

Vietnamese Americans Tell Story of Diaspora in Own Words at 50-Year Anniversary Event

By Adam Smith

This April marks a half-century since refugees began flooding from Vietnam after the end of the war, making their perilous escape from persecution and violence. In recognition of this anniversary, hundreds of Vietnamese Americans and others are slated to gather on April 26 at Boston College High School in Dorchester

for “Remembering Black April: 50 Years of Vietnamese Diaspora.”

“It’s a pretty momentous year and time to think about the impact of the war’s legacy on families and communities,” said artist and community organizer Ngoc-Tran Vu, the lead project director with The 1975: A Vietnamese Diaspora Commemoration Initiative.

Her exhibit near the entrance of the event will consist of suspended

traditional conical hats that will create a space for “reflection, memory and healing.”

Vu’s group is one of the many leading the commemoration. Others, who are part of the coalition, include Boston Little Saigon, the Vietnamese American Community of Massachusetts, VietAID, the Cultural Empowerment Organization, and the Massachusetts Vietnamese

Scouts Association.

More than 600 people are expected to turn out, say the organizers, including community leaders, historians, artists, refugees, and immigrants from across New England. The event will include performances, arts and history exhibits, and storytelling to give voice to the diaspora and

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Eddie Ahn Draws From His Life as an ‘Advocate’

Artist, Writer Chats With Sampan About Creating His Graphic Novel

By Anna Hu

During the height of Covid in 2020, environmental policy advocate Eddie Ahn started what he thought was just a pandemic project — posting snippets of his comic book memoir to social media. The posts — about career anxieties, the bumpy road to artistic success, and growing up Korean American with industrious immigrant parents — resonated with readers.

And then his comic strips took off.

The original goal was to develop a series of short stories for the small but well-respected comics publisher Fantagraphics. But when Ahn received an email from Penguin Random House about publishing his work as a book, he

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Opinion/Chinatown Voices

Chinatown Eatery Owner Speaks Out

By Martin Gao and Lydia Lowe

The owner of Double Chin Restaurant and Bao Bao Bakery says she is facing eviction from her two Chinatown businesses, after about 8 years in operation. Owner Gloria Chin grew up in Boston and says that Chinatown “has always been a really big part of my identity” as her family has been involved in businesses in the neighborhood for multiple generations. We spoke to her about the struggles of running a business in the area — including hiring staff, rising costs and rent hikes — as well as zoning and other issues.

What are some of the challenges your businesses are facing?

It's really hard to hire people, especially good people. It feels like ever since Covid, that has been a consistent issue. Another issue is the price increases, like a disproportionate price increases. Especially within the bakery industry, products like milk and eggs have jumped a lot higher, much more quickly than like a lot of other products. And shipping costs have gone up a lot for the products that we use since the pandemic. Since Covid-19, there has definitely been less foot traffic because there are fewer people working in the offices, and then a huge increase in our rent....

What are some changes that you've noticed in the neighborhood?

It has changed a lot. There's definitely been pros and cons. The Chinatown gate area looks really nice now. And it feels like within the last five years, they've been continuously improving that little park. So that's been really nice. And I've loved seeing the summer events that they'll do there. They have public movie screenings. And then they have lanterns lit up around the clock.

And then some of the other changes — there's just been a disproportionate

amount of franchises opening in the area. And I personally feel like nothing sucks the soul out of a community more than Asian Starbucks. I feel like in our zip code, half of it is boba shops and specifically franchises. There's less and less independent businesses and just less unique restaurants in general.

Why should we have more small, locally owned businesses instead of franchises?

It gives the community a choice in how they want to spend their money. It's not going to a large conglomerate, and I think that at the end of the day the small business owners are going to be the ones who care about creating community and like advocating for the community, doing something for the people that live here. You're just not going to get that from these corporations who really are just here to make money....

And the restaurant industry is often dominated by males and white males. Might I add so it feels very empowering to be a young female entrepreneur of color who is contributing to the restaurant scene, not just in Chinatown, Boston, but also Boston in general. And given my identity — of my sister having grown up here and our family roots to Chinatown and having done business in Chinatown for decades — it only makes sense for us to stay here.

How can community members support you?

Just making our voice heard as a community can definitely help; spreading awareness and showing to the outside investors or the city that, we, as a community, are standing strong, stronger than ever together, to stand up for what we believe is right.

I think we need to have hard conversations with people to spread awareness about, not just what I'm going through, but what like all small busi-

ness owners are going through. Why? It's important to vote with your money, and also just educating people about the dangers of gentrification and over modernizing, if that's a word.

You know, the city is proposing new zoning guidelines for Chinatown, a height of 80 feet on your corner. Do you have an opinion about that?

I have a very mixed opinion. I think that one of the benefits to keeping the restrictions at 80 feet is, it helps our little Chinatown feel like a Chinatown and not Seaport per se. You see, like what overdevelopment has done to the Chinatown in Manhattan. And people don't really go there anymore. But a lot of the small businesses are struggling in Manhattan's Chinatown ever since all the developments happened. Based on what people want for our zoning, it sounds like it's going to end up looking like that — a lot of tall hotels, a lot of tall buildings. I do understand that housing is a very scarce resource in not just Chinatown, but all of Boston. So I do see how that would be a benefit of expanding the heights of the buildings. But I think that if they were to just be hotels and not even really be for housing and for helping grow the community of people who want to live here. I don't think that is that purposeful.

Why is being in Chinatown important to you?

It is meaningful to me because I have helped my parents at their multiple businesses throughout my entire life in Chinatown. So it's kind of just been a core part of who I am, and I think that it's really beautiful to kind of carry on their torch in my own way, and continue living out their legacy for them. So that to me is very meaningful.

Lowe is the Executive Director of the Chinatown Community Land Trust.

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CORRECTION: A photo caption for a story about singer Nita Slay should have stated the location as, 'Mission Church,' or 'Our Lady of Perpetual Help' or the 'Basilica.' We apologize for the confusion.

Editorial: These Two Judgments Are Worth Reading

We'll leave the writing in this editorial to two voices that deserve to be magnified. First, the words of Chief Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, who rejected an appeal by the Trump Administration in the case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who was mistakenly sent to an El Salvadoran prison:

“It is difficult in some cases to get to the very heart of the matter. But in this

case, it is not hard at all. The government is asserting a right to stash away residents of this country in foreign prisons without the semblance of due process that is the foundation of our constitutional order. Further, it claims in essence that because it has rid itself of custody that there is nothing that can be done. This should be shocking not only to judges, but to the intuitive sense of liberty that Americans far removed from

courthouses still hold dear.”

