Sampan Interview: An emergency resident physician on the frontline at MGH

By Ken Smith

Andy Hung-Yi Lee, 26, is an emergency medicine resident physician in his first year at Massachusetts General Hospital. He began his four-year residency in July of 2019 after obtaining a medical degree from Northwestern University in Chicago. III. Lee said he chose Mass. General after looking around the country for a training program for emergency medicine and he recognized that it has a long history and an excellent reputation as a training hospital for young doctors.

Now Lee finds himself working in the emergency department, on the frontline during a pandemic. He admits that it’s a stressful time to be doing a residency – but also rewarding.

“I think it kind of reinforced why a lot of us went into my specialty, which is studying emergency medicine, said Lee during a phone interview April 8. “You see some really sick patients who come into the hospital and need a lot of help from all areas of the hospital. You also see a lot of people coming together.”

He said that during the coronavirus outbreak, there has been a lot of cooperation from different services and see page 2, On the Frontline.

Boston shelters provide homeless critical support during Covid-19

By Shira Laucharoen

Brendan Coye comes to St. Francis House, a day shelter located near Chinatown, every day of the week. Before the coronavirus hit, Coye had been studying culinary arts at the New England Culinary Arts Training School and living in an apartment with a friend. As the pandemic spread, he lost the work-study benefits he was receiving from his school, and the strain that the virus put on his relationship with his roommate soon left him homeless. Coye comes to St. Francis House during the day for lunch and goes to the Southampton Street Shelter for dinner and rest at night.

“It’s St. Francis House: a very supportive place. They have food, they have showers, and they have support staff here,” said Coye. “I needed a mask, because I was staying at the shelter. They have showers, and they give you toiletries. It’s a very good place for people who are homeless, because it gives them someplace to go during the day. It gets them off the streets.”

The coronavirus has struck Boston’s homeless, a vulnerable population, particularly hard. According to Maggie Burns, vice president of St. Francis House’s philanthropy and external affairs, the shelter has not seen a surge in numbers, but they have seen an increase in need, as the severity of the virus has brought guests new levels of anxiety. St. Francis House typically sees 400 guests per day, and this amount of people has stayed pretty stable, said Burns. But the fear that the homeless are experiencing is palpable and real, she said.

“When the community and society has told you to stay home, when

-100-

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Pet adoption and foster care are put on hold during Covid-19

By Carey Lin

With the city in a virtual lockdown, and increasingly strict social distancing regulations, people have either been depending on or seeking the company of a pet. Adoption is incredibly popular, as well as fostering pets during this time. The Animal Rescue League (ARL) Boston announced on their website that they would put a hold on all new volunteer and foster parent orientation due to social distancing regulations and the sudden popularity of animal foster care. The uncertainty of these times make foster care a more appealing option to some, with the assumption that the current conditions are temporary. While such companionships have been increasingly in demand, many pets have also been left vulnerable under these circumstances.

Since the Bronx Zoo Tiger in New York City has contracted the coronavirus, there have been increasing concerns about animals and pets contracting or carrying the virus. Animal care centers like the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) have ensured their communities that they will also remain open with adjusted hours, as was announced on their website. Smaller and lower cost vet appointments are limited and vets will only take urgent care cases. They are reachable through phone and email during their adjusted open hours.

Animal centers are currently not looking for new fostering applications and will only conduct their system through existing animal foster parents. Some organizations, such as the Northeast Animal Shelter, have closed to the public and suspended adoption processes for the time being.

The MSPCA stated on their website that it will be continuing their adoption program online while taking necessary precautions with the right equipment when transitioning animals into their new homes. Their other programs, such as pet trainings have been moved to virtual and online platforms. While ARL has suspended new volunteer trainings until May 1, the MSPCA’s transition online has no set deadline.

Unleashed, a branch of PetCo on Washington Street in Boston have also halted their dog training lessons until further notice. Manager Jess Lopes says “dog trainings are a main pillar of sales, so the store really took a hit from having to cancel classes.”

Lee was born in Taiwan but grew up mostly in Vancouver, Canada, and came to America for medical school and his current training. He’s been working actively in the emergency department every other day, on 10-hour shifts, about 40 hours a week, which he said was more than what he usually works in residency.

Lee said he understands the risks of caring for patients with coronavi- rus, and admits to being nervous, but says nobody has gotten sick in his residency program; however, he is aware of doctors who have contracted the virus.

