Walkin’ Waban

by Jack Curley and Phil Radoff

One of the loveliest walks in MetroWest is located an easy 20-minute drive from Brandeis. The path around Lake Waban, on the grounds of Wellesley College and the abutting Hunnewell Estates Historic District, is a mostly easy 2.5-mile excursion with views of the campus and surrounding areas. The Historic District comprises several hundred acres of farmland, gardens, residences, and landscapes, some of it visible when driving west on Route 16 just beyond the college. The District is managed by the Trustees of Reservations and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Limited free parking for the Lake Waban path is available at the college’s main garage located near the Route 135 entrance or, if you are arriving via Route 16, at a small lot reached by taking a left on Service Road just west of the college entrance. When events are not in progress at the Wellesley College Club, parking is also available in the Club’s lot, located just inside the Route 16 entrance to the college. Signage is minimal, but wherever you park, the path is easy to find by simply walking toward the pond.

We say the Lake Waban walk is “mostly” easy because there are occasional rocks and exposed roots on the section of the trail leading from the Route 16 parking lots to the Historic District’s topiary garden. If you wish, this area can be avoided by walking the path counter-clockwise and reversing course after reaching the topiary garden.

Among the sights you may see while walking the trail are wildlife such as deer, rabbits, turtles, and frogs; various types of birds, water fowl, and wildflowers; the Wellesley College President’s House; and the Hunnewell Gardens with their magnificent terraces and topiary display designed by Horatio Hollis Hunnewell. A renowned businessman, philanthropist, and horticulturist, Hunnewell is known for his donations to the Arnold Arboretum and the Town of Wellesley and for having brought the rhododendron to popularity in New England in the mid-19th century. (Continued on page 3)
Communications Developments. This month, we report on important changes in the administration of our two sister publications, as well as progress in developing a revised BOLLI website.

BOLLI Journal. Editor Maxine Weintraub reports that the Journal staff has modified the previous restriction on the number of items that a BOLLI member may submit to be considered for publication in next year’s edition. As before, not more than two items (in any combination of articles, photos, or other art) per person will be published, but interested members are encouraged to submit up to four items for consideration. All submissions will be screened initially by a “blind” jury of volunteer reviewers who are not members of the Journal staff. The reviewers’ editorial comments on submitted articles will be provided upon request to the authors (who may elect to revise their submissions) and to the Journal staff, which will have final say on which items are published. The deadline for submission of items for the 2018 Journal is June 30, 2017. Back issues can be found at the Publications tab on the BOLLI web site, http://www.brandeis.edu/bolli/publications/.

BOLLI Matters Blog. The blog’s managing editor, Sue Wurster, proudly points to a new feature whereby members may sign up as blog subscribers who will be notified by email whenever a new posting appears. You can find the blog at: blogs.brandeis.edu/bolli.

BOLLI Website. The BOLLI administration has been hard at work developing a new BOLLI website. Megan Curtis advises that the new site will be more user-friendly than the current site. It will be easier to navigate, contain more information, provide reader access to BOLLI’s publications, and conform more easily to the small screen format of mobile devices like iPhones and iPads. The new site should be up and running by June 1. Be sure to check the Bulletin in the coming weeks for screen shots of the new site.

BOLLI Banner. The Banner committee is interested in your feedback. If you have comments on recent issues or suggestions for future issues, please contact Phil Radoff, plradoff@yahoo.com, or any committee member listed in our masthead below.

Turner Street “Takes”

Harris Traiger checks out a shot while David Breakstone and John Rudy catch up on some last-minute reading “before the bell.” (Photos by Sue Wurster)
Walkin’ Waban, Continued

While most seniors may wish to limit their outings to a single circuit of the lake, be advised that, according to college legend, completion of three circuits with a significant other requires a proposal of marriage! Should no such proposal be forthcoming, the aggrieved party has the right to push the offender into the lake.