Next, are words from William Kenneth Sessions III, a senior judge of the U.S. District Court of Vermont, who said Rumeysa Ozturk should be sent to Vermont as she challenges her detention:

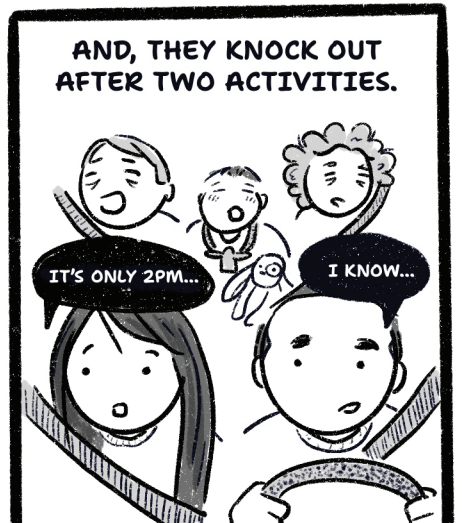
“Ms. Ozturk argues that her detention is in retaliation for her political speech, thus violating her rights under the First and Fifth Amendments. Her evidence supports her argument that the govern-

ment's motivation or purpose for her detention is to punish her for co-authoring an op-ed in a campus newspaper which criticized the Tufts University administration, and to chill the political speech of others. The government has so far offered no evidence to support an alternative, lawful motivation or purpose for Ms. Ozturk's detention.”

We agree on both counts.

EMPTY BAMBOO GIRL 竹升女

by Lillian Lee



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4-24-25

Why Eddie Ahn Says: ‘I Gotta Draw a Comic About That’

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quickly pivoted to a longer-form narrative, creating what would become the graphic novel, *Advocate*. In the richly illustrated and sparingly colored memoir, Ahn weaves his family’s story into a broader one about community activism and environmental justice.

In his day job, Ahn is the executive director at San Francisco-based environmental non-profit Brightline Defense and serves on three California environmental policy commissions. But in the early morning before work and late at night, he’s a cartoonist and storyteller.

Ahn started crafting his memoir in 2016 to explain to his parents why he stayed in low-paying non-profit work, even after earning a fancy law degree. Often working into the wee hours of the morning, he sketched and inked the panels, and shaded in his monochromatic color palette with trusty Copic markers. He then would digitally edit in dialogue boxes. Each page, he said, represents 20 to 30 hours of work, with a total of 5,000 hours poured into the book’s publication last April.

Ahn made several stops in Boston last month to talk about his memoir. He visited the Josiah Quincy Elementary and Upper schools, Boston Latin Academy, the Harvard Countway Library, the Boston Bar Association, and rounded off the trip with an event at Bedford’s Lif Bookshop. In talks, Ahn is soft-spoken and engaging, with eyes that crinkle into half-moons when he smiles, which is often.

Ahn sat down with *Sampan* to chat about his family’s reactions to the book, “burrito math,” storytelling, activism, and working with students. The following has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Sampan: You talk about your parents’ reactions to the book as you’re in the process of making it. Have those reactions changed now that it’s been published, either with your parents or with your extended family in Korea?

Ahn: With my mother, I think the reaction was really nice. I was very nervous that she would hate the book, thinking it’s a very bad take on her relationship with her father, my grandfather. But she ended up liking it a lot. She said she cried on multiple readings of the book, and that’s as good of a reaction as I could have hoped for that. And she’s now much more accepting of the nonprofit, so I think the book achieved its original goal.

My father, unfortunately, is very sick; he’s been consistently getting worse over the last two years. I did manage to show him the book when I was in South Korea. His eyes were tracking the pages as I was turning them, but verbally he was not responsive. So I’m not quite sure if he really appreciated it, but at



BOOK TALK: Artist Eddie Ahn talks about his work while at the Quincy Upper School in Boston last month. Courtesy photo.

least I showed him the pages.

And then my extended family, like my cousins, my aunts and even my grandmother, who’s still alive on my father’s side — they can’t read it in its entirety because they’re not fluent in English, but they can appreciate the visual work. And they know the corporation Penguin Random House. They’re like, “Oh, wow! This is like something that’s in any bookstore in America.”

Sampan: How did it feel to illustrate those more emotionally charged scenes around your family?

Ahn: Complicated. Even nowadays as I illustrate more about my father’s decline, some of those panels are so hard to draw that I often draw them out of order. And then I mix and match and try to tell a story that makes sense linearly later.

I think the process of creating comics can be very hard, especially if you are the writer and artist. I have overarching themes, goals, and storytelling I want to achieve, and then I need to just start committing it on paper. As I draw, I’m finding the storytelling “beats” and getting it to a stage where the eye can move rapidly across a page.

Going back to the emotional conflicts in the book and the difficulties of my family, I think it was important to put it out there. For me, it was always just try-

ing to find that right balance. You want to make each story emotionally resonant, authentic, but you don’t want to burden the reader with so much detail, or maybe even so much emotion, where you get bogged down with it all.

Sampan: In addition to your family, another figure that features prominently is the late Dr. Espanola Jackson, a noted environmental and social justice activist who lived in the Bayview-Hunters Point area of San Francisco. What do you hope that people take away from her advocacy story?

Ahn: I hope they focus on her as an individual. Being able to tell her story on this kind of platform, whether it was an Instagram account or a published memoir; I thought that was really good. She could be known as a local figure, very specific to San Francisco history. But I wanted to make her story a lot more than that, too.

The other thing I hope people take away from the chapter on Espanola is the relationship between two very different individuals, myself and her, and the different communities that we are part of and represent.

In the US, we pride ourselves on being a multiracial society. We talk a lot about different communities, and how we need to unite to come together. But

the act of building that kind of bridge is quite hard.

Even in nonprofit work, it’s easy to get siloed and not reach across to a very different audience or community from your own. A lot of my work early on in environmental policy-making was not necessarily about the policy but building up communities and making them relate more to environmental policy. That is something that I really wanted to focus on in telling Espanola’s story.

Sampan: Switching gears, one thing I thought was quite funny in your book was when you talked about measuring the cost of things in burritos, which at the time was eight dollars for a two-meal burrito. Do you still use “burrito math”?

Ahn: There’s a new burrito inflation happening, so a burrito can cost as much as twenty dollars, which I was astonished by. I don’t eat burritos nearly as often now, probably once a week. So I still keep in touch with the burrito economy.

Do I measure everything in burritos? Not as much anymore. My life has become more settled. The burrito math days were very scrappy days, super, super intense work days. The salary I made for a long time at Brightline was rough for a high cost of living area like San Francisco. But my life has become a lot more settled, thank goodness!

Sampan: You start *Advocate* with your first out-of-college job at an after-school program in Oakland, California, and the close relationships you formed with your students. What has it been like talking with young people on your book tour? Any differences between the older and younger students?

Ahn: The presentations I give between the grade levels are very different. For elementary to middle school, we intentionally built in a graphic novel making section. So the students had a bunch of clipboards and two sheets of paper, and I would talk to them about panel layout. It wasn’t so much about my own story, my graphic memoir. I talked a little bit about my family with that audience, but the purpose of that kind of talk is really to empower them, to have them be able to tell their own story.

Sampan: And what about high school or college students?

Ahn: Those conversations were very sharp, and I was pleasantly surprised by how engaged they were with the concept of climate change, and, “What can I do around it?”

The title of the book, *Advocate*, was always meant to have several meanings. It’s not just about being an advocate for environmental policy or environmental injustice; it’s also about being an advocate for oneself. So I could see the

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Arab American Heritage Month

‘No One Can Walk It For You’

Iranian-American
Haleh Liza Gafari
to Appear in Hub
to Talk About Her
Translations, Life

By Kevin A. Mani

Haleh Liza Gafari had the offer of a lifetime. And then she said no.