“You just kind of have to bare with it,” he said. “There’s recommenda- tions from the CDC regarding the best way to protect ourselves, and we defi- nitely follow that as best we can. But we understand there are inherent risks in taking care of these patients that we have to deal with every day, and those of us with families, with loved ones, who are at home with us, we have them to think of. I mean, I’ve heard of doctors who literally move out of their houses to be away from their families so they have less risk of passing the disease on to them. So you get used to what happening to a lot of frontline health workers as well.”

A lot of the doctors and nurses at the hospital, he said, have been relo- cated to the emergency department in anticipation of the increase in patients infected with the coronavirus as the disease enters its peak in the coming weeks. Lee said they have a lot of staff prepared to tackle the increase in the number of Covid-19 patients, but if the volume of sick patients surges, then that could change the scenario significantly.

“We’re overstaffed in that we are preparing for an increase,” he said. “We’re expecting the number of sick folks to go up in the next week, so we have more people on hand to deal with it. That being said, if people start getting sick, and people start coming in bigger volume, then we could poten- tially be understaffed.”

At the time of this interview, he said the patient numbers in the emer- gency department had actually gone down to about 60 to 70 percent of what it typically is, due in large part because people are afraid to go to the hospital. He said only the most se- vere cases of people in medical need were showing up at the emergency room, and those patients, who needed strong medication that they can’t get at home.

As for the number of coronavirus patients arriving at the emergency department, Lee said that half of the patients who were coming in either had the virus or suspected they had it. All of these patients are tested for the virus, he said.

Most of the rooms in the emer- gency department are individual rooms, but those who need breathing tubes are put in a negative pressure room, Lee said, but once the breathing tube is in place then they are not always in total isolation.

The emergency department has enough ventilators for the patients right now, he said, but all hospitals across the state are working on getting more – because they will need more. Thus far, the patients Lee has seen coming to the emergency depart- ment with the Covid-19 disease are from the local area, but some patients have also been transferred from other hospitals in the state that are less equipped to care for coronavirus pa- tients, but they are sent to Mass. gen- eral for more comprehensive care.

African-American and Latino pa- tients have also outnumbered white patients arriving at the emergency department, Lee said, and seem to be more severely affected by the disease for a number of reasons.

“Sometimes they are living closer together, and it’s harder to isolate,” he said. “And many of them also have a baseline of social and economic dis- parities as well as more baseline health problems like diabetes, heart disease, lung disease. All these things make people more vulnerable to this virus. So because of these social and economic reasons, as well as the base- line medical and health status, we do think these populations are being more affected and are actually sicker as well by the coronavirus disease.”

Lee said that much will be learned from this pandemic, such as better emergency preparedness, and commu- nities being better prepared for future virus outbreaks. These will be very important lessons gained from the Covid-19 experience, he said. As for Lee’s personal knowledge gained from this experience, he said he’s seen how important the health commu- nity is to the greater community at large.

“I think a lot of people are stuck at home, not being able to work in quarantine,” he said. “I get a lot of satisfaction be- ing able to contribute during a time of crisis. It reinforces why I chose my specialty, why I chose medicine, and why I think it will be a fantastic career choice in the long term.”

With that said, Lee wanted to remind people to continue social dis- tancing and minimize travel out of the home until they receive official guidance otherwise, especially for the elderly and those with pre-existing health problems.

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Chinese students face harsh realities during Covid-19

By Anqi Zhang and Yiming Zhao

It was at the end of February, Lily was on the orange line with her boyfriend going back home at about 10 p.m. Lily is a 25-year-old from mainland China who graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute last year and currently is working at a medium technology company as a marketing manager. She agreed to be interviewed to share her personal experience, and has to use her real name due to the sensi-
tivity of the incident she experienced. They were riding on the T with one person when a white male got on at the next stop. He appeared drunk as he lay down on the seats. Lily was talking with her boyfriend in Chinese at a normal voice level, when suddenly the man awoke, approached them, and shouted, “Your language is disgusting! Shut up! You guys brought the virus here!” Lily and her boyfriend were shocked and sat there silently, not knowing how to respond. They wanted to get off the train, but their stop was quite a long way, so they had to wait. At one point, the man even stood in front of Lily shouting at her. The train finally stopped, and they moved to another car. The incident did not leave a dark shadow on the couple, but they felt humiliated, and Lily said she regretted not responding to the man’s hostile behavior. At that time, the coronavirus was still in the early stages of spread-
ing in the U.S., but anger towards Asians was beginning to simmer in certain areas of the country.

