
ECG MATTERS

OUR NEW LOBBY



In keeping with our celebration of the Esplanade's 30th anniversary this year, we thought it fitting to describe the thinking and planning that went into our new lobby that has stimulated a lot of comments most of them positive. Moshe Safdie's original sketches were revisited when the time came for the lobby update. (See *ECG Matters*, our Spring Newsletter, for more information on Safdie and his work.) His vision was to have the Esplanade, with its stepping terraces, openness to the sun, and orientation to the river "offer the peace and spirit of water, sunlight, and the natural world." With that vision in mind, a designer and artist were chosen and asked to give the lobby an update fitting the architect's original sketches and his clean, modern lines -- a timeless yet updated look.

The designer, Sonja Haviland (<http://sonjahavilanddesign.com>), who does both commercial and residential work, knew Safdie's work and agreed with the concept to "honor the building and his vision" by emphasizing the connection to the river and the light. Her thinking was overall to modernize the space with clean lines and cooler colors of blues, complementing a neutral palette that Safdie favored for the building.

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SUMMER 2019 ISSUE

COMING EVENTS

September 10, Board of Trustees Meeting, 7:30 am, Tye Room

November 7, Neighbor **William Julius Wilson** will discuss the memoir he is writing on his remarkable journey from a poor Pennsylvania town to University Professor at Harvard. Bill, a sociologist, is best known for his books on race and class in America, including *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) and *When Work Disappears* (1996). 6 pm, Tye Room

November 12, Board of Trustees Elections & Annual Meeting

December 12, Holiday Potluck 6:00-8:00 pm, Tye Room

May 2020, Neighbor **Larry Tye** is finishing a biography of Senator Joe McCarthy, a controversial figure in 1950s America and a timely one today. Larry will do a reading in the building next May, just after Houghton-Mifflin releases the book.

ECG Matters, published by the Esplanade Community Group (ECG), is devoted to building community in our building and our neighborhood and welcomes feedback. Send letters to:
EsplanadeCommunity@gmail.com

All must be signed! Thank you.

Our New Lobby, Cont.

Sonja noted that she wanted to bring a vibrancy and up-to-date look to the lobby space. She mentioned three specific pieces in the room:

- The chandelier was chosen as the focal point. We “wanted it to be a real center of attention, a beautiful light with clean lines that gives the space a definition, avoiding a hallway look.” It is to be both modern and timeless.
- The second piece Haviland mentioned was the custom-made carpet, with river-like blues, browns, and neutrals rippling through it. It seeks to ground the center of the lobby with both a beautiful and organic feel.
- The third piece in the lobby is the art installation, “Diatom Bloom” by Alisha Gould, an artist who lives and works in Kennebunk Maine, and who was recommended by Marni Katz, a *Boston Globe* Correspondent. Alisha has exhibited in museums and galleries throughout New England, been featured in the 2011 and 2005 Portland Museum of Art Biennials, and has pieces in select boutique hotels across the country.

(<https://alishagould.com/home.html>)

Alisha describes her piece “Diatom Bloom” this way: “For this project I used the view of the Charles River as my starting point of inspiration and then looked more closely at the stunning microscopic forms within water itself. Diatoms are a diverse group of microscopic single-celled algae that are housed in beautiful and intricate glass shells and found in rivers, lakes, and oceans. The forms of this installation are inspired and abstracted from 19th century naturalist drawings and Victorian microphotography of diatoms.



Beyond their aesthetic appeal, diatoms can currently be used as a way to monitor the health and water quality the river, an issue especially important in the Charles River’s history of recovery from pollution. I wanted the overall composition, color, translucency, and shadows of these glass sculptures to evoke images and feelings of water.”

Alisha worked with a Cambridge glassblower, Andrew Iannazzi to create her installation.