Whether soggy or dry, consider finishing your walk with a visit to Wellesley College’s Davis Museum or Botanic Gardens, followed by lunch at the Collins Café, located near the museum. (For more information about the Davis Museum and Botanic Gardens, visit www.wellesley.edu/about/visit.)

If there’s still a spring in your step, drive about a mile farther west on Route 16 and take a left into Elm Bank Reservation, 36 acres of fields and trails and home to the Massachusetts Horticultural Society’s “Gardens at Elm Bank.” Watch for more details on this unique getaway in a future issue of The Banner.

“Walkin’ Waban” photos by Phil Radoff
What’s Up in Waltham? Celebrating
by Na’ama Ansell

1966 was a year of social unrest and upheaval on university campuses. The Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War roiled student bodies across the country, and Brandeis University was no exception. That year, three Brandeis University activists--Steve Rose, Barbara Marin, and Howard Winant--decided that they wanted to do something about it. “Waltham was the place to begin,” says Winant. In an attempt to engage with the community, the trio started a daycare and toddler center at the Prospect Hill low income housing development. The group quickly grew to ten student volunteers. Soon more joined. “Suddenly there were hundreds of students who wanted to volunteer,” says Winant. A community center was established in an unused building at the Prospect Hill housing development; after school programs were added; and volunteers not only helped students with homework but also mentored teens. And so, the Brandeis Waltham Group came into being.

At that time, Waltham was largely a depressed, white working class community with little or no racial diversity. It was a town/gown city. Brandeis University students, faculty, and donors seemed to look down on Waltham, while city people seemed suspicious of “that Jewish university on the hill.” Lucas Malo, Brandeis’s current director of Community Service, says that Rose, Marin, and Winant “wanted to give the Waltham community an opportunity to be heard.”

According to Winant, the trio also wanted to keep Waltham high school students from becoming “cannon fodder” for the Vietnam War. Feeling privileged to have student deferments, the volunteers counseled other young men to seek legal deferrals as well, a move that helped Brandeis and Waltham students realize they had something in common.

Now in its 50th year, the Waltham Group is a large umbrella organization consisting of 20 different clubs, each with two to four coordinators and ten to 200 volunteers. That adds up to approximately 1,250 Brandeis student volunteers who fan out into the greater Waltham area every year committing time, energy, friendship, and expertise as they partner with residents of all ages, ethnicities, religions, and economic levels. Programs range from Companions to the Elderly to Kids Connection.

Brandeis senior Mitchell Beers is one of two co-presidents of the Waltham Group. He oversees a $55,000 annual budget, most of which comes from student fees and grants; coordinates programs; organizes the training of coordinators; and runs the annual blood drives on campus. Mitchell figures that he puts in approximately 20 hours a week with the Waltham Group. He says that “it’s easy to be egocentric in college, but it’s nice to know that Brandeis gives so much back to Waltham because we get so much from the community.”

Agnele Sewa, a Brandeis freshman from Togo and a volunteer at the Prospect Hill Community Center, says, “I wanted to do something meaningful, and now I have a purpose. It’s a privilege to work with the kids and to have them share their lives with me. Sometimes when I have a bad day, the kids bring joy into my life.”

Brandeis sophomore Sophia Einis is a companion to 97-year-old Kay Pannesi at the Leland Home. Sophia has been visiting Kay once a week for the entire year. The day I visited, Sophia’s friend Lydia joined us because her elder companion was ill. During the hour I spent with the three of them, I saw that 97-year-old Kay knew as much about sophomore Sophia as sophomore Sophia knew about elder Kay. Sophia was touched when Kay gave her a birthday card and present and wanted to know how her a cappella concert had gone. “I treasure these experiences,” said Sophia. “There are very wise people here.”
When volunteers leave for school vacations and for the summer months, it’s difficult for both companions. “I’m going to miss you,” Sophia told Kay. Some volunteers stay with their elder companions the entire time they’re at Brandeis. A Brandeis volunteer even delivered a eulogy at a memorial service for her elderly companion.

