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I2B Extracurriculars Events on and off campus into the fall



12F Strings, Sax, and a Dash of Sass A Far Cry at the Gardner



12J Portsmouth, N.H. *A day trip offers festivals, history, and art by the sea*



12L Staging Magic Finding Neverland's *dynamic world premiere*



12M Attention, Please Asta's primal focus is on food

JIM HARRISON





Extracurriculars

Events on and off campus during September and October

SEASONAL

An Evening with Champions www.aneveningwithchampions.org The forty-fourth annual ice-skating exhibition features champion synchronized skat-

ers, ice dancers, and Harvard's own figure skating club, along with enduring, new, and aspiring Olympians. All event proceeds benefit the Jimmy Fund of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. (September 19-20)

(From left) From Ragnar Kjartansson's *The Visitors*, at the ICA; detail of the cotton and wire *Time of Ten Suns* (2013) by Carol Eckert, from *Game Changers* at the Fuller Craft Museum; primatologist Patricia Chapple Wright appears at the Harvard Museum of Natural History



The Farmers' Market at Harvard www.dining.harvard.edu/flp/ag_market.html

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MUSIC

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Harvard University Band. (October 10) Bands of the Beanpot

The Harvard Wind Ensemble joins fellow musicians from Boston College and Boston and Northeastern Universities for this annual talent showcase. (October 19)

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

Harvard Museum of Natural History www.hmnh.harvard.edu

Saving Lemurs from Extinction: Conservation in Action. Stony Brook University professor and primatologist Patricia Chapple Wright, who won this year's Indianapolis Prize (from the eponymous zoo) for her work in Madagascar, shares her work and experiences. (October 2)

DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum

www.decordova.org

Roberley Bell: The Shape of The Afternoon challenges what's "natural" and "artificial" by transforming the museum's roof terrace into a "garden" of fake flowers and plastic or resin-molded bulbous objects in neon colors. (Through October 6)

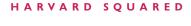
The Institute for Contemporary Art www.icaboston.org

Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson's The **Visitors** is a nine-channel video installation based on a musical performance by the artist's friends at the once-grand Rokeby Farm—now a bohemian meeting ground and a perfect "backdrop to the film's eloquent homage to love, loss, and friendship." (Through November 2)

The Fuller Craft Museum www.fullercraft.org Game Changers: Fiber Art Masters and Innovators. Contemporary artists work



An orange "garden planter" on display in Roberley Bell: The Shape of the Afternoon at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts



Spotlight



Simon Fujiwara: Three Easy Pieces, a show of multimedia installations at the Carpenter Center, offers stark but absorbing theatrical narratives. Studio Pietá (King Kong Komplex), detailed above, is an attempt to re-stage a lost photo of Fujiwara's blonde, bikini-clad mother and her Lebanese boyfriend on a beach near Beirut where, it seems, she was a cabaret dancer. "Simon's work, while generally departing from facets of his biography," says James Voorhies, the center's new director, "beautifully interweaves fact and fiction to confront larger questions" about the nature of identity, creativity, sexuality, and politics. Rehearsal for a Reunion (with the Father of Pottery) explores Fujiwara's tenuous tie to his Japanese father, while Letters From Mexico points to the gross complexities of global interdependence and heritage.

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts www.ves.fas.harvard.edu October 23 – December 21

wonders with wire, yarn, ropes, cord, fabric, hydrangea petals, birds' nests, nylon, silicone, melon rind, waxed linen, cedar bark, ostrich-shell beads, granite, sweet grass, and twines of 18-karat gold. (Through November 23)

NATURE AND SCIENCE The Arnold Arboretum

www.arboretum.harvard.edu A magnificent link in Boston's Emerald Necklace, the arboretum is a trove of native plants, old-growth trees, flowers, rare specimens, and walking trails. Guided weekend



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tours are offered through October, or visit the website for special events, classes, and art shows.