<https://www.andrewiannazzi.com/about.html>

Look closely, in particular, at six of the pieces with the white etched areas that were created after Alisha carefully studied various types of diatoms. Although Alisha thinks of her work as one collective piece, she is particularly fond of this one piece (see if you can find it):



Additionally, it should be mentioned that the tables and cabinets were crafted by Carla Ferrara, <http://www.ironmtnforge.com/story> So, as you enter the new lobby, look around at the details and experience its overall atmosphere. Reflect on the river, the light, the park, and dynamic Kendall Square. Consider what the designer/architect Saarinen advised: “In designing something think of it in its larger context, a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, and an environment in a city plan.” We hope this gives you some background on the new lobby. We would love your feedback; send to esplanadecommunity@gmail.com

-- Jane Hilbert-Davis

Information from ECG for the Upcoming Elections for the Board of Trustees

Elections for the Esplanade's Board of Trustees (BOT) will be held again this fall. John Yee, President; Jane Blalock, Treasurer; Fred Davis; and Enid Zimbler were elected in 2017 for three-year terms, and they will continue on the Board until 2020. The current terms of Nancy Stiening, Secretary; Bernie Aserkoff; and Joanne Hynek will end this fall, thus leaving three positions open on the Board. These incumbents can run for reelection in 2019 election if they so choose.

The Board of Trustees, as the Esplanade's governing body, has critical fiduciary and strategic responsibilities under the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws. The Board is accountable to the owners and involvement by the owners is critical to its success and the success and well-being of our community.

To fully participate in this important election process this fall, here are some considerations from the ECG to make your vote count:

(1) If you think that you have the interest, commitment, and expertise to contribute to the Board of Trustees, please consider running for the three open positions this fall.

(2) Understand that our responsibility as owners is to make informed choices when deciding for whom to vote. Even if you use the Proxy to vote, questions can be posed to candidates beforehand about their qualifications and goals: What is your board experience? What are your goals for the Board of Trustees? And, if using the Proxy, you can give specific voting instructions to the person who exercises your Proxy so that your vote reflects your own choices.

Your vote counts! --*The Esplanade Community Group*

Updates on ECG Interest Groups

Esplanade Environmental Study Group Holds Initial Meeting: On May 22, 2019, the Esplanade Environmental Study Group held its first meeting. There were six of us in attendance. It was a lively and fruitful meeting. We agreed that our purpose encompassed two primary goals: (1) to *gather information* from both the Esplanade management and a variety of other sources regarding available methods of further reducing our building's carbon footprint; and (2) to *collaborate* with management and the Board of Trustees in assessing the feasibility of ideas that emerge. Our inquiries, we agreed, will focus not only on what the building might do collectively, that is, at the level of the building as a whole, but also on what individual residents can do, in their own units, and on what incentives can be provided in that regard. Group members each volunteered to make contact with a particular source that might provide helpful information and/or be resources for our group. This study group is just beginning. We welcome the input of any other residents with some expertise or experience in making existing buildings "greener," or with ideas about whom we might contact, or who recognize the urgency of the threats created by accelerating global warming. We also invite those who wish to join us in learning more about pathways the Esplanade and its residents can take to minimize our own contributions to this huge looming problem. Contact *Bob Kagan*, rak@berkeley.edu

ECG Interest Groups Cont.

Invitation to a New “All Things Plants” Group!

Whether perched companionably on sunny kitchen sills or bearing sweet fruit in raised beds, climbing crisp white trellises or offering verdant companionship on neighborhood strolls, plant life not only surrounds our spaces but so often helps to define them. And, sometimes, us! As two of those who are undeniably plant-obsessed, my partner Kyle and I would love to invite our fellow community members to join us in cultivating a group dedicated to admiring and sharing all things plant-focused! Our own collection and cultivation focus primarily on succulents and cacti with seasonal edibles and native species. We welcome both those with shared interests and a focus -- or budding interest! -- in other greenery, as well!