The hostility Lily experienced is one of countless accounts of racism and aggression targeting the Asian-Americans in the U.S. in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Two Chi-
nese students at Harvard University, Boram Lee and Ja Young Choi, made a Google map, crowdsourcing infor-
mation on the frequency and severity of attacks on Asian Americans in the U.S., and shared the map on WeChat, a popular social media platform in China. The piece pointed out that it does not make sense to prevent people coming from abroad from flying back to China all of a sudden, and that some people who usually need to return are facing problems. Her post sparked a fierce discussion.

Xiyuan did not expect this to hap-
pens. Her WeChat friends wrote long comments like essays, and some of her fellow students in and outside of China even started to argue with each other. She deleted the post afterward.

Opinions are divided on whether students abroad should return to China, and at one point on the Internet it was a hot topic. The fear in China is that returning students may bring back the virus when life is finally starting to get back to normal.

News headlines about those who hid their symptoms and got on flights back to the mainland has only stoked the flames of hostility towards Chi-
nese students studying abroad, who want to go home. There is public sentiment circulating on the Internet, stating: “You went, lit there building the home country, yet you are the first poisoning people from far away.”

Xiyuan understands the logic be-
hind those who are concerned with Chinese students returning home, but feels lost inside her heart. She talked about her friend in New York City who had to leave her apartment be-
cause there was a coronavirus patient in the building who died. From her description, the friend is homeless now. She cannot get a ticket back to China and has to live in hotels. Xiyuan said she feels like her friend is floating outside of the protection, and the reality is very cruel for her right now.

Peng Ge, 30, is a computer science student who graduated this January. He received an offer from Amazon in February and was scheduled to start working in May in California. Talking about the public opinion inside China, he expressed his understandings.

“The U.S. restricted the flights from China quickly after the pan-
demic developed in China,” Ge said. “The countries doing so are out of the safety concern. It’s the same.”

But cancelled airline flights are just one problem. For many Chinese stu-
dent who will soon graduate, and for those in their early 20s, now is a time for making big life choices and prepar-
ing for the start of new careers. But these decisions are made more diff-
cult because they are far from home and have to figure out many things by themselves.

“My anxiety doesn’t come from the present, but from the future,” Xi-
yuan said.

Xiyuan’s visa will expire in June. Although she had an appointment with the American embassy in China in June, she is worried that she may not make it. Xiyuan’s recital sched-
uled in March was canceled. It is a pity for her to lose such a once-a-year occasion, especially because she had invested so much time and practice for this pinnacle event in her college experience. She is also considering postponing her plans to pursue an-
other degree after graduation, because she may not be able to obtain all the necessary materials in time for this year’s application deadline due to the current circumstances.

For other Chinese students, the pandemic has disrupted their future plans. Xiyuan’s classmate, Yuwen Wang, 24, aspires to join a symphony orchestra in America, which is why she decided to go abroad to hone her

Yuwen Wang is a violinist whose dreams are on hold. (Photo courtesy of Yuwen Wang)

violin skills. She applied to four sym-
phony orchestras, all of which can-
celled in March. She said she will not be recruiting new members this year. One of them, the Milwaukee Sympho-
ny Orchestra, canceled the audition after Yuwen’s results got passed, and she had to cancel flights and hotels she had reserved. If Yuwen were to apply for Op-
tional Practical Training (OPT), she could legally stay in the U.S. How-
ever, as a violin student, the chance of being admitted into an orchestra within three months after graduation is highly unlikely. Compounding her problem, is the requirement that an international student under OPT rules has to find employment within three months after graduation, or else, they have to leave the country.

The frustration of lost opportu-
nities for Yuwen, as well as other Chinese college students, is the harsh reality of living in a foreign country during a pandemic. Now Yuwen is weighing what options she has, like pur-
suing another degree in China or the Netherlands, where she applied to two schools before the coronavirus out-
broke.

“If I go back China, I will be a real grown-up and make big choices,” she said. “If I continue catching my dream, I will choose Netherlands, and then apply for a symphony orchestra in Europe. Everything starts from the beginning.”