Gafari was one of the lucky few to get accepted into Harvard Medical School. But instead, the Iranian-American writer and translator decided to pursue her true passion: The arts.

“It’s a pity,” her mother said recently, holding a framed copy of her daughter’s acceptance letter.

Instead, Gafari earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in creative writing from the City College of New York.

Now, years later, the 49-year-old — who’s also a singer, songwriter, poet and educator — is not looking back. She has several works in her portfolio, including *Water*, a follow-up to *Gold*, her acclaimed 2022 translation of Rumi’s poetry. She will appear at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education’s Blacksmith House Poetry Series on Monday, May 5, and at Brookline Booksmith’s Transnational Literature Series on Tuesday, May 6.

Born in the Bronx on March 13, 1974, Gafari is the second child of two physicians who left Iran for the United States shortly after the 1979 revolution. She was raised in Tenafly, New Jersey, alongside her older sister, Valery. While Valery followed in their father’s footsteps, becoming a gynecologist, Gafari went in a different



HALEH LIZA GAFORI

Photo by Beowulf Sheehan

direction. As Rumi wrote about the paths we choose in life, “No one can walk it for you.”

Gafari first discovered her passion for the arts in middle school, performing in a musical production. Her creative curiosity continued to blossom in adolescence.

“Eugène Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano* taught me about the absurdity of humanity,” she recalled.

She then attended Stanford University and, despite her interest in the arts, chose to study biology.

“As the child of Iranian immigrants,

both physicians, there was a sense that following in my parents’ footsteps was the only legitimate career choice,” she said.

After her pivotal moment of getting accepted into Harvard and turning it down, she said, life wasn’t without its obstacles, especially financial ones.

“A career in the arts is more challenging than a more conventional career because you don’t know what’s going to happen,” she said. “It’s not as clear a path. You’re often dealing with the unknown, with mystery. You never know when the next job opportunity will arise.”

She emphasized the importance of versatility for any working artist.

“If you choose to pursue a career in the arts, don’t keep all your eggs in one basket,” she said. “There will always be stressors in the arts. But you don’t want to feel stressed about something you feel passionate about, so it’s good to have other avenues—other types of jobs—whether that means you’re producing music for film and TV or teaching.”

For a time, Gafari worked as a tour guide at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan.

Her translations have received critical acclaim for reintroducing Rumi to English-speaking audiences through a poetic voice that remains deeply rooted in the Farsi original.

“Gafari’s new translations of Rumi are the work of someone who is at once an acute and enamored reader of the original Farsi text, a dedicated miner of context and back story, and, best of all, a marvelous poet in English,” poet Marilyn Hacker has

written.

For Gafari, translation is more than a technical exercise — it’s a sacred encounter.

“In translation, you eat the words of a poem and let them flow through you,” she said. “You then sit down and attempt to bring them into the music of another language.”

Looking back, she has no regrets about choosing the artist’s path.

“We’ve got to make decisions in life. We may never know if they’re the right decision,” she said. “But is it really about right and wrong? Life is a journey. We make a decision, and then we’ve got to move forward, not backward.”

Ultimately, the decision to pursue a career in the arts, she believes, “depends on how much curiosity is fueling your dream and how much work has gone into your dream already.”

She also advises giving the choice careful consideration.

“Sit down and meditate on it,” she said. “Get advice from people who know you well, people who know how your psyche works. It’s a very personal decision, and it shouldn’t be made lightly.”

While the road may be uncertain, Gafari’s story is a testament to the rewards of a career in the arts. With determination, dedication and self-discipline, the journey can foster deep personal growth and profound human connection.

As Gafari has said: “Life is a journey,” Gafari said. “We make a decision, and then we’ve got to move forward, not backward.”



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Arab American Heritage Month



DOCS FOR GAZA: From left, Dr. Yipeng Ge; Dr. Ghassan Abu-Sittah (on screen); Dr. Thaer Ahmad; moderator Lea Sinno. Photo by Adam Smith

We Need Solidarity
Not Charity, Say Docs
at Arab Conference

On a weekend when much of the U.S. media was fixated on the latest tariff spat with China, a small group of doctors in Boston was focused instead on the humanitarian crisis worsening in another part of the world: Gaza.

Israeli forces had – just hours before the doctors met in the Harvard medical campus – struck Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital, Gaza’s only remaining Christian hospital and, according to press reports, the last fully operating hospital in Gaza City.

As the doctors gathered, the ironies of the time seemed everywhere: The day of the bombing was Palm Sunday, the month of meeting was National Arab American Heritage Month, and the discussion about the collapse of the health care system in Gaza took place in Boston’s world-renowned Longwood medical area.

None of these themes seemed lost on the doctors – Yipeng Ge, a family physician; Ghassan Abu-Sittah, a plastic surgeon; Thaer Ahmad, an emergency physician; and moderator Lea Sinno, a project manager at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. Nor did any of the doctors – the first three of whom had served for periods of time in hospitals in Gaza over the past year and a half – let the destruction of the day go unnoticed. To them, it was yet another devastating blow in an 18-month-long series of blows to the already decimated Palestinian health care infrastructure. Though the Israeli government claimed that it was targeting a command and control center at the location run by Hamas, that group denied Israel’s claims, according to press reports. Hamas was responsible for the Oct. 7 2023 attacks inside Israel that Israeli forces say justifies its ongoing raid on Gaza that has killed at least many tens of thousands of Palestinians and flattened vast areas of land, including neighborhoods, health care centers, schools and other infrastructure.

The doctors, who were that day speaking at the April 13 Arab Conference at

Harvard, described the horrifying realities of the ongoing Israeli bombardment and what they saw: starvation, disease, pain, and death.

They also described the early signals that convinced them the war was a “genocidal” campaign from the start: the attack on health care facilities; the blocking of food, water and supplies; and the demolition of everything needed to live normally. They also described facing bias and institutional silencing — for example Ge was temporarily suspended from the University of Ottawa and was reprimanded by the Canadian Medical Association over his social media posts – and the failures of the international humanitarian system. How could Western help take on the impossible task of saving Palestinians amid an overwhelming onslaught that it was also supporting and in some cases financing? they asked.

“As a community, as a world, we have failed in this genocide,” said Ge, who traveled to the conference from Canada. Ge, who has been an outspoken advocate of Palestinians and indigenous peoples in North America, was profiled in the Sampan in February.

Ahmad agreed, calling out the “hypocrisy” of the system that he said fails to incorporate Palestinian voices.

Speaking just weeks after the Trump Administration gutted much of United States Agency for International Development and moved to formally dissolve the agency, Abu-Sittah declared, “We’re witnessing the end of the humanitarian sector.” Additionally, he criticized the existing sources of aid as denying Palestinians’ agency.

“What we need is not charity, but solidarity,” said the doctor.

At the same time, Abu-Sittah said, as the world has let Gaza devolve into genocide and as the Trump administration is deporting activists at home in the U.S., “fascism has now come home to roost.”