LECTURES

The Radcliffe Institute for **Advanced Study** www.radcliffe.harvard.edu Kemper professor of American history and New Yorker staff writer lill Lepore reveals "How Wonder Woman Got into Harvard." (October 30)

FILM

Harvard Film Archive www.hcl.harvard.edu/hfa

A retrospective on the Chinese-born director Hou Hsiao-Hsien, a progenitor of Taiwan's New Wave cinema, highlights the nuanced sophistication of City of Sadness, The Green, Green Grass of Home, and A Time to Live, A Time to Die. (October 2 - November 3)

Also visit www.harvardmagazine.com for event listings

STAFF PICK: Strings, Sax, and a Dash of Sass

Aiming to "mix up genres and provoke the audience," says A Far Cry violinist Alex Fortes '07, the chamber orchestra performs Béla Bartók's Divertimento for strings, then joins saxophonist Harry Allen to explore the 1961 musical work Focus. Composed by Ed-



die Sauter for Stan Getz, the tenor saxophonist improvises against a score for strings. Why the pairing? Bartók's piece "broke new ground in form and craft," Fortes says. Bartók also championed Sauter, whose lead movement in Focus,

"I'm Late, I'm Late," echoes Concert music Bartok's Music for Strings, Persoars at the Gardner Museum's Calderwood Hall

cussion, and Celesta. The selfconducted A Far Cry has 17 young musicians (including Sarah Darling '02 and Miki-Sophia Cloud '04) all intent, Fortes says, on "inspiring and enlivening an audience through performance of classical music—broadly defined." The group

has released five albums, performed with Yo-Yo Ma '76, D. Mus. '91, among others, and is in residence at the Gardner Museum.

October 2, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston ww.gardnermuseum.org

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A Park of One's Own

Where Frederick Law Olmsted lived his last good years • by Nell Porter Brown







of playful exploration, of grand mystery in the "natural" world, that imbue New York's Central and Prospect Parks, Boston's Emerald Necklace, and his other public projects.

At 61, Olmsted was famous when he and his wife, Mary Cleveland Perkins Olmsted, bought the farmhouse, naming it "Fairsted." He was so intent on having the place, which sat on nearly two lush and hilly acres, that he cut a purchase deal with the elderly sisters who owned it: they moved into a cottage his son designed at the edge of the property, to live rent-free for the rest of their lives.

Still recovering from his final political battles over Central Park, Olmsted was lured to Boston as much by what would become the Emerald Necklace as by his friends and collaborators, the architect H.H. Richardson, A.B. 1859, and botanist Charles Sprague Sargent, the first director of Harvard's Arnold Arboretum. They both lived nearby, and Isabella Stewart Gardner soon moved in next door. She was already collecting the art that would later fill her Boston museum, adjacent Rustic rock steps lead to a shady dell. to Olmsted's earliest

ALK THROUGH he front archway at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, and note how the dirt carriageway gently hugs an island grown wild with ferns, winged euonymous, and native

barberry. In the middle, ivy runs up the architect (with two honorary rough and reddish trunk of a 90-foot Eastern hemlock. "Olmsted planted that soon after he bought the property in 1883," park ranger Mark D. Swartz explained during a tour of the Brookline, Massachusetts, site. "He envisioned that it would eventually be a towering centerpiece that would command attention as people walked in."

Some 131 years later, it does. Patient and persistent, Olmsted, A.M. 1864, LL.D. '93, angled the archway toward the tree, not his house, and likely knew that in time the structure would be hidden by boughs and foliage. America's most famous landscape