Waltham’s population has become significantly more diverse since 1966. A considerable portion is made up of Guatemalans, Haitian Creoles, Ugandans, and Asians. One of Waltham’s public schools, in fact, has a 75% non-English-speaking student body. These students get assistance with homework, ESL, and applied skills from Brandeis Waltham Group mentors at the Prospect Hill Community Center. Brandeis vans, which are funded by the Waltham Group, ferry students to and from the campus for enrichment programs and on field trips during school vacations.

Volunteers go through a coaching process before going out to their chosen clubs, and Lucas Malo, Community Services Director, emphasizes the partnership aspect of the program. “I’m learning from you at the same time you’re learning from me,” he says. Volunteers are helped to shed “the white savior” complex and to talk about their own identities as they learn about the different cultures in Waltham. Founder Howard Winant says that “stereotypes are challenged, and students learn, in real time, about people different from themselves.”

New clubs form as community needs evolve. Spectrum, for example, is a disabilities awareness group in which relationships are built among children with disabilities, their families, and student volunteers. Memory Café is a monthly gathering for persons with Alzheimer's and other cognitive impairments. A month ago, a Boston improvisational company performed for café guests. “We didn’t think it would work, but it was a huge success,” said one of the Brandeis volunteers. The newest addition to the program roster is Symbiosis, which focuses on environmental activities like doing farm work and volunteering at animal shelters.

Columbus Day weekend 2016 saw the 50th anniversary gala celebration of the Brandeis Waltham Group. Alumni volunteers from all over the country came to participate in events organized by current volunteers.

At that event, Brandeis President Ron Liebowitz and Waltham civic leaders spoke in praise of the Waltham Group’s work. Steve Rose, one of the founders who attended the event was amazed by the current size of the program. “The number of participants just blew me away,” he said. “The positive attitude was amazing. It was uplifting.” In our current climate of social unrest and upheaval, that is certainly cause for celebration.
Developments at the Rose

by Phil Radoff

When The Banner last reported on the Rose Art Museum (May 2016), it was to herald the inauguration of “Rosebud,” one of several innovations promoted under the stewardship of then-director Chris Bedford and intended to feature video art and to foster collaboration between Brandeis and the city of Waltham. How quickly things change! Now, less than one year later, Bedford has left (a permanent successor has yet to be named), and Rosebud has shut its doors without fanfare, with the explanation that it was intended to be only a temporary location and that other, similar “pop-up” Rose offshoots may spring up elsewhere in the Greater Boston area. We shall see.

Since Bedford’s departure last year, Kristin Parker has served as Acting Director, but we have it on good authority that interviews of potential successors are underway. A new Rose director is expected to be named later in 2017.

Meanwhile, the Rose continues to present new exhibits conceived on Bedford’s watch. The exhibits range from a three-dimensional image (requiring a special viewer) of Louise Nevelson’s 1967 one-woman show at the Rose to Sarah Sze’s Blue Wall Moulting, a set of rectilinear “snap-line” drawings in blue chalk along the wall of the Foster staircase.

On view in the Fineberg gallery is a series of attractive black, white, and gray sculptures of various shapes and textures made of cast polyester resin that were produced in the 1970s and 80s by NASA rocket scientist turned cosmic sculptor, Fred Eversley.

The lower gallery presents Tommy Hartung’s exhibit titled King Solomon’s Mines, featuring what appears to be a blend of high-contrast, rapidly moving still images and tourist videos. This work, shot mostly in the Sahara, is described by the Rose as a sort of “satirical ethnification,” growing out of the Solomon myths. Also on display are sculptural objects and Polaroid photos that the artist created and used in the video. The video itself is visually attractive and (to this viewer) more appealing than the voice-over narrative.

