems alone do not control secondhand smoke exposure throughout a building.

● Even separately enclosed, separately exhausted, negative-pressure smoking rooms do not keep secondhand smoke from spilling into adjacent areas.

World Health Organization (WHO)

In 2007, WHO released a report, “Protection from Exposure to Secondhand Tobacco Smoke: Policy Recommendations.” In light of the available scientific evidence on ventilation, the report made the following recommendation to protect workers and the public from exposure to secondhand smoke:

“Remove the pollutant—tobacco smoke—by implementing 100 percent smoke-free environments. This is the only effective strategy to reduce exposure to tobacco smoke to safe levels in indoor environments and to provide an acceptable level of protection from the dangers of secondhand smoke exposure. Ventilation and smoking areas, whether separately ventilated from nonsmoking areas or not, do not reduce exposure to a safe level of risk and are not recommended.”

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)

ASHRAE is the national standard-setting body for indoor air quality, including ventilation issues. In 2010, ASHRAE released a report titled “ASHRAE Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke.” The report included the following major conclusions:

● At present, the only means of effectively eliminating health risks associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity.

● No other engineering approaches, including current and advanced dilution ventilation or air cleaning technologies, have been demonstrated or should be relied upon to control health risks from environmental tobacco smoke exposure in spaces where smoking occurs.

● “Because of ASHRAE’s mission to act for the benefit of the public, it encourages elimination of smoking in the indoor environment as the optimal way to minimize environmental tobacco smoke exposure.”

Secondhand smoke has an impact on several public health crises. A restaurant worker lights up during a break in San Francisco’s Chinatown, in this image from 2012. (Image courtesy of Flickr user Brandon Doran.)

Certain populations smoke at higher rates than the general population, including those who are alcohol to excess, have mental illness or who are affected by other diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS. As a result, smoking has a tremendous impact on several other grave public health crises.

Most cases of TB occur in places where tobacco use is extremely common or rising rapidly. China and India alone, which have high smoking rates, account for 40 percent of all cases of tuberculosis in the world. A recent study showed that 21 percent of tuberculosis cases in adults were attributable to tobacco. As most patients with TB are relatively young, excess morbidity and mortality from tobacco-related tuberculosis takes a toll on persons in their most economically-productive years.

HIV-infected persons are even more susceptible to the dangers of tobacco than are persons without HIV infection. In settings where treatment for HIV infection has become widely available, HIV-infected tobacco smokers are losing more life-years to smoking than to HIV infection itself.

Smokers are more likely to consume excessive amounts of alcohol, and smoking may independently affect an individual’s propensity to abuse alcohol and vice versa. These people are at risk of adverse effects of both tobacco and alcohol-related diseases.

Mental health disorders are also tied closely to tobacco use. Persons with mental illness have high smoking rates, and for certain illnesses, such as anxiety disorders, tobacco use may cause or worsen the problem. Additionally, smoking is associated with increased severity of symptoms of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Persons with mental illness die disproportionately from smoking-related diseases. In California, approximately half of all deaths among people with mental illness were due to diseases caused by smoking.
Buds & Blossoms Early Education and Care Center celebrated Chinese New Year on Feb. 23 at the Kwong Kow Chinese School. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

BY LING-MEI WONG

Seniors learn how to take medicines properly

BY SOUTH COVE MANOR

A seminar on medicine management by pharmacist Qing Qing Lam took place Feb. 22 at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. (Image courtesy of South Cove Manor.)

BY LING-MEI WONG

A talk by pharmacist Qing Qing Lam on medication management took place Feb. 22 at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church’s 120 Shawmut Avenue auditorium. More than 20 seniors came to the seminar and celebrated the Lunar New Year together.

Lam of Walgreens said 44 percent of men and 57 percent of women older than 65 take five or more medications per week; about 12 percent of both men and women take 10 or more medications per week. Older adults should take care to avoid common medication mistakes, such as taking drugs incorrectly or taking more than prescribed. Useful tools include pill dispensers and reminder services, such as marking one’s calendar or setting an alarm.