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land’s only biweekly bi-
lunar English-Chinese newspaper. Sampan fosters cultural understanding and celebrates global diversity.
A group of Tufts University parents in China has donated 31,000 desperately needed respirator masks to Tufts Medical Center. The respirators are crucial to the health of patients infected with Covid-19. The masks and other sought-after personal protective equipment (PPE) were shipped from China and arrived at the medical center on April 1.

“With this added resource, our staff will continue to have the right PPE to keep them safe and treat the Covid-19 patients,” he said.

Forty members of the Tufts community have long been active in its preparedness efforts. Schwartz said, “he made an exception.”

The respirator masks fit close to the face and filter out particles that can carry the coronavirus. They will be used at Tufts Medical Center and its affiliate hospitals in Massachusetts. Without specifying percentages, Lee said 31,000 masks is a “substantial increase” in the hospitals’ inventory and over six months’ worth of supplies. The hospital is concerned about protecting its staff so that the staff can continue to protect the public,” he said. “These masks will directly impact the staff’s ability to react to whatever walks in the door.”

A number of other Tufts supporters, including a handful of alumni in China, are currently trying to organize other efforts to help with testing.

The parents’ goal, Bian wrote, is to support the university and its community emotionally and financially. “We sincerely hope that our effort will help the brave medical workers. We also look forward to seeing the Tufts University even stronger coming through the pandemic,” he wrote.

The parents summed up their feelings about the masks by saying they are still open and providing take-out business. If you can, consider buying gift cards for your favorite local restaurant. Plan to use your gift cards later, otherwise, the business could be busy, but take a minute to think about their costs now without the infusion of cash from the gift card sales. You can immediately need with low sales as more people are cooking their meals at home.

In these uncertain times, as we wait for the curve to flatten, nutrition specialist, Terry Yin, spoke about “How to Boost Your Immune System With Exercise.” It’s more relevant than ever for seniors, who at this time need all the added protection they can get during the coronavirus pandemic.

As people age, their immune response capability becomes reduced, which in turn, contributes to more infections. Exercise regularly is proven to naturally keep your immune system strong and healthy. For people over age 65, 20-30 minutes daily low impact exercise can help cardiovas- cular health, lower blood pressure, help control body weight, and protect against a variety of diseases.

Here are a series of senior exercise routines:

• Warm up and stretch
  o Upper Back Stretch
  o Chest Stretch
  o Sit and Reach Stretch
  o Neck Stretch
  o Inner and Outer Thigh Stretch
  o Shoulder Circles
  o Flamingo Stand
  o Single Leg Stance with Arm
  o Toe the Line
  o Side Leg Raises

Click Clock
Front Arm Raises (Seated)
Tummy Twist
Side Bends
Inchworm Lifts
Bicep Curls (with weight)
UpRight front row (with weight)
Plies
Knee Extensions

The older we get, a healthy diet also assists in improving the immune system. Eating well can also be the key to a positive outlook and even stress reduction. We do know that as seniors’ metabolism slows, their body doesn’t burn as many calories. As a result, the food elderly people eat should be as nutrient rich as possible. Here is Yin’s recommendation based on ADA Food Guide:

• Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
• Make at least half your grains whole grains.
• Enjoy your food, but eat less.
• Compare sodium in foods like hamburger, meat, and fish plus 4 to 5 servings of nuts, seeds, and/or dried beans per week.
Ask Dr. Hang

Overcoming loneliness and boredom during stay-at-home advisory

Since this stay-at-home advisory, I’ve been feeling very lonely and bored. I really don’t know what I can talk to or hobbies to distract me. How should I deal with this loneliness and boredom?

It sounds like you are ready to make some changes in your life. I recommend trying these two strategies: 1) Develop awareness of what your feelings are telling you and 2) Taking small actions to feel better in the present. It’s important that you recognize and let yourself feel the loneliness and boredom rather than pushing those feelings away. This awareness is where change begins.

Your loneliness is telling you that you want to have close friends in your life. What has been getting in the way of building close friendships that you want for yourself? Have you been looking in the wrong places? Have you been struggling with being vulnerable and real with people, which is the foundation of emotional intimacy? Are there opportunities to deepen your friendships by reaching out to those friends or acquaintances? Reflect on these questions, either through journaling or talking to a therapist to help you explore answers. This may be the time to address your needs for emotional closeness.