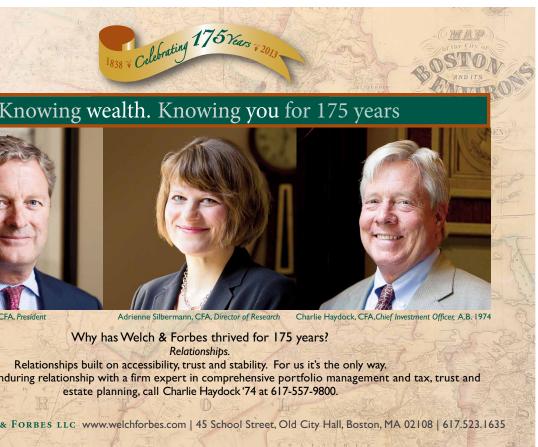
degrees from Harvard) "believed the natural world was a powerful medicine," Swartz added, "an antidote to the adverse effects of the manmade urban environ-

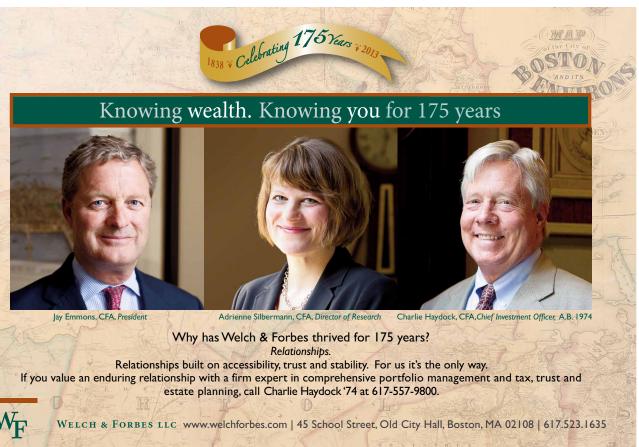
ment that was rapidly expanding during his lifetime." Here, the eye, first caught by the tree, follows the curving drive as it disappears behind the hemlock. Though small, the landscape Olmsted sculpted around his home holds pathways lined with mountain laurel and local pudding stone, a solitary American elm set on the rolling lawn, rock stairs patchy with moss that lead to a



Olmsted's vision is alive and well at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site. Clockwise from top left: meandering paths; the age-old hemlock on the carriage way; his home, as of 1883; and the arched entrance to it all.

shady hollow rich with vines, rhododendrons, cotoneasters, yews, and a shagbark hickory tree. All encouraged the same sense







Boston project, the Back Bay Fens. There, he helped solve an engineering and publichealth problem caused by chronic flooding and excess sewage. "He recreated a salt marsh that had been there, but enhanced it with a variety of new plants," Swartz explained, building a more scenic testament to the original landscape. Pathways were added around the marsh, as was a carriageway, which became known as the Fenway, and two bridges, one designed by Richardson.

Gardner's manse and other early estates still stand along the winding road to Fairsted. The Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site opened to the public in 1981, having been purchased the previous year directly from Olmsted's firm, which was still there. The site now includes seven acres (five were bought from the Gardner estate and are conserved to protect the viewshed) and the original residence. Also open is the two-story addition that was built in stages, mostly after Olmsted retired in 1895, to house the landscape-architecture firm he founded and others continued to foster.

A new permanent exhibit, Designing





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for the Future: The Olmsteds and the American *Landscape*, fills most of the first floor of the house and reflects the monumental impact of Olmsted's philosophy and work, emphasizing the collaborative nature of his legacy. "It was not just Olmsted's vision," Swartz says, "that made a major contribution to American landscape architecture." Others took his ideas, as well as their

own, into the future—in particular, Olmsted's sons, John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., A.B. 1894. They worked with their father, then took over the firm when dementia forced his retirement. (He spent the last five years of his life at McLean Hospital, whose Belmont, Massachusetts, site he had helped choose years before; see Vita, "Frederick Law Olmsted,"

ALL IN A DAY: Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Sections of this seacoast city, where restaurants, shops, and architecture today charm herds of visitors, were once largely derelict. Residents resisted plans to bulldoze part of the downtown area in the 1950s, and instead helped turn 10 acres into the living history museum Strawbery Banke.