Seniors should take medications at the correct strength, correct dose, correct timing, and at the correct frequency and duration. Taking your medication correctly is important because it will minimize or prevent complications, hospitalizations and death.

Prescription labels will show the patient’s name, the name of the medicine, dosage and instructions on how often to take the medicine. Pharmacies such as Walgreens and Tai Tung Pharmacy can print prescription labels in Chinese and provide phone interpretation services, Lam said.

Store all medications in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight and moisture. For medicines that need refrigeration, try to open the fridge less frequently.

Seniors should not be afraid to ask for help. Your pharmacist can tell you about the medicine’s indications, how to take it and possible side effects. If you notice anything, such as pills looking different from the usual appearance, be sure to alert your pharmacist in case of a medical error. You can also ask family members and visiting nurses to your home for help. Keep a list of medications with you.

Expired medicines should be disposed of properly. Do not flush drugs down the toilet, due to environmental concerns. They can be brought for take-back to police stations, city/town halls, some pharmacies or mailboxes.

The next breakfast seminar in Boston will take place March 29, and a Quincy breakfast seminar will take place March 20.

Tora

208 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 542-6688

Food review: Tora

Tora Japanese Restaurant serves poke bowls and Japanese kaiseki for an intimate downstairs space in Chinatown. Tora, or “tiger” in Japanese, offers more than a dozen combinations of salmon, uni and tuna. For those less keen on raw fish, there’s broiled eel, grilled beef and pork rice bowls.

The takoyaki ($6) octopus balls came out hot, with chewy bites of octopus in all four pieces. Dressed in Kewpie mayo, takoyaki sauce, bonito flakes and nori, the takoyaki disappeared quickly.

The Uni Ikura Don ($24) featured a generous amount of uni and salmon roe for a decadent bowl. Our uni was creamy and melted in your mouth.

The Tokyo Don ($20) contained torched salmon, scallop and salmon roe for a decadent bowl. Our uni was creamy and melted in your mouth. Our salmon was buttery and sweet, complemented by the tasty sushi rice. The rice was slightly warm and had the right amount of sushi vinegar for flavor.

Each of the rice bowls came with daikon radish, pickled ginger and a bowl of miso soup. There’s soy sauce and togarashi “seven spice” powder on each table, to add extra umami to your meal.

Seafood is lovingly prepared at Tora, as seen in the careful execution of each dish. Head down to the basement, pull out some chopsticks and get ready for an ocean of flavor at Tora.

Daycare center rings in Year of the Dog

BY LING-MEI WONG

BY LING-MEI WONG

A Public Info Session will be held on February 26th, 2018 at 6:00 pm in the Activity Room in Memorial Hall Library (2 North Main Street, Andover). The Affordable Housing Lottery Hanover at Andover 30 Shattuck Road, Andover, MA

$1BRs @ $1,160*, $2BRs @ $1,374*, $3BRs @ $1,575

*TAXES NOT INCLUDED. TENTATIVE RENTAL RATES.

First units will be ready in Summer 2018. Hanover at Andover is a 248 unit rental apartment community located in Andover on the corner of Fisher Street and South High Street. 62 of these apartments will be made available through this application process. The project includes residential amenities such as a resort-style pool, firepit area and BBQs for outdoor grilling. Units will have modern kitchens with granite countertops, frameless cabinets, wood flooring, and stainless steel appliances. The living areas incorporate carpeting flooring and expansive windows, while the bedrooms have ceiling fans, large walk-in closets, and carpeted flooring. The finish packages have 9’ ceilings and accent color walls.

MAXIMUM HOUSEHOLD INCOME LIMITS:
$47,600 (1 person), $54,400 (2 people), $61,200 (3 people), $68,000 (4 people), $73,450 (5 person), $78,900 (6 people)

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Completed Applications and Required Income Documentation must be received, not postmarked, by 2 pm on April 13th, 2018.

For Lottery Information and Applications, or for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, go to www.s-e-b.com/lottery or call (617) 782-6900x1 (and then x2) and leave a message. For TTY Services dial 711. Free translation available. Applications and Information also available at the Memorial Hall Library. The Lottery will be held in the same location on May 3rd, 2018 at 6 pm.