With potential conversation topics of interior landscaping, succulents and cacti, balcony gardening, seed collection, composting, native species, and other engaging notions, group activities could also include plant and supply swaps, developing a shared seed library, going on nature walks, or even group nursery or garden visits. If you're interested, let us know by emailing Alyssa at alyssacohen01@gmail.com. We hope to meet you soon and wish you a very happy spring and summer in the meantime! Alyssa C. & Kyle S., E1107

Aging in Place Group

The Aging in Place Group is working to schedule a meeting this summer and to work on finding out in greater detail what our group wants and would need to implement this concept. All questions and suggestions welcome, please email Jessie von Hippel jvhippel@comcast.net. In the meantime, Esplanade residents can explore the programs, services, and resources available from Beacon Hill Village and Cambridge Neighbors.

Beacon Hill Village: For information and to apply, call 617-723-9713 or see the website https://www.beaconhillvillage.org/content.aspx?page_id=0&club_id=332658

Cambridge Neighbors (formerly Cambridge At Home), Information Session, Thursday, June 13, 11 am, call 617-354-1715 to sign up. Or check their website for further information <http://cambridgeneighbors.org/>

Esplanade Arts Group

Are you interested in local theater and discussion? Do you enjoy independent films or criterion collections of classics? Is music, dance, or art your passion? Then, maybe the Esplanade Arts Group is for you. Join us to discuss ways we can experience our interests and share them in a communal way. We will meet in late June to discuss possibilities for the fall. All suggestions and ideas are welcome. For more information email me at nancymcrowley@icloud.com

Book Groups: See “Book Notes” beginning on page 8.

MEET YOUR ESPLANADE NEIGHBORS: ANOTHER NEW FEATURE

Introducing our readers to their neighbors in the Esplanade.

Corinne Dame moved to the Esplanade in 1989, one of the early residents. She moved from a "Cape Cod" house furnished in antiques, on an acre of land to care for in Belmont, to the Esplanade with modern decor and no responsibilities, with her husband Sam until his death in 2009. Son Douglas and wife Kathryn now also live in the Esplanade.

Corinne graduated from Brookline High School just after World War II was declared. War is a very frightening experience!! College would wait. She joined the Red Cross Motor Corp where she learned to drive a truck and prepare for an emergency evacuation. She worked at the Watertown Arsenal and, then, the Charlestown Navy Yard to help the war effort. The war ended, she met Colonel Samuel Dame, and they were married. They purchased a home in Waban MA. During their two sons' naptime, Corinne worked with Sam to establish his new lecture management company. In 1956 women were not entrepreneurs. However, Corinne established her own event-planning company. Working along with Gloria Steinem, they pioneered and opened opportunities for other women in the business world. Her company, Dame Associates, Inc., is global and has produced events all over the world. She appreciates and is grateful for the travel, the sights, and the people she was privileged to experience. In 1982 her company produced the first Glass Machinery Exposition in Beijing, China. The first trip required 38 hours of travel time. Last year it was a direct flight for 16 hours.

Corinne has seen many changes in Kendall Square. When she first saw the neighborhood, it was for a business meeting in a warehouse. She describes the neighborhood then as "so shabby" and loves the way it has developed.

John Yee, Chair of the Esplanade Board of Trustees, is a dedicated primary care physician who has been in practice for forty years. Smitten by its location, John moved into the Esplanade in March 1989 as one of its original owners. He noted that this property was formerly the home of the Squibb Pharmaceutical Company. The one word that comes to mind following my interview with John is *earnest*.

John was elected to the Board of Trustees six years ago. He stated that he was motivated to run as a candidate at a time when there were "a number of vacancies, and no one was interested in running." John clearly is proud of the Esplanade, noting that we have a dedicated staff with minimal turnover. He takes seriously his responsibility to "maintain the building's traditions and high standards" and to exercise his fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the Esplanade remains fiscally sound. He also is adamant that the building adhere to the ever-changing, comprehensive state laws governing the running of condominiums.

While John is a proponent of the Esplanade as a community, he feels that it is fiscally irresponsible for the management to sponsor community events – events that are not attended by all of the residents. He supports the efforts of interested residents to exercise their desire for community interaction.