There, costumed reenactors explain the past while showing off buildings that date from about 1695 through World War II. "Mrs. Goodwin, wife of a Civil War-era governor of New Hampshire, is in her garden," reports marketing director Stephanie Seacord, "Mrs. Stavers is at the Revolutionary War-era Pitt Tavern, and Mrs. Abbott minds her 1944-ish store, talking about rations and making do." All are present, along with kids' games, cooking tips, and traditional artisansblacksmiths, barrel-makers, weavers, coopers, and spinners—for the museum's seventh annual New Hampshire Fall Festival on October 11.

But any off-season visit, when summer crowds are gone, reveals the core vibrancy of this community. Local art appears in Enormous Tiny Art at the Nahcotta Gallery through September 28. New films migrate from Colorado to the Telluride by at the Nahcotta Gallery the Sea festival, at The Music Hall September 19- downtown. 21. Live music, from college bands to folk and jazz





Spinning demonstration at Strawbery Banke; water's edge at the Fort Stark State Historic Site; lively gathering

ensembles, is played almost nightly at clubs, such as The Blue Mermaid and The Dolphin Striker (a classic surf and turf restaurant). The Portsmouth Athenaeum hosts maritime lectures, on October 15 and November 19, and a chamber music trio on October 19. And the historic John Paul Jones House is open through October.

Portsmouth's easy walk- and bike-ability is also a plus. Cyclists can take the Route IB causeway to neighboring New Castle. The beach and park at Great Island Com-



mon are open year-round, as is the lesser-trod Fort Stark State Historic Site. Take a picnic and see the remnants of harbor defenses, which, like outspoken residents, proved integral to this coastal region's survival.

Strawbery Banke www.strawberybanke.org vww.portsmouthnh.com/thingstodo

HARVARD SQUARED

July-August 2007, page 38.) Also pivotal was Charles Eliot, A.B. 1882, the son of Harvard president Charles William Eliot, whose cousin Charles Eliot Norton, Harvard professor of art history, was a good friend of Olmsted's. The younger Eliot apprenticed with Olmsted in 1883, then returned as a leading partner of the renamed Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, in 1893. The nation's first landscape architecture program was established in Eliot's honor at Harvard.

The family presence is only lightly felt at Fairsted. Olmsted married Mary, his brother's widow, in 1859, and adopted her three children, including John, who was already 31 and a landscape architect when the family moved to Brookline. (The couple's own son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., was about 13.) Vintage photographs



Conservators cleaned, repaired, and archived thousands of landscape plans found at the Olmsted firm.

of the former interiors are hung on walls, and visitors can flip through photo albums in the Olmsted-designed, pebbledash stucco-walled plant room. But the addition, where the firm was headquartered, has been restored and recreated circa 1930, when F.L. Olmsted Jr. was chiefly in charge and business at its peak, requiring about 70 employees. The sparsely decorated rooms-where bare bulbs on cords and on swinging metal arms light wooden tables and simple tools-capture the painstaking artistry of nineteenth-century design work: pen nubs and inkwells; a can of Pounce (powder used to blot ink); colored pencils and the sandpaper used to sharpen them; a velvet case for compasses and a metal canteen, both taken on field visits.









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Pinholes on the tables mark where thousands of landscape plans were labored over, and where lead drafting "whales" weighted the wooden arcs formed to draw Olmsted's meandering paths. Employees serving as "copiers" sat at a "light table," tracing fine lines of a design on paper uplit, through glass, by metal lamps on the floor. The tracings became blueprints: drawings were placed atop paper treated with cyanide salts and rolled

HM) Visit harvardmag.com/ extras to see images from the Olmsted archives.

racks outside to develop in the sun. Later, the 1904 Wagenhorst Electric Blue Printer, also on display, brought

through windows onto

that process indoors.