— Adam Smith



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Arts

‘Beastly’ Is Poignant But Fails to Address Elephant in the Room

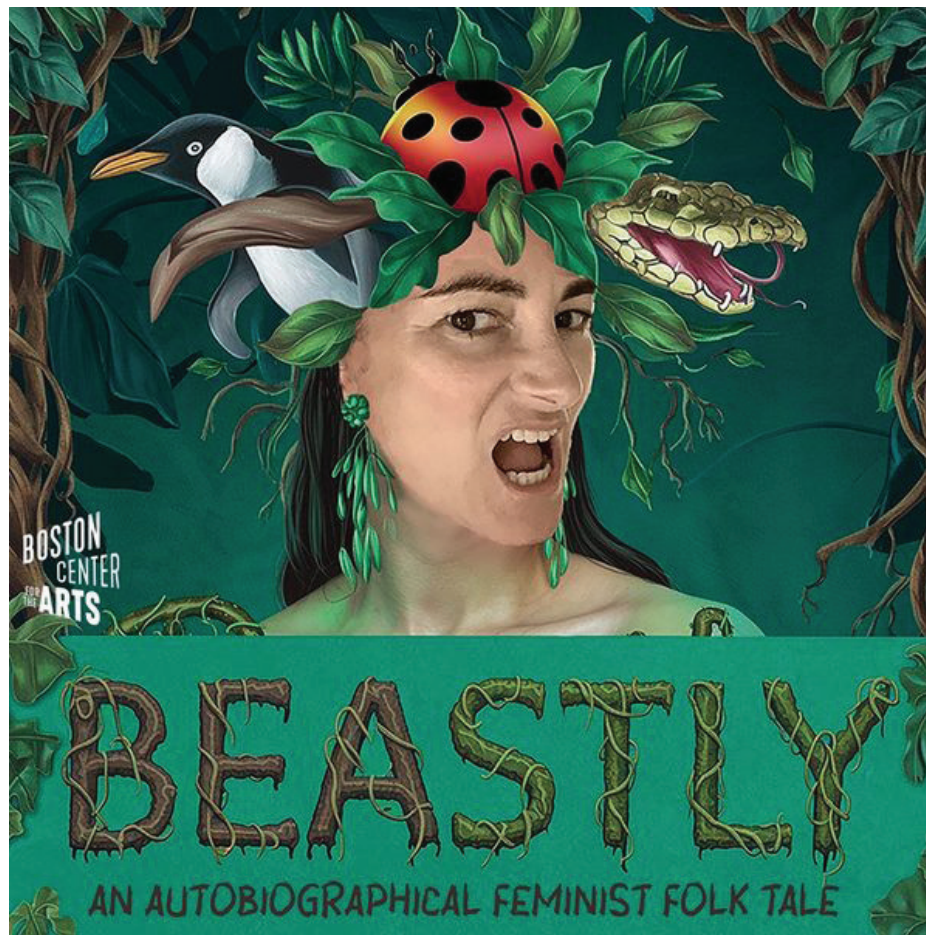
By Virginia Sun

The one-woman theater performance *Beastly: An Autobiographical Feminist Folk Tale* at the Boston Center for the Arts opens in a not-too-distant dystopian future where oil tycoons rule while the world burns. Melissa Hale Woodman, who created and starred in *Beastly*, delves into female sexuality, identity, and aging, while connecting these autobiographical experiences with critiques of patriarchy, corporate greed, and climate crisis.

The show is told through interwoven short personal monologues with Woodman dressing up as animals to tell fables in delightful rhyming verse. Her character travels back in time, drawing on her personal experiences — from her teenage years to motherhood to perimenopause.

Woodman’s wacky, funny performance captivated the audience during its run in late February to early March. Her autobiographical “takes” on growing older, women’s sexuality, and fighting patriarchy were successfully brought alive on the stage with humor. But *Beastly* largely drew on a world-view grounded in White feminism and White liberalism. (Hint: Taylor Swift is a heralded feminist icon in the play.) *Beastly* thus presents a limited examination of patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism. While the fun fable-like short-stories and intimate revelations of aging as a woman were interesting, as a woman of color I found that *Beastly* could benefit from reflection on the need for intersectional feminism in challenging power structures. Although Woodman is writing what she knows, *Beastly*’s minimal consideration of non-White, non-U.S., and non-wealthy experiences of the pains of patriarchy, capitalism, climate crisis — as well as the collective struggles to dismantle these — was unsettling.

Woodman’s storytelling about her life is vulnerable and raw. Woodman starts an intimate short story from her



youth with “I haven’t told anyone this before...” *Beastly*’s most successful moments were those in which Woodman’s expressive voice brought to life a world largely hostile to women. Alternating between her personal voice — unabashedly sensual, humorous, and at times serious — and those of the dramatic animal characters she inhabited, Woodman kept the audience members on their toes. The play culminated in a call to action for those in the audience to close their eyes and leave with a personal commitment to fighting for social change.

Beastly’s narration, however, of the threats of corporate greed and what is needed to address them largely reflects a White feminist perspective. White or liberal feminism prioritizes

the perspectives of white middle class women and the issues that primarily affect them. White feminism also universalizes these agendas as being those of all feminists. For many women of color and other marginalized people in both the Global North and Global South, climate change and capitalism are real, imminent threats rather than future-bound, theoretical, looming dystopias. These present realities look like displacement from homes; threats to lives for speaking out against corporate power; and forced migration. At the end of *Beastly*, Woodman asks audience members to close their eyes, imagine a better future, and leave the play remembering that this performance inspired them to take change for social justice. What change

does she mean, and social justice for whom? The lack of specificity of the kind of actions needed to fight capitalism, patriarchy, and the climate crisis is in itself a privilege; the message that one can summon the courage of Taylor Swift reproducing her album on her own terms “Taylor’s Version” and individually fight these systems is unrealistic for many communities under threat.

Beastly’s frequent, flippant mentions of “colonialism” were jarring. Colonialism was featured as a rhetorical stand-in for a big bad system to take down (listed alongside capitalism, CEOs, etc.) rather than a real ongoing system that deserves treatment with historical specificity. The repeated call-outs of colonialism were strange, given the play created an island of White middle class experience seemingly detached from any colonized person’s experiences, or any internal examination of potential complicity in perpetuating ongoing colonization. Woodman mentioned off-hand that she normally gets lots of Amazon packages, but was boycotting Amazon for a day during the Feb. 28 consumer boycott. How should someone working at an Amazon packaging facility respond to corporate greed and capitalism — while also surviving within capitalism — without the privilege of a middle or upper-middle class consumer? How would a working-class Boston Chinatown resident being pushed out of their neighborhood by capitalist land grabs, while also facing intensified climatic issues (e.g. worse air quality, extreme heat and minimal shade, etc.) feel connected to *Beastly*’s message?

Woodman daylights as Director of Strategic Partnerships at Corporate Accountability, a progressive advocacy organization that seeks to hold corporations accountable. The benefit performance raised money for Woodman’s organization as well as Brew & Forge and Neighborhood Birth Center.

‘A Man of No Importance’ at Speak Easy Theater Compassionately Explores Queer Life

By Virginia Sun

The musical *A Man of No Importance*, set in 1960s Dublin, delved thoughtfully into how love, community, and art can be spiritual bulwarks for a closeted queer person amid homophobia and conservatism. At Speakeasy Theater, this wonderfully acted and staged performance addressed queer themes of both “coming in” to oneself and coming out to the world with emotional depth, vigor, and bravery.