A talk by pharmacist Qing Qing Lam on medication management took place Feb. 22 at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

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‘Guards at the Taj’ explores divisions of class, heart

BY LING-MEI WONG

For a tale set in 1648 India, “Guards at the Taj” feels close to home. An intimate play with two characters, it probes class divisions with wicked humor.

Two Imperial guards protect the palace, where at first light, the glorious Taj Mahal will be revealed. Childhood friends Humayun (Jacob Abylay) and Babur (Harsh J. Gagoomal) must stand guard in stoic silence and not look at the Taj Mahal, which Babur cannot do. Humayun chastises Babur for his tardiness and chattiness, only to be asked why he is speaking.

At first light, Humayun and Babur behold the awe-inspiring edifice. Built by 20,000 artisans and designed by a brilliant architect, the Taj Mahal was commissioned for Shah Jahan’s favorite wife Mumtaz Mahal. After dying in childbirth bearing her 14th child, the grieving king

Harsh J. Gagoomal and Jacob Abylay in “Guards at the Taj,” playing at the Underground Railway Theater. (Image courtesy of A.R. Sinclair Photography.)

built the world’s most stunning mausoleum in her memory.

As the sun rises, the guards undertake an impossibly bloody task. This puts the play firmly in the adult category with its impossibly bloody task. This puts the play firmly in the adult category with its

friendship goes through a seismic shock, challenging their faith and duty. Playwright Rajiv Joseph won a 2016 award Obie for Best New American Play and 2016 Lucille Lortel award for Best Play for “Guards at the Taj.” Even in the violent scenes, it’s impossible to look away from this dark comedy.

Boston’s skyline is punctuated with more luxury buildings, making a highly stratified India seem not so distant. “Guards at the Taj” plays at the Underground Railway Theater until April 1.

A Lunar New Year Celebration took place at the Statehouse on Feb. 27. Mass. Treasurer Deb Goldberg and Rep. Donald Wong show off stuffed dogs from Wah Lum lion dancers, honoring the traditional Chinese new year. The AACA and AAC intend to hold a new year’s gathering annually. “The success of so many diverse groups points to the value of immigration, the value of open doors, the value of trade and the fact that we as a country need to be welcoming,” said Secretary of State William Galvin. “So many people are questioning immigration … I encourage you to continue proclaiming your culture.”

The program spotlighted AAC’s Buds and Blossoms Early Education and Care Center, as students performed a kung fu demonstration, Chinese poem and dance. The Wah Lum Kung Fu and Tai Chi Academy presented an energetic lion dance, while the Dance Philippines Performing Arts Company produced an elegant routine, during which performers balanced glasses on their heads. The Thai Sunday School staged two dances, the first representing the four regions of Thailand and the second depicting the forbidden love between a prince and half-bird/half-woman. The last act was a synchronized dance by the Boston University miXx K-pop Cover Dance Crew.

The Asian American Commission and the Asian American Civic Association held their first Lunar New Year Celebration at the Massachusetts Statehouse on Feb. 26. Drawing together 260 guests, the celebration featured speeches from state political figures, as well as artistic performances from local Asian groups.

“Our goal is to bring attention to this important cultural and civic event to the larger community and represent our cultural diversity,” said AACA deputy director Lisa Wong. “It is a proud showcase of our heritage. We want to make sure that we bring visibility, but also that we pass this along to the next generation.”

The event opened with a reception, during which artist Peter Ng presented original Chinese calligraphy, accompanied by music from the Thai Sunday School of Wat Nawamintararachuts of Boston. Speakers included Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, who stated that in honoring the Year of the Dog, “trust and honesty you uphold are good values to celebrate and underscore.”

Treasurer Deborah Goldberg expressed her wishes of prosperity in business ventures and success in careers for the community.

“We must extend our outreach and support the important advocacy work our communities are directing,” Goldberg said. “We are empowering and creating opportunities across the state.”

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AAC and AACA celebrate first Lunar New Year event at Statehouse

BY SHIRA LAUCHAROEN

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