By the time the federal government took over the site, business had dwindled for years and the firm had consolidated operations on the first floor. Some 130,000 paper plans were found in a storage vault, Swartz reports, most of them "dirty, stained, brittle, and torn," he adds, "a few with mold growing on them." It took paper conservators nearly 15 years to inventory and repair them. Altogether, more than a million archival documents are stored on site; researchers

The enduring, simple beauty of Olmsted's landscapes is echoed in the rustic wooden interior of the restored drafting room at Fairsted.

may work there by appointment.

The restoration work outside was and is just as carefully considered. The hollow to the right of the hemlock and carriageway in front of the house, for example, is maintained as "wild," Swartz says. Olm-

sted eschewed flower gardens, preferring the picturesque landscape and a palate of greens. Here, visitors descend rock steps into the hollow to find his differentiated shades, textures, shapes, and sizes cool to the eye, and more soothing to walk through.

Fairsted is ultimately a manmade environment. "He cut down all the elms out here," Swartz explains, "except the one he wanted, in the middle of the South Lawn." That tree survived until 2011. Much discussion of historic and scholarly inter-



pretations and practical realities (efforts to propagate cuttings from the original elm failed) led to replacing it in 2013 with a new, disease-resistant variety, the Jefferson elm. The young specimen stands alone on the lawn, cordoned off by ropes. "We're protecting it," says Swartz. The hope is that half a century from now, Olmsted's visionary design will again offer the sense that nothing was placed here, that everything simply evolved.

CURIOSITIES: Staging Magic

In designing 106 costumes from scratch for the musical Finding Neverland, Suttirat Larlarb was challenged to depict Edwardianera history with a fresh visual edge—and convey the explosive magic of the imagination. "You don't want a museum piece set to music," notes Larlarb, who was educated at Stanford and Yale. She has worked on numerous films (e.g., Slumdog Millionaire and Trance), and co-designed the 2012 Summer Olympics opening ceremony: recall the splendid "white-dove" cyclists? The ART's world-premiere musical, based on the 2004 movie, has its own wings (for bumblebees), dancing servants, dogs, one mermaid, and a crew of sexy pirates. All contribute to the play's modern meditation on the roots of creativity and the nature of youth, as



evidenced in J.M. Barrie's relationship with the Llewelyn Davies family as he conjures up Peter Pan. Backed by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, Neverland is a sumptuous production that is likely headed to London or Broadway. Like the fantastical sets, Larlarb's creations intensify the drama. Barrie's society-minded wife, Mary, strides around in a silky, lace dress with a proper high neck, curveloving bodice, and layers of ruffles

Thousands of swatches were

sourced to find just the right Italian lace used in this gown for actress Jeanna de Waal (Mary Barrie).

too stiff to shimmy when she walks. (It was inspired by a 1901 dress at the Kyoto Costume Institute and a more recent design in Vogue Italia.) Even Mary's satin evening gown is an "urban,"

orderly, navy blue, Larlarb says, whereas her husband's muse, Sylvia Llewelyn Davies, is a softer creature first seen playing in a park with her boys. She wears drapey, gauzy blouses and long skirts of pale oranges, pinks, and lavender—just "the right degree of bohemian hyperfemininity," says Larlarb—and a peach-toned frock with an airy, flowery print at dinner. No matter how beautiful, the designer adds, costumes should not be signature artistic

"concepts," a word she dislikes. Instead, "they serve a larger ambition—the intended journey of the play."

Finding Neverland American Repertory Theater Through September 28 http://americanrepertorytheater.org



Attention, Please

Asta's diners stop, taste, and get excited.

CLOSE LOOK at Asta's sign reveals the name of the storefront's old occupant, Café 47 Pizza and Pasta. "We realized that we could just spray paint over the rest of the sign and keep the 'asta,'" explains Shish Parsigian, who co-owns and runs the restaurant with her partner, chef Alex Crabb. "Our contractor was horrified."