Paul Daigneault directed this beautifully produced musical, his last show after 34 years at the helm of the Speakeasy Stage Company, which he founded. Performed live by

on-stage musicians, the music lent a rich emotional tenor to the ups and downs of the protagonist’s journey. Daigneault’s swan song at Speakeasy Stage was the New England Premiere of the recently reimaged version of a beloved classic, written by Terrence McNally.

In the play, Alfie Byrne, a bus conductor, loves the poetry of Oscar Wilde and enjoys staging amateur productions with his local theater troupe. Church officials, however, shut down his upcoming play for its alleged perversity, turning Alfie’s life upside down. *A Man of No Importance* addresses queer life and challenges from the perspective of

a closeted gay man. It does so by giving his particular set of concerns depth, without leaning into dramatized stereotypes of life as a queer person. While the homophobic violence of the time is thoughtfully brought to life on stage, Alfie’s identity is portrayed as much more nuanced than this painful reality.

Alfie — acted brilliantly by Eddie Shields — loves earnestly and passionately. But he is well-versed in how to hide his love in a world that sees his authentic self as a threat. He charmingly reads his beloved Oscar Wilde poetry out loud to his bus riders, but hides this side of himself when his supervisor angrily checks

in. He also conceals his romantic desires to avoid rocking the boat in his family and in his friendships. But the time comes when it becomes impossible to both love fully and to hide his feelings. *A Man of No Importance* explores what it means to balance self-preservation and self-acceptance. It also poignantly delves into the question: When forced out of one’s private world and into direct confrontation with a hostile society, who or what can one lean on?

This nuanced take on “coming out” — which is rooted in but goes beyond queer identity — was a beautiful, complex, and moving performance.

Arts



QUEER VOICES FESTIVAL:
Photo by Maggie Hall

Queer Voices Festival Makes a Show of Joy, Defiance & Pride

By Harmony Witte

Amid a political push back against diversity and the rights of transgender people, the Queer Voices Festival at the Boston Center for the Arts Plaza Theater in late March brought together a diverse group of performances of pride, joy, grief – and defiance.

“Gay, gay, gay!” is how opening performer Peter Mill described his evening’s song and dance show.

Indeed, during his time on stage, Mill commanded the space with powerful vocals and a magnetic stage presence, performing a mix of show tunes and pop songs to an enthusiastic audience.

“I was so thrilled to be asked to be a small part of the Queer Voices Festival. I try to bring a mix of joy, boldness and unapologetic queerness to all of my work and to be sought out to be part of an evening like this feels really special,” Mill told Sampan later. “It’s always a wonderful feeling when people make space for you at the table.”

But Mill said his favorite part of the festival happens off the stage, when he can meet the many queer artists there.

“People all at different places on their journeys and yet united in their desire to live boldly, beautifully and loudly. These are scary times we live in but sadly that’s nothing new to us. To see the resilience and love-forward bravery of the younger artists in particular gave me a lot of hope,” Mills said.

Organizers from the Boston Theater Company came on stage after Mill’s set to introduce the festival and announced to loud applause that all of the seats had been sold out for the evening. The festival used a pay-what-you-wish model to sell tickets.

The festival weekend featured two showcases of seven 10-minute plays

written by playwrights who identify as gay, queer, lesbian or transgender. The festival also featured a matinee staged reading of Brandon Zang’s “Or, Three Wise Monkeys” in collaboration with Chuang Stage on March 22. Shakespeare and gender were explored on March 23 in a trial performance of “Beyond Boundaries: Gender Expression in Shakespeare,” created by Lisa Rafferty. The show was set to go on tour at 10 middle and high schools in the next week.

The seven plays had themes ranging from deep explorations of grief after the loss of a loved one, comedic political statements, exploration of identity, and exploration of the nuances of queer relationships. Throughout the performances, there were moments of real tenderness, raucous laughter, queer joy, and hope.

Playwright Tom Zhang wrote “Oop, Can’t Say That,” and told Sampan that the festival had “had almost 100 plays that were submitted and they ended up picking and choosing seven.”

Zhang, who uses they/them pronouns, said they were excited to be a part of the 2nd year of the festival.

“I think for me there’s like a sense of gratitude to the festival and to the Boston Theater Company for selecting it. But also, I think there’s a lot of joy in this sense of getting the chance to find a platform as someone who’s trans and Asian,” said Zhang. “It’s a story that I don’t really feel like I get to see a lot. And where I think both in queer communities, but also in Asian communities, there can be sort of two dual blindnesses in a way, where I think a lot of time queer discourse is very much dominated by white narratives and white Eurocentric narratives and then in Asian American communities there are a lot of queer folks, but especially for folks who might be

like, I’m second generation. So, this sense of understanding that queerness is a part of our experiences as well. I think the chance to get to present a story that is inherently about being both, again, trans and Asian, I think feels like a really lovely chance to expand the conversation around what community looks like, who is within community, and the distinct challenges and stigmas that get associated with each and with existing within both.”

Zhang continued: “I hope that the audience members take away the sense of the true diversity within the queer community and the diversity of experiences and the complexity of queer identity and queer narratives. I think we live in a world where it’s very easy to flatten perspectives and to flatten our understandings of other groups. And I guess it depends on the audience. I think for queer folks, I hope that we come away like finding a sense of community, finding a sense of joy and recognition and a sense of belonging in community. And then for folks who are outside the community ... the sense of understanding, the breadth of experience that exists within these labels that we have.”

Zhang’s play featured three characters, two say they are “from the government and are here to help” yet they keep interrupting and censoring the main character when that character tries to describe their trans Asian identity to the audience. The government workers go so far as to erase the words the main character writes on a whiteboard and grow increasingly hostile in their interruptions, eventually dragging the main character off the stage. The play manages to tackle censorship and silencing with humor.

Zhang said they want people to know that they are seen and that queer

Asian folks are not alone, especially those folks in the audience at the festival.

The main character in “Oop, Can’t Say That” was performed by Wellesley College theater studies major, Jiayi Shao, who uses any pronouns. Shao described answering a casting call for the show. Shao said they have been looking for opportunities to perform, “specifically with narrative that center queer, Asian American voices” which is something they have been finding opportunities to do more often in the last few months.

When asked what they hope audience members will take away from the play, Shao said, “In addition to sort of the sense of impending danger on our identities ... this sense of resilience and persistence and ... of finding joy both in our own identities and also sometimes in the ridiculousness of the situation.”

About the festival, Shao said, “I think visibility is always a huge motivation of whatever I do if just even because I think of all the times that I, as an audience member see a fellow Asian American performer on stage. And it has always been very uplifting, especially in this field. That just feels like very historically predominantly white and that there’s like more of an erasure when it comes to that.”

Shao said the festival was timely in a week when the City of Boston announced after a City Council vote that it is now a “Sanctuary City” for trans and all other “LGBTQIA+” people.

“I think any sort of policies that are more so what you want, like, protecting our identities and any opportunity to come together as a community to be in each other’s presence and sort of relish our existence is something that I think is very valuable to people.”

Autism Awareness Month

Autism Symposium Focuses on Inclusion, Tech and Arts

“We must learn to see not only the differences, but also the talents and admirable qualities that reside within them.”