Boredom is your boredom telling you? Are you feeling indifferent about what happens in your life? Are you becoming empty or numb? Unsure of who you are or what you want in life? It may help to reflect on what this boredom means for you, so you have a clearer idea of where to go from here. Maybe you are looking for meaning and purpose in your life. Maybe you want to learn more about those feelings underneath the category of “boredom” to make sense of those feelings and where they come from. It’s hard to move forward when you have unpacked the baggage of the past.

Hobbies can help you feel more alive, not just distract you. Maybe this is the time to explore potential interests or hobbies. Notice how you feel when you engage in some of those new ideas. Do they spark engagement in your mind? Do they give you energy? Do they make you emotional? Try new things without fear of failure or commitment. Recognize that this is the process of exploration.

If you’ve been feeling lonely and bored for a long time, coupled with sad feelings and lack of motivation to do much in life and/or physical symptoms of sleep issues and/or appetite issues, I recommend talking to your doctor or a mental health professional to evaluate for depression.

One concrete action you can take right now is doing something that may spark positive emotions for you in the present, even if you feel unmotivated or you think it might not feel good. Do it anyway – be it doing 10 jumping jacks, taking a bath, dancing to your favorite song, sending a text to a friend – whatever it is. Not for you maybe that action didn’t feel as hard to do after all, or maybe it felt good to do it. Let this be the first step in doing more things that spark positive emotions for you so you are not stuck feeling bad in the present while you make space to reflect on what you want in your life.

About the author: Dr. Hang Ngo is a licensed Clinical Psychologist. She speaks English, Cantonese, and Mandarin. Dr. Ngo provides therapy, psychological assessment services, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultation in Davis Square, Somerville.

Her website is: https://hangngopsyd.com. To submit your questions to the Ask Dr. Hang column, please emaileditor@sampan.org.

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Letter to the Editor

Please exercise social distancing with your mail carrier

Dear Editor:

During these challenging times, postal employees are working hard to ensure residents stay connected with their world through the mail. Whether it’s medications, a package, a paycheck, benefits or pension check, a bill or letter from a family member, postal workers understand that every piece of mail is important. While service like this is nothing new, we need our communities’ help with social distancing.

For everyone’s safety, our employees do not approach a postal vehicle or carrier to accept delivery. Let the carrier leave the mailbox before collecting the mail. With schools not in session, children should also be encouraged to not approach a postal vehicle or carrier.

If a delivery requires a signature, carriers will knock on the door rather than touching the bell. They will maintain a safe distance, and instead of asking for a signature on their mobile device, they’ll ask for the resident’s name. The carrier will leave the mail or package in a safe place for retrieval.

We are proud of the role all our employees play in processing, transporting, and delivering mail and packages for the American public. The CDC, World Health Organization, as well as the Surgeon General indicate there is currently no evidence that COVID-19 is being spread through the mail.

With social distancing, we can keep the mail moving while keeping our employees, and the public, safe.

MIKE RAKES
District Manager
U.S. Postal Service
Greater Boston District

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Elder service organizations are unwavering in their missions

By Yiming Zhao and Anqi Zhang

While other businesses in Massachusetts are temporarily closing doors due to the outbreak of Covid-19, elder service organizations like South Cove Manor at Quincy Point and Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center in Boston are hard at work fulfilling their missions, especially during this deadly pandemic with this society of concern most at risk.

South Cove Manor at Quincy Point

At South Cove Manor at Quincy Point, all 141 beds are occupied except for a few that will serve as isolation rooms if needed. Therapies including physical, occupational and speech are still provided to residents in need. The facility has about 260 staff members, none of them has been laid off.

“We pretty much close to run on full staff. We’re staffing at our regular ratio,” said South Cove Manor CEO Bill Graves.

According to Li Chen, director of nursing at South Cove Manor, the staff has expressed willingness to keep caring for patients at the facility.

“They even said ‘This is what we sign on for. This is the time our patients need us.’ They have concerns but they still come back and report to work,” said Chen

She added that they’re also adjusting some staff’s assignment when people fall in sick.

“Sometimes even nurses [would] do nurses aide’s job just trying to provide the best care we can,” said Chen.

“We always make sure we have enough staff,” Graves added.

As a nursing home, South Cove Manor has always had a strict policy on infection control. They have now increased the frequency of disinfecting the facility due to the coronavirus outbreak. And all staff members are required to wear masks around the clock.