What's Cooking? Cookbook Reviews by Residents of the Esplanade

For the food column in this issue of the *ECG Newsletter*, I decided to ask some residents of the Esplanade to write a paragraph or two about their favorite cookbooks. I quickly realized that there must be dozens upon dozens of residents who spend their most creative moments in the kitchen and would love to write about their experiences. So, the six brief reviews presented here will need to be supplemented with many more in later issues of the newsletter. – Ken Winston

From Jane Gould:

The Joy of Cooking, 1931 edition by Irma S. Rombauer, is my go-to cookbook, but not for the usual reasons. One day I was trying to recreate *hors d'oeuvres* from the 1920's for a retro-themed book-club soiree, and I asked my college-aged son for advice. He happened to be taking an elective class on the history of cookbooks, and the 1931 edition was one of his required texts. Rombauer's recipes for creamed oyster canapes and sweetbreads-on-skewers were a real turn-off. But then I read further and my outlook changed.

The Joy of Cooking has recipes on how to make a pie crust, bake an apple pie, and compile a pea soup. My dear Mother managed to make a killer apple pie and fantastic soups, but otherwise subscribed to the B&B school of cooking, i.e., Burn or Boil. When I watched her prepare her good recipes, she used a "pinch" here and a "dash" there. She never wrote it down. With the 1931 edition of *Joy of Cooking*, I have discovered the missing link and can now season soups to perfection and make a killer-girl pie crust. Meanwhile, my son, who took the cooking class to counterbalance his heavy coursework in computer science, has come to appreciate the importance of outlining each step and leaving notes for the next cook.

From Susan Barron:

I thoroughly enjoy cooking, as I find it relaxing as well as creative. I liken cookbooks to useful road maps. Cookbooks provide us with detailed instructions as to how to reach a designated goal. However, when cooking, it's often both fun and rewarding to veer off the beaten path and explore side roads – roads that enable one to substitute preferred ingredients and/or ingredients one may have on hand for those given in a recipe. This practice augments the creative side of cooking and bears attempting.

I'd like to recommend two different types of cookbooks that are instructive yet invite our "deviations" from the designated road. The Silver Palate cookbooks: *Good Times*, *New Basics*, and *The Silver Palate* are tried and true paperback references from the 1980's. Each one provides unfailingly delicious recipes that are easy-to-follow crowd-pleasers. They typically call for ingredients that are readily obtainable, while allowing for substitutions as desired.

In marked contrast, I also recommend Yotam Ottolenghi's cookbooks: *Jerusalem*; *Simple*, *Sweet*; and last but not least *Plenty* and *Plenty More* (both of which are vegetarian). These books are hard-covered treasures with sumptuous photographs of mouth-watering dishes, most of them featuring Middle East/Mediterranean flavors. The recipes, although somewhat involved, are, for the most part, easy to follow, emphasizing fresh ingredients. The results, to my mind, are well worth the effort and bound to garner kudos from assembled guests.

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From Janet and Bernie Aserkoff:

Over the years, our cooking progressed from Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* to Craig Claiborne's *60 Minute Gourmet* and now to *Radically Simple*, Roxanne Gold's excellent and beautifully illustrated cookbook published in 2010. Her 350 recipes are designed to produce "elegant" results with a minimum of fuss, and that is just what they accomplish. From rigatoni with cauliflower, anchovies, and raisins, to scallops on sweet pea puree, or simply roast chicken, her recipes are quick to prepare and filled with zip. We have made and enjoyed many of them. Seared tuna with roasted garlic asparagus on a bed of yogurt caper sauce is an Aserkoff favorite that gets put together and on the table in 15 minutes. Many other recipes do the same. The book is easy to use.

From Vibha Pingle:

Japanese Farm Food, by Nancy Singleton Hachisu, is one of our favorite cookbooks. We love how it transports us to the calm, balanced, nature-filled world of Kamikawa (Hokkaido, Japan). While getting home delivery from Fuji at Kendall is always quick and requires little thought (as we always order the same dishes!), preparing a dish from *Japanese Farm Food* requires thought and a trip to H-Mart in Central Square. But the results always feel sublime and inspiring.