Inside, this "design by subtraction" continued. They tore down the black drop ceiling, patching and painting the original tin panels gold, then used the same paint to touch up a picture of Zeus found behind

Chef/owner Alex Crabb shares the open kitchen with fellow cooks Tyson Wardwell and Nathan "Lazer" Phinisee.



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a demolished wall—the logo for an even older incarnation, Despina's pizzeria. They also left the crooked, raw-plaster edging where the drop ceiling had been, and a swath of exposed bricks. "The contractor said, 'I've got a guy who can get it straight and smooth—it's going to look primo," reports Crabb. "And we were like, 'No, we're from Detroit. We like it. A lot."

Before opening Asta in early 2013, the L'Espalier veteran spent two months apprenticing at Copenhagen's Noma, soaking up its spare Nordic style and almost primal focus on food. At Asta, diners sit at wooden tables with no apparent place settings (tip: open the drawers underneath). Dishes are vaguely titled "turnip," "beef," "fiddleheads," and "onion." Mis-

givings can ensue, Parsigian says, with a laugh: "'What's this crazy restaurant?' But we are about making and plating this food and not about all the other trappings."

Make no mistake: Asta is an original. Each night Crabb offers three tasting menus—three-course (\$45), five-course (\$70), and eight-course (\$95), to which wine pairings may be added. One night, a meal began with a shallow bowl of blanched and buttered peas with goat cheese. Not chèvre, this cheese is made inhouse and is unrefined, so it has a clean, custardy texture. It comes with shavings of fermented rutabaga and diced preserved lemon; a purple chive blossom adds a hot nip. The turnip dish features the vegetable quartered and roasted, poached, and even raw (in moon-shaped discs), with a saltedplum vinaigrette, rolled-up, pickled green radish leaves, a cèpe foam, flecks of miso shortbread, and a baby nasturtium flower.

The food may appear fussy, but Crabb, who started working in kitchens as a teenager, lacks pretension. There is enough to eat, but diners leave truly sated because Asta's inventive aesthetic is so stimulating:



HARVARD SQUARED

it forces people to slow down, take small bites, and enjoy the adventure of figuring out what's what. "We think that's fun," says Parsigian, a former manager at Hi-Rise Bread Company in Cambridge. "Then, when they are curious and excited, they call us over to find out what all the elements are."

And the onion dish is deceptively complicated. Crabb starts with a sweet roasted spring Vidalia for drama, then adds the "green unctuousness" of a poached scallion, with its "slimy chewiness." Petals of pickled pearl onions are placed on the plate with tweezers, then splashed with balsamic vinegar; another yellow dollop turns out to be "onion that has been cooked down with buttermilk whey and a little champagne vinegar," he reports. The black drizzles are burnt-onion oil—a bitter contrast to the dish's last touch: a luxurious spoonful of beer-and-cheddar purée.

Among the onions is a nest of twiggy, crispy beef—because Crabb often treats protein as a condiment. In this case, the fibers of a rib-eye steak cooked with wine are pulled apart, slow-fried, then seasoned. "It's not a beef dish," Parsigian tells patrons, "it's an onion dish." Almost every dish is just as carefully composed, although Crabb says the inspiration for the onion plate's "look" came one day when he saw wasted bits of fresh greens lying "in a nice circular pattern" around the sink drain.

When served, the ingredients form a crescent shape along the side of the plate. "And we will get the jokesters who say, 'Where's the rest of the food? Why is it all over there?" reports Crabb. For him, it's obvious: "Because the negative space on the plate helps you focus on what's there."

That also explains why he cooks. Growing up in Michigan, he struggled with attention-deficit issues, and still does. But in the extreme chaos of commercial kitchens, Crabb found solace. His seemingly opposite traits—a sharp, kinetic intensity and the ability to shift quickly among diverse tasks-enabled him to thrive. "When I was 16 or 17, I was making omelets at a breakfast place," he says, "and those two-and-a-half hours of service were the only time my teenage mind was quiet. And it was so nice." ~N.P.B.

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