However, despite the strict measures to protect staff and patients from the coronavirus, one staff member recently tested positive for Covid-19. South Cove Manor reported in a newsletter they emailed out: “That staff member is at home, and is recovering.

As part of our response to that positive test, we will be testing all residents, and all staff members over the next two days. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has revised its guidance this week related to testing, and is now encouraging all Nursing Homes to test all residents and staff regardless of if they are symptomatic or asymptomatic. The testing procedure is completed by way of a nasal swab, and takes less than 20 seconds.

“We will be conducting our staff testing on Thursday, April 16th via a drive through testing site that will be set up in our front parking lot. This site will be for South Cove Manor staff only, and will be completely operated by our own Nursing team…”

Following the guidance for nursing homes issued by the Centers for Disease Control, South Cove Manor has also made a lot of changes regarding social distancing.

“Right now, there’s no group activity going on. It’s been that way for over a month now,” said Graves. “Meals are served in a much different way now. Residents don’t eat at the same table. They’re at least six feet apart. Some do eat in their rooms. Some residents have medical conditions where they need assistance when they’re eating. Those people are eating in common areas but are separated by at least six feet.

In addition, South Cove Manor has restricted visitation from family members over a month ago.

“We have multiple devices, whether they’re iPads or laptops, anything that we can connect the outside world with,” said Graves. “We have staff that are managing those devices and have scheduled Facetime, Skype, and WeChat calls with large numbers of families.”

Graves and Chen both admitted that this is one of the most challenging times in their careers, but they’re receiving great deal of support from the community. They expressed gratitude for all the donated goods and services in every day. Some donors didn’t even leave a name.

“We’ve been in this business for over 30 years, but we have tremendous staff here, tremendous leadership team and great support from our board of directors,” said Graves. “I would say [we’re] nervous, but we’re definitely concerned. We’re doing everything possible we can to keep this virus out of our buildings.”

Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center

Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center is a nonprofit organization that has been serving the Asian elderly since 1972.

They tailor their service to accommodate the needs of Asian elders who are looking for cultural sense of belonging and who are not fluent in English, and to help maintain their independence and well-being at home and in the community.

Due to the pandemic, the center has to close all their physical interpersonal programs such as congregate lunch, education and recreation activities. However, employees at the center are still working and delivering meals, offering free food to family members so elders can eat in their room.

“We’re keeping in touch with elders to make sure they are in good physical and mental health. Home-delivery meal programs are necessary. Ruth May, executive director of the center told Sampan. Employees are working hard, cooking and sending out approximately 3,000 free meals each day to those who have enrolled in the program. They try to deliver to elders’ doors between 10:30 a.m. and noon, so that they can have their lunch on time.

“They [elders] don’t want to see people,” May said, “and so the deliverers just leave the food and knock on the door, and then they go to the next one.”

The meals are moderate in fat and sodium while providing adequate calories and nutrients. The daily meals include meat, vegetables, rice, fresh fruit, and a cup of low-fat milk.

Notes with care are sent along with the food packages. Sometimes it’s an easy message to say hello and express concern. Or it’s news from the center and updates and announcements about the Covid-19 virus.

The virus outbreak has stopped

The Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center has been serving Chinese-speaking seniors since 1972. (Photo by Ken Smith)

Elderly staff in the center from seeing elders face to face, but phone calls keep the lines of communication open. Elders are delighted to get calls from nurses, talking with people makes them feel less isolated, May said, and they receive their medications to keep healthy.

For now, the center acquired enough essentials, including masks, gloves and sanitizers to make sure employeess work safely. May said they have received emails asking if the center needs anything, and they have received generous donations.

“There are some people really concerned for the elderly, and those who are somewhat isolated,” May said.

May is also proud that the center has enough funds to fully pay for the staff, who are working positively with very high morale.

“The virus has changed all these the nonprofits are having a hard time, and we hope that we can go back to our normal routines and do some fundraising,” said May.
Staying Healthy During Coronavirus

MGH Equity and Inclusion supports our communities and stands with you. A reminder on ways to stay safe that we humbly share, and we thank you.

Clean your hands often.
Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Wear a cloth covering over your nose and mouth.
Stay at home, but if you must go out (for food, your job, or to a doctor's appointment), cover your nose and mouth with a medical mask, a scarf or bandana. Always wear a mask or cloth covering if you are sick. Make sure the mask fits snugly around your nose and mouth, and is secured with ties or ear loops.