What we particularly like about the recipes is how accessible they are. The author makes the recipes seem familiar, even though they clearly do not include ingredients from Whole Foods. The instructions are straightforward, though some recipes are more labor-intensive than the instructions might suggest. What's particularly lovely about the dishes is that they're not ones we've found at Japanese restaurants in the area. It's of course entirely possible that whatever we prepare using this cookbook barely resembles authentic Japanese farm food. But they're delicious, and our dinner party guests clearly do an excellent job of pretending they've enjoyed them too.

From Nancy Crowley:

Though I have many cookbooks and have a few staples from each that I love and many to still explore, my most stained and tattered is the Silver Palate's first book from the eighties – *The Silver Palate Good Times Cookbook* by Julee Rosso and Sheila Lukins, with Sarah Leah Chase. Why? It was a decade in which my family was growing, and we hosted many large gatherings with families and friends... and I loved the themes of meals related to the seasons and special gatherings of loved ones. "Summer When It Sizzles," "America Gives Thanks," and "Winter Wonderland" were favorites. The accompanying illustrations and tips for enhancing the get-togethers made it all the more fun.

I realize now that many of the recipes tasted so good because of the enormous amounts of fats within! Armed with a new food processor, I made pesto for the first time, and it became a pre-Monday night dance dish for the teeny boppers... and added marinated basil, tomato, and Brie cheese to a series of pasta nights with up to twenty guests at the table on Cape Cod. "Seafood Gazpacho" was a primer for adaptation with all vegetables fresh and shellfish briny from the sea. And "Porch Brunches" led to easy entertaining with weekend guests. But the most celebrated and cooked EVERY year is "Grand Marnier Apricot Stuffing." It would be my chosen meal on a desert island along with a perfectly roasted turkey, which I do not always achieve! Local fresh ingredients and more global cuisines have captured my contemporary tastes and recipes lately, but the *Silver Palate* will always have a special place with a dash of nostalgia and a sprinkling of love.

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Cookbooks, continued:

From Ken Winston:

It was after my first visit to India that I decided it was time to get serious about Asian cooking, and by then I'd had the pleasure of several meals at Stan Frankenthaler's restaurant, Salamander, which (as it happens) was located in the Athenaeum building across the street from the Esplanade. (When residents talk about living in the Esplanade in "the good old days," surely that's what they have in mind!) Frankenthaler's cookbook, *The Occidental Tourist* (2001), was a special challenge because nearly every dish involved two or three sauces. There would be a marinade and a basting sauce. Or a glaze and a vinaigrette. Or both of those plus a relish. The results were fantastic, but needless-to-say I didn't use the book as often as I had anticipated.

Fortunately, I discovered Jean-Georges Vongerichten, who shares Frankenthaler's Asian-inspired sensibility but gets the sauce-making under control – without sacrificing the elegance of the dishes. Of his cookbooks, my favorite is *Asian Flavors of Jean-Georges* (2007). The recipes are as likely to include elements of Thai or Vietnamese cuisine, as of Chinese or Korean. Jean-George's wife, Marja, is Korean and has a cookbook of her own worth noting, *The Kimchi Chronicles* (2011), which is a companion to the PBS show of that name. But, then, I also discovered Marcus Samuelsson, who takes eclecticism to an entirely new level in his *New American Table* (2009). Samuelsson was born in Ethiopia, raised in Sweden, and travelled widely in the US before settling down in New York City and opening such restaurants as Aquavit. Many of the recipes in his book also have a strong Asian accent, but combined with creole or soul or southwestern elements...truly creative cuisine.

BOOK NOTES FROM BOOK CLUB MEMBERS

A new book club at the Esplanade is being organized. If you are interested in joining, please contact Judi Hampton jhamp76817@aol.com or Liang Yap liangyap2019@gmail.com.