Those words, spoken by Dr. Xue-Jun June Kong, summed up the theme of this year’s Autism Awareness Symposium at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center on April 5-6. The event – held during the globally recognized Autism Awareness Month – touched on a variety of topics related to the neurological condition including uses of technology, inclusion, arts and education.

More than a hundred people attended the symposium — some traveling from New York, California, South Carolina, and even Taiwan— to hear from the Harvard-affiliated clinicians, researchers, psychologists, as well as documentary filmmakers, behavioral therapists and other experts on the topic.

Dr. David Hirsh, the associate dean of Harvard Medical School, opened the conference, and was followed by Dr. Ann M. Neumeyer, medical director at the Lurie Center of Massachusetts General Hospital, who discussed “Autism: Myths and Evidence.” Her talk addressed gender differences, pain perception, bone density and ongoing scientific developments that challenge and clarify long-standing assumptions about ASD.

Also speaking was Dr. Kong, the symposium chair and the director of the Synapse Laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Children’s Hospital. Kong gave a talk titled, “New Individualized Approaches to Autism,” in which she surveyed current progress in autism-related biomarkers — including genetics, microbiota, eye-tracking, heart scans, medical imaging, and AI. She told about her work to map out emerging therapeutic directions and targets. Her talk also emphasized strength-based education and advocated for integrated health care–education models that empower autistic individuals through “customized pathways.”

Dr. Walid Yassin, co-chair of the symposium and a psychiatry researcher, discussed neurodiversity, encouraging a broader understanding of cognitive variance and its value in society.

The event was hosted by Beth Israel as well as the American Chinese Medical Exchange Society. Key organizers and session moderators included Drs. Weigen Li, Zhao Liu, Qiaoxin Yang, Wei Yang, Bo Wang, Yiqing Song, and Xiaochun Wang, along with several physician volunteers who contributed with precision and care.

Also at the event, director Jianping Qu screened his documentary, “The



ASD DAY: Autism Awareness Symposium at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center on April 5-6.

Whisper of Colour,” chronicling the journey of Sophia, a young woman with autism whose exceptional artistic talent was discovered and nurtured, culminating in her being signed as a professional artist on her 18th birthday.

Dr. Jason Li, chair of the Boston Future Academy, discussed the broader implications of special education.

Other talks were given by financial adviser and certified public accountant Ms. Jinping Xu, who gave a practical lecture on financial planning for families with special needs, covering healthcare insurance and tax considerations. Dr. Jian Kong from Massachusetts General Hospital presented on the design and implementation of parent–child training programs rooted in mind–body medicine. Bai Pan, a behavioral therapist from New York, shared her recent research into performance-based structured interviews and emergency response analyses as a foundation for skill-based, socially meaningful interventions.

Amber Huang, a senior in the film department at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts, presented her short film, “Glass,” which explored the unique emotional experiences of siblings in families affected by autism.

Yin-Chun Chen from the Taiwan Autism Art Association and Yung-Chi Sung of Yuanzhi Education talked about the impact of art therapy in autism, emphasizing how artistic expression can help unlock emotional and developmental growth in individuals on the spectrum.

Several autistic persons, including Raymond K. Wang, from the Boston area, shared their stories. Wang told



his deeply personal journey—how he overcame the challenges of severe childhood autism to become a university graduate, a math teacher, and a research assistant at Massachusetts General Hospital. Wang invented a new eye tracking parameter system and model to differentiate autism from non-autism, which led to a patent filing via MGH. This technology was introduced commercially last year.

Yi-Hong Chen, a graduate student in special education from Taiwan, also spoke. Chen was born with multiple developmental disabilities and an unsteady gait. He shared his paintings.

Hung-Hsuan Chen, a man in his 30s with Marfan syndrome, scoliosis, profound myopia, and almost no spoken language, then took the stage. Under the guidance of his father and teacher, he has developed a stunning body of

artwork. Watching him draw live on stage moved the audience deeply—his work defied assumptions and left an indelible impression.

Dr. Mei Zhang delivered a speech titled “Autistic Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence: A Path to Understanding,” presenting original insights that sparked active discussion among the audience.

“Let us celebrate neurodiversity, foster a society of inclusion and compassion, and support every autistic individual in realizing their potential—not as a burden,” said Dr. June Kong, “but as a valuable contributor to our world. They deserve, as we all do, to experience the fullness of life.”

This story was provided by Jianghe Niu from the Autism Neurodiversity Institute

Job Corner

South Cove Community Health Center

Position: Certified Medical Assistant, FT Boston/Malden

Interested candidates should send, fax, or email their resume to:
Human Resources
145 South Street
Boston, MA 02111
Fax: 617-521-6795
Email: Careers@scchc.org

Position: Social Services Assistant, (FT) Boston/Quincy

Interested candidates should send, fax, or email their resume to:
Human Resources
145 South Street
Boston, MA 02111
Fax: 617-521-6795
Email: Careers@scchc.org

Position: Referral Coordinator (FT) Quincy

Interested candidates should send, fax, or email their resume to:
Human Resources
145 South Street
Boston, MA 02111
Fax: 617-521-6795
Email: Careers@scchc.org

ABCD-Boston, MA

Position: Career Advisor - Workshop/Resource Room Facilitator, Hybrid, Woburn

A Minimum of a High School Diploma, or equivalent, and a minimum of three years of customer service or relevant experience are required.
An Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree in human services, public administration, business management, or a related field is preferred but not required.
At least 2 years of experience working in a career center, providing services to businesses, or other related experience preferred but not required.
Knowledge and experience with WIOA (and other Career Center Programs) regulations, programs, guidelines, and administrative requirements preferred.
To apply: <https://careers.bostonabcd.org/>

Position: Business Service Representative, Malden, Hybrid

A minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent and three years of customer service or relevant experience is required.
An Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree in human services, public administration, business management, or a related field is preferred but not required.

At least 2 years of experience working in a career center, providing services to businesses, or other related experience preferred but not required.
To apply: <https://careers.bostonabcd.org/>

Position: Career Advisor, FT Chelsea, Hybrid

Minimum of a high School Degree or GED required, and a minimum of three years of customer service or relevant experience required.

An Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree in human services, public administration, business management, or a related field is preferred but not required.
At least 2 years of experience working in a career center, providing services to businesses, or other related experience preferred but not required.
To apply: <https://careers.bostonabcd.org/>

Position: Administrative Assistant, FT, Medford

A minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent, at least one year of prior experience with a human service agency, and a solid background in general office practice are required. An associate’s degree in a relevant field is preferred.
Salary: \$22.59 / hour
To apply: <https://careers.bostonabcd.org/>

Position: Client Advocate, F, East Boston

Minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent, with up to one year of experience in case management, job development, or general office support required
Demonstrated proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel is required
Excellent oral and written communication skills
Bilingual skill in Spanish is required.
To apply: <https://careers.bostonabcd.org/>

Maloney Properties

Position: Maintenance Superintendent, FT, Allston

Knowledge of plumbing, electrical, appliance repair, carpentry, janitorial work, and HVAC is required.
Prior experience supervising a team of maintenance professionals is required.
Previous experience with Yardi is a plus.
A driver’s license and access to a vehicle are required.
To apply: <https://recruit.hirebridge.com/v3/>

WinnCompanies

Position: Regional Compliance Coordinator, FT, Boston, Hybrid

High school diploma or GED equivalent.
1-3 years of related work experience.
LIHTC and HUD experience.
Fair Housing Certification.
A current driver’s license in good standing and the ability to meet the driving records standards outlined in the Company’s Safe Vehicular Operations Policy.
To apply: <https://jobs.lever.co/winnco/>

UMass Amherst

Position: Maintainer I, FT

Knowledge of the methods used in institutional cleaning.
Ability to follow oral and written instructions in English.
Ability to use simple hand and power cleaning equipment.
To apply: <https://careers.umass.edu/amherst/en-us/job/>

Boston Medical Center, MA

Position: Domestic Violence Advo-

cate, FT

Bachelor’s Degree (or equivalent) in Social Work, Public Health, Psychology, or related field required.
At least 3 years of general work experience and demonstrated understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner abuse/victimization, principles of advocacy/empowerment approaches to victim service, or experience in domestic violence intervention required.
Apply at www.jobs.bmc.org
Contact: Caroline Cafer, 617-414-7066, caroline.cafer@bmc.org

Position: Senior Director, Revenue Integrity, FT

Master’s degree
Coding certification in at least one of the following: CPC, CPC-P, CPC-, H, or Certification in Auditing and/or Healthcare Compliance. Must obtain or be working towards certification within one year of hire.
Apply at www.jobs.bmc.org
Contact: Caroline Cafer, 617-414-7066, caroline.cafer@bmc.org

Position: Child Protection Team Social Worker - On-Call (Per Diem)

Requires a Master’s Degree from an accredited school of Social Work.
Requires a Massachusetts license as a Licensed Certified Social Worker or Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (or eligible for licensure within 90 days of hire).
Preferred: 3-5 years relevant work ex-

perience, including a hospital/healthcare setting or child welfare
Apply at www.jobs.bmc.org
Contact: Caroline Cafer, 617-414-7066, caroline.cafer@bmc.org

Position: Patient Access Representative (Greater Roslindale Med Ctr)(32 hrs/wk)

Must be a high school graduate or have a GED.
Required: 1-2 years of relevant experience (one of which in admitting, medical office, managed care, or insurance).
Apply at www.jobs.bmc.org
Contact: Caroline Cafer, 617-414-7066, caroline.cafer@bmc.org

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Position: Mental Health Worker I FT, Taunton

MINIMUM ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS: None.
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: None.
Salary: 45,942.52 - 58,097.26 Yearly
Apply at: <https://trialcourtjobs.mass.gov/jobs/search>

Position: Dental Clerk, FT, Boston

Applicants must have at least three years of full-time, or equivalent part-time, experience in office work, or an equivalent combination of the required experience and those substitutions which can be found on their website.
Salary: 50,239.28 - 66,621.88 Yearly
Apply at: <https://massanf.taleo.net/careersection>

Affordable Housing Lottery
Meadows I – Chicory Place Apartments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 7
Chicory Place, Nantucket, MA

Two (2) Studios at \$1,927; One (1) 1BR at \$2,197, Four (4) 2BRs at \$2,437
**Rents are subject to change after the first year of lease. Tenants will pay for electricity (which is also used for heating/cooling, cooking, hot water). Cold water and sewer charges are included in the rent. One parking space will be included for residents of Studio and 1BR units, while two parking spaces will be assigned to residents of 2BR units. Pets are permitted, subject to restrictions.*

Meadows I is a rental development located in Nantucket. The community will include seven (7) apartments which will be leased to households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income. The affordable units will undergo a complete interior renovation and will be delivered in like- new condition to qualified households.

Maximum Household Income Limits.
\$83,850 (1 person), \$95,800 (2 people), \$107,800 (3 people) \$119,750 (4 people)

Public Info Session: June 3, 2025 at 6:00 pm via Zoom
Go to zoom.com/join or call (646) 558-8656 and enter Meeting ID: 818 9317 7595, Passcode: 088159

Application Deadline: June 23, 2025 at 2:00 pm
Completed Applications must be delivered, or postmarked, by this date. Applications postmarked by the deadline must be received no later than 5 business days from the deadline.

Lottery: July 8, 2025 at 6:00 pm via Zoom
Go to zoom.com/join or call (646) 558-8656 and enter Meeting ID: 857 2736 5609, Passcode: 276410

Attendance is not required at Info or Lottery sessions. To view the recorded sessions at a later date, please search for Meadows I Nantucket on the SEB Housing YouTube channel.
For Lottery Information and Applications, or for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, go to www.sebhousing.com or call (617) 782-6900x1, then 0, and leave a message or postal mail SEB Housing, 257 Hillside Ave, Needham MA 02494. For TTY Services dial 711.
Free translation available. Traducción gratuita disponible. Tradução livre disponível.



Events Calendar

Japan Festival Boston
April 26 and 27
Address: Boston Common, 139 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02111
This festival provides an opportunity for attendees to learn about Japan and its culture. By learning and understanding culture, the fear of the unknown disappears and has the power to form a bond, connecting people of various cultures and backgrounds to build a foundation for peace.
Admission: free

29th Greek Independence Day Parade
Date: Sunday, April 27, 2025
Time: 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM
Address: Boylston Street to Boston Common, Boston, MA 02136
The parade route is all down Boylston Street, and we will end at the Boston Common for a big celebration including food, music, and dancing.
Event link: https://www.greekboston.com/event/greek-independence-parade/#google_vignette
Admission: free

Spring Week by Highland Street Foundation
Date: April 19-25
Free admission during the April school vacation week! Art, history, animals, carousels – something for everyone

Haitian Flag Day Festival
Date: Saturday, May 17



Cellist Leland Ko Plays at Symphony Hall

Boston-based cellist Leland Ko, age 26, will take center stage at Symphony Hall at the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra’s closing concert on May 1, at 8 p.m., performing as soloist for Walton’s Cello Concerto, conducted by Benjamin Zander. Violinist Itzhak Perlman has described Ko as someone who, “plays with the beauty of sound and subtlety that we don’t often encounter in a cellist of his age... a musician who willingly

considers all aspects of music.” The former BPYO member, who held the principal cello position in the orchestra at the early age of 14, is a rising star in the classical world, having recently garnered international acclaim for winning first prize at the Montreal Symphony Orchestra’s International Competition and co-winning the 2024 Walter W. Naumburg International Cello Competition.
Photo of Ko by Tam Photography.