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.
High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. If you don’t have cleaning solutions, use a bleach solution of 1/3 cup of bleach per gallon of water. If you are making a smaller batch, use 4 teaspoons of bleach for a quart of water. WARNING: Never mix household bleach with ammonia.

Launder items using the warmest water possible.
Do not shake laundry. Disinfect hampers and carrying carts thoroughly.

Talk to someone if you need to.
If distress impacts your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor, or contact the SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-985-5990.

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Malden’s first Chinese restaurant opened in 1912, but not without overcoming prejudice and political opposition

What was the first Chinese restaurant in Malden?

Currently, about 23 percent of the population of Malden is of Asian descent, and there are also about 25 Asian restaurants and eateries in the town, the majority offering Chinese cuisine, but you’ll also find Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, and Korean spots. As I live close to Malden, I’ve dined at many of these restaurants and found plenty to be pleasing to the palate. Some of my favorites include: District Kitchen, 2 Florence Street, which offers delicious Xiao Long Bao, soup dumplings, including a huge,super-sized version; Yong Yong, 108 Ferry Street, which has an extensive Dim Sum menu; and Spicy World, 157 Pleasant Street, which serves a spicy and intriguing Sichuan Skewer Pot.

After completing my history of the restaurants in Boston’s Chinatown, I wanted to expand my explorations to determine the first Chinese restaurants in the other cities and towns of Massachusetts. Though there are now many Chinese restaurants in Malden, the first one wasn’t established until 1912, over objections by some. In September 1912, the Aldermen of Malden met to discuss the granting of a permit for the opening of a Chinese restaurant, the New Canton, in Malden Square, at 416 Main Street. The only opposition to the license came from Aldermen William M. Blakeley, who thought it would be unfair to the existing restaurants and that the company and people associated with the restaurant. In October 1912, the Aldermen met again and protested about the New Canton being open on Sundays, which is contrary to the permit. The New Canton was granted a license, and the mayor of Malden in 1915. In June 1915, the New Canton was granted a victuallers’ license by the Board of Aldermen but Blakeley refused to sign it. Without that license, the restaurant could’t open on Sundays, but they could still open from Monday to Saturday. During this time, a victuallers’ license was quite important to restaurants, and could make or break it. The New Canton had to sue the mayor for his failure to sign the license, alleging that he had “not lived up to his oath of office and has been negligent in his duties by failing to affix his signature to the license granted by the alderman.” Also that the mayor has discriminated against the restaurant people, his stand being based on prejudices advocated by motives of hatred against the Chinese race.”

The New Canton alleged that the mayor had refused to sign the license unless the restaurant hired American citizens rather than the Chinese that worked there. In addition, the restaurant noted that they had been allowed to open on Sundays the previous year, under the term of Mayor Schumaker. In July 1915, the mayor appeared before the Massachusetts Supreme Court to discuss his refusal. The City Solicitor had advised the mayor to sign the license, but he refused to do so. The mayor informed the court that he wouldn’t sign the license and would fight it despite the cost. Blakeley felt that granting the license “would be detrimental to the public welfare.” Judge De Courcy decided to report the matter to the full bench on a question of law. However, the matter was finally settled about a week later. At the full bench hearing wouldn’t occur until the fall, the judge ruled that the New Canton could open on Sundays until the time of that hearing because the judge didn’t believe the restaurant should lose money awaiting a decision. Soon after that ruling, and with the urging of the judge, the mayor finally signed the license so the New Canton could open on Sundays. Case settled.

Unfortunately, the New Canton dropped off the radar, and its ultimate fate is largely unknown. I know that it isn’t listed in a 1922 directory of the restaurants in Malden, but that’s the extent of what I was able to find.

For more information, you may read Richard Auffrey’s entire series on Boston’s Chinatown and its Restaurants online at: https://passionatefoodies.blogspot.com/2020/02/the-first-restaurannts-in-bostons.html.

Richard Auffrey

A delicious Sichuan Skewer Pot from spicy world in Malden, which has many excellent Chinese restaurants. (Photo by Richard Auffrey)

A super-sized Long Bao is served at District Kitchen restaurant in Malden, with a normal dumpling on top as comparison. Malden has a long history of Chinese restaurants, with the first one opening in 1912. (Photo by Richard Auffrey)

The theater district in downtown Boston is all but empty, like all of the city, as businesses remain closed during the coronavirus lockdown. (Photo by Ken Smith)