Mark Dion’s continuing exhibit, The Undisciplined Collector, consists of a small, wood-paneled room intended to simulate a collector’s den. Furnished with objects from permanent collections at the Rose and other collections around the campus, it is a time capsule preserving the atmosphere of the institution’s founding year, 1961, a year of significant political, social, and cultural change—and the year in which Dion was born.

Sculptor Fred Eversley at the Rose to give an artist talk shortly after his exhibit opened. (Photo online)

Tommy Hartung’s “King Solomon’s Mines” video work in the lower Rose gallery. (Photo online)
During his 20-year career, comedian and First Amendment provocateur Lenny Bruce relentlessly attacked many of the mores and standards of mid-20th century America, especially those associated with religion, race, and sex. Once dubbed “the nightclub Cassandra” by critic Kenneth Tynan because of his prophetic writings and comic routines, Bruce became a lightning rod for the forces of reactionary thinking. Charged with obscenity, he was dragged through a series of arrests and trials which ultimately led to his blacklisting by the entertainment industry. Broke and unable to find work, Bruce died at age 40 from an accidental overdose of heroin.

Bruce’s storied career and tragic life are revisited in an exhibit at Brandeis’s Goldfarb Library with items purchased by the University in 2014 from the comedian’s daughter with funding provided by the Hugh M. Hefner Foundation. Hefner’s daughter, Christie, graduated from Brandeis in 1974. Originally opened in conjunction with last fall’s conference Comedy and the Constitution: The Legacy of Lenny Bruce, the exhibit includes intimate images of Bruce taken by his friend, photographer Don Carroll; a poignant, typewritten note from Bruce to his estranged father; and a collection of photos and transcripts titled “Obscenity and the Law,” which graphically depict his ensnarement by the legal system. Visitors are also able to listen to brief selections from audio tapes of Bruce in performance.

This free exhibit is on display on Mondays through Fridays, from 9 am to 5 pm, through July 2017. (Photos Online)
Coming Soon to Turner Street: Scene-iors!

by Sue Wurster

BOLLI’s intrepid band of players returns to the “Gathering Space Lunchtime Theatre” on Thursday, May 18 with two one-act plays. First, veteran Scene-ior actors Sandy Clifford and Bobbe Vernon star in a drama by Tennessee Williams in which the wealthy, domineering Cornelia (Clifford) confronts her social secretary Grace (Vernon) with *Something Unspoken*. As a companion piece to the Williams play, director Becky Meyers chose one of Christopher Durang’s most popular comedies, *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, an outrageous parody of the Williams stage classic, *The Glass Menagerie*. Starring in this “crackpot comedy” are Bunny Cohen as Amanda, Davida Lowenstein as her son Tom, Monique Frank as the ultra-shy and hypochondriacal Lawrence, and Becki Norman as Ginny, the feminine caller.

“Both plays have characters that are multifaceted,” Meyers commented. “We have found it challenging to figure out how to play these nuanced personalities and portray their interactions on stage.”

Coming Soon to Turner Street: Scene-iors!

by Sue Wurster

Louise Nevelson: 1967 *Reflections* - Retrospective, Rose Museum of Art M.S. Lee Gallery. In honor of the 50th anniversary of Nevelson’s first museum retrospective, this presentation offers documents providing a glimpse of the artist’s hand in the original installation process. Virtual reality technology allows today’s visitors to walk back in time and recreate the experience of visiting this earlier show.

*Afterward: For the Children* by Hélène Aylon at Kniznick Gallery (Women’s Studies Research Center), through June 16. Internationally acclaimed Jewish feminist artist, Hélène Aylon, presents the conclusion to her 20-year series highlighting the dismissal of women in Jewish traditions and text.

**The Adamses of Massachusetts: Trajectory of a Family**

Saturday, May 20, 12:30 – 2 pm, Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall, The Epstein Building. Professional actors provide a dramatic reading of a play in progress. The voices of four generations of Adamses focus on their opposition to slavery and their family dynamics.

Upcoming Campus Events

Compiled by Ellen Moskowitz. These events are offered free of charge. (Photos online)

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