Time: 22 pm - 6 pm
Address: Somerville City HALL, 93 Highland Ave S Somerville, MA 02143

Come experience a vibrant celebration of Haitian heritage with live music, traditional dance, delicious food, and cultural performances! Join the community as we honor the rich history of the Haitian flag and enjoy a day filled with joy, unity, and culture.
Admission: Free

Move and Groove Festival
Date: Saturday, May 3
Time: 12:00 pm- 4:00 pm
Address: Mealne A. CAS Recreational Complex
Save the date for this family event packed with activities for all ages. For more info: communityengagement@bostonpublicschool.org
Admission: free

Hyde Park Free food distribution
Date: Sundays Time:1:30 pm
Address: Mount of Olives Community Center, 1283 Hyde Park Avenue
All are welcome; no ID is required. For more info: helpingplates.org
Admission: free

39th Annual Harvard Square Mayfair
Date: Sunday, May 4, 2025
Time: 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Address: 18 Brattle Street, Cambridge
Experience food inspired by cultures from all over the world, unique one-of-a-kind gifts and crafts, al fresco beer gardens, music, entertainment, and dance! Mayfair is the region’s premier family-friendly celebration of spring.
Event Link: <https://www.harvardsquare.com/47687-2/>
Admission: free

Duckling Day
Date: Sunday, May 11, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Address: Parkman Bandstand, Boston Public Garden, Boston, MA 02116
Event Link: <https://friendsofthepublicgarden.org/events/ducklingday/>
Duckling Day is a family-friendly celebration held each year on Boston Common. Duckling Day features activity booths, lawn games, magic, and live music all at the Parkman Bandstand. The event ends with a parade retracing Mrs. Mallard’s steps to the Make Way for Ducklings sculpture in the Public Garden.
Price: free, Register on their website

29th Annual Mother’s Day Walk For Peace
Date: Sunday, May 11 Time: 8:00 am
Address: Town Field Park in Dorchester, MA 02122
This year’s theme is “Cultivating Cycles of Peace. Walk and come to honor the lives of our loved ones who have been murdered while joining a beloved Boston tradition.n
Get more info at: <https://friendsofthepublicgarden.org/events/ducklingday/>
Price: Free

250th Anniversary of the Battle of Chelsea Creek Celebration
Date: Saturday, May 24, 2025
Time: 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Address: Port Park, 99 Marginal Street, Chelsea, MA
This Memorial Day Weekend, the Chelsea community and visitors from across the state can experience a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Chelsea Creek, the first naval battle of the American Revolution.
Event Link:<https://www.chelseaprospers.org/post/250th-anniversary-of-the-battle-of-chelsea-creek-ssv-2f0037a925>
Price: free

Drop-In Gaming Time
Date: Every Friday
Time: 12:30-4:30 pm
Address: Chinatown Branch of the Boston Public Library, 2 Boylston St.
Event Link:<https://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6774209359163a-2f0037a925>
To get more information:mhoward@bpl.org
This event is open to all ages. Children under the age of 12 must have an adult present at the library.
Price: Free

Somerville Community Corporation Job Fair - Spring 2025
Date: Tuesday, May 13
Time: 10 am - 2 pm
Address: The Center for Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143
Event Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/somerville-community-corporation-job-fair-spring-2025>

Explore full-time, part-time, or seasonal job options.

Price: Free


AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPEN WAIT LIST OPPORTUNITY

Avalon at the Hingham Shipyard and
Avalon Residences at the Hingham Shipyard


- Free Translation/Language Assistance Available Upon Request**
- Avalon Residences at the Hingham Shipyard and Avalon at the Hingham Shipyard are non-smoking communities with outdoor pools, fitness clubs, parking, and in-unit laundry
 - Open wait list opportunity for affordable rental units available to households earning at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)
 - Heads of households claiming full-time student status are not eligible


Moderate-Income Guidelines Apply
We will be accepting applications for 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments! Applications for disabled-accessible and hearing-impaired units (ADA) will also be accepted. Documentation will be required upon reaching the top of the wait list.

Open Application Period: 5/1/2025 – 5/31/2025
Applications will be ranked by date and time received.
To submit a completed application online starting 5/1/2025 9am, visit:




AVALON
RESIDENCES AT THE
HINGHAM SHIPYARD





AVALON
AT THE HINGHAM
SHIPYARD



319 Lincoln Street, Hingham, MA 02043 152 Shipyard Drive, Hingham, MA 02043


Paper applications available by request at avalonresidences@avalonbay.com and avalonhinghamshipyard@avalonbay.com

* Residents of Avalon Residences at the Hingham Shipyard and Avalon at the Hingham Shipyard are responsible for gas, electric, water, sewer, phone, and cable utilities. Additional fees for parking and for pets may apply. Credit check required.

Voucher holders are encouraged to apply.

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Health

Tufts Surgeon: Catching Colon Cancer Via Regular Screenings Can Save Lives

By Sampan Staff

March was colon cancer awareness month. But the reality is that this often silent killer can strike any time and doctors are discovering it affects more and more younger adults. To learn more about colorectal cancer and how to spot it early – and have a good chance to stop its progression – we spoke with Tufts Medical Center’s Chief of Colon and Rectal Surgery, Dr. Lilian Chen, MD.

Sampan: What are some typical early warning signs that a person could be at risk for colorectal cancer?

Dr. Chen: Many early warning signs include changes in bowel habits such as persistent constipation or diarrhea and the presence of blood in the stool. Other symptoms can include unexplained weight loss, fatigue, and persistent abdominal discomfort or cramps. However, early-stage colorectal cancer is often asymptomatic, which is why regular screening is so important.

Sampan: Are there any significant demographic risk factors for the disease?

Dr. Chen: Age is the most important

risk factor, with colorectal cancer being more common in people aged 45 and older. A family history of colorectal cancer or polyps can also increase your risk. Lifestyle factors, such as a diet low in fiber and high in red or processed meats, as well as smoking and obesity, can further contribute to risk.

Sampan: New tests have emerged that don’t require a colonoscopy; how good are they at detecting risk for the cancer?

Dr. Chen: Yes, non-invasive tests like fecal immunochemical tests (FIT) and multitarget stool DNA tests (sDNA-FIT) have become popular options for screening. These are stool-based tests that are effective at detecting hidden blood or DNA markers associated with polyps and early cancers. However, a positive result from these tests still needs confirmation with a follow-up colonoscopy for a diagnosis, and many of these tests need to be done once a year.

Sampan: What is the typical prognosis when catching tumors or suspicious polyps early?

Dr. Chen: When tumors or polyps are

detected early, the prognosis is generally very favorable. Pre-cancerous polyps can be removed during a colonoscopy, and early-stage colorectal cancer is highly treatable with excellent outcomes. Early detection and prompt treatment significantly improve survival rates, underscoring the importance of regular screening.

Sampan: What should someone do if they experience any symptoms or have concerns?

Dr. Chen: If you notice any changes in your bowel habits, blood in your stool, unexplained weight loss, or persistent abdominal pain, it’s important to contact your healthcare provider promptly. Even if you don’t have symptoms, regular screening is key because early-stage colorectal cancer often does not cause noticeable symptoms. Our clinic is here to help—please don’t hesitate to reach out for a consultation or to schedule a screening.



DR. CHEN

Sampan: At what age do you recommend people first start getting screened for the disease?

Dr. Chen: We recommend that average-risk adults begin screening at age 45. Early screening is essential because it can detect precancerous polyps or early-stage cancer when treatment is most effective.

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If you have experienced bleeding in your stool or other symptoms, you can also make an appointment to see me in the Colorectal Surgery Clinic at 617-636-6190; I speak Cantonese and Mandarin.



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Continued from Page 3

(And I thought:)... I gotta draw a comic about that.

It's stuff like that that really drives me to produce perhaps a second story. But in terms of storytelling technique, the goal is to become faster, better, stronger.

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