Some recent reads enjoyed by Esplanade bookies:

Becoming

Michele Obama's *Becoming* is a wonderful and inspiring read, filled with anecdotal treasures. It covers her life from growing up in a poor neighborhood on the south side of Chicago to wearing designer gowns at the President's inauguration balls. Along the way, she chronicles her very personal life events including a miscarriage and the emotional aftermath that she struggled through. I found many parallels to my own history growing up in segregated St. Louis and breaking the color barrier in the school system. Obama made significant changes in the White House protocols. She created a welcoming environment, a community garden, and sponsored events to improve the health of children and adults. Obama is so candid and real. It's refreshing to put aside politics and just focus on an outstanding individual.

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Book Notes, continued:

Our book club members really enjoyed the Obama book. One member provided us with Michele's favorite popcorn to enjoy during our meeting. Another member asked a question that spurred a good lively discussion: Whether they would have read the book if it had not been written by a First Lady? This book is truly a page turner showing us the most significant events of her life with inspiring touches of the real person. --*Judi Hampton*

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

The narrator of this novel, by Sherman Alexie, is a fourteen-year-old Spokane Indian, living on the reservation with his family. Supposedly, it is fiction, but it seems mostly autobiographical. There are numerous references to the plight of the Native American: poverty, alcoholism, drug abuse, and crime. It is seen through the eyes of an adolescent, who has a keen wit, is committed to self-deprecation, and is able to find hope and inspiration through a loving family and mentors. It is a book about growing up with physical and social challenges and finding those things in one's life that can be controlled. Making a decision to attend the all-white high school, 22 miles away, is the major alteration in Arnold Spirit's (aka Junior's) life path. This decision triggers animosity and hatred in both places: school and reservation. Yet Arnold prevails through determination and resilience and achieves success in both worlds. This choice drives the narrative and creates the scenarios that contribute to his coming of age.

The Absolutely True Diary has been billed as being for young adult readers, but that doesn't do it justice. It provides wisdom and understanding for all ages. It is funny, poignant, sad, and uplifting. The book is filled with brilliant insights into the mind of an adolescent, and not just a native American adolescent. The universal nature of this stage of life is evident from beginning to end. Every member of the group made a commitment to give this book to his grandchildren at a time deemed appropriate. It has great potential to be a gateway into the world of reading, for those adolescents who might not love reading. This book has won numerous awards. All deserved. --*Laurence Lieberman*

There There

There There is a story of many stories, of over a dozen characters who are making the journey to the "Oakland Powwow" and whose motivations and relationships (revealed in overt and covert means) reach a crescendo in the last pages of the book. In fact, one of the characters has a grant to interview people in what it means to them to be an Indian. A prominent theme concerns identity, specifically Native American identity, which itself is questioned as to its definition. What is an "urban Indian" identity? "Am I Native enough?" The characters look at themselves in mirrors, window shields, and into their souls. They face the historical identities that America has imposed upon them and their ancestors both culturally in the media and in the long-term results of the separation of families and dispossession of lands. There is a poignant scene in which a young 14-year-old dons native regalia found in a closet and begins to carry out a traditional dance like those he has seen in videos of powwows and "pretends" to be a "Native American."
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Book Notes, continued:

Tommy Orange, author of *There There*, is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. The *New York Times* named *There There* one of the ten most notable books of 2018 and on April 7th Orange received the Pen/Hemingway award honoring a distinguished first novel. ---*Nancy Crowley*

Two Interesting Ideas for our Neighborhood

The City of Cambridge has launched its sixth Participatory Budgeting (PB6). This time it has set aside \$1,000,000 for capital projects to improve the community. Click here to submit your ideas between June 1 and July 31: <https://pb.cambridgema.gov>

Get to know your neighbors; organize a block party!

http://edition.pagesuite.com/popovers/dynamic_article_popover.aspx?artguid=65cd10aa-237a-4f2b-a200-eaf4b595e1d5&appid=1165