12H The Fells

Just north of Boston is a wild park filled with forests, lakes, and rocky hills.

12B Extracurricul ars

Events on and off campus in September and October

12D Harvard Museum of Natural History

A stunning array of beetles

12G Kinetic Art

Lowell celebrates unique, people-powered vehicles

12L “The Dark Side”

Unsavory stories of Boston’s historic North End

12N Comedor

Chilean-American cuisine in Newton
Extracurriculars
Events on and off campus during September and October

**SEASONAL**

**Ingmar Bergman Centennial**
www.hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/bergman.html
The Harvard Film Archive, Brattle Theatre, and Coolidge Corner Theatre celebrate the filmmaker and his “naked pursuit of the most profound metaphysical and spiritual questions.” Highlights include screenings of Autumn Sonata, with a visit by actress and Bergman muse Liv Ullmann, and Wild Strawberries, shown at sundown in Mount Auburn Cemetery. (August 31–October 14)

**Boston Book Festival**
www.bostonbookfest.org
This free, day-long fête features 200 authors, children’s activities, and an outdoor dance party. Copley Square. (October 13)

**LECTURES**

Mahindra Humanities Center
www.mahindrahumanities.fas.harvard.edu

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Gail Roberts & Ed Feijo

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Something bugging you? Head to the Harvard Museum of Natural History to marvel at The Rockefeller Beetles. The largest order (Coleoptera) of insects, beetles have been honored, eaten, and studied since ancient times. They also comprise a full quarter of the planet’s animal species, which come in a mind-boggling array of colors and sizes—and have been trained to fight, coveted as pets, and turned into jewelry and religious totems. Beetles speak to the “extraordinary variety and organization of nature,” Farrell said of Rockefeller’s penchant during a speech last year. “He saw what Darwin saw: evolution in action.” Collecting any natural object, Farrell added, offers that “discovery of the meaning in everything.”

Harvard Museum of Natural History
http://hmnh.harvard.edu
Opens October 20

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HARVARD SQUARE

Harvard Art Museums

September 7, 2018–January 6, 2019

Animal-Shaped Vessels from the Ancient World
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HARVARD SQUARE

Captures unheralded scenes from the 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline protests at Standing Rock. (All exhibits open September 21)

deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum
Lived Space: Humans and Architecture
explores physical and psychological attachments to our built environments through works by more than 25 artists, including Walker Evans, Sarah Malakoff, and Arno Rafael Minkkinen. (Through September 30)

Fuller Craft Museum
Uneasy Beauty: Discomfort in Contemporary Adornment. Some 75 examples of wearable art that test the limits of endurance and personal expression. (Through November 5)

Fruttifonds Museum
More than 50 romantic depictions of America are on display in A New View: Landscapes from the Permanent Collection. (Through November 5)

MUSIC
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum
The Boston debut of Russian violinist and violist Sergey Malov, playing the intriguing violoncello da spalla, a small cello held like a guitar and played high against one’s chest. (September 30)

Sanders Theatre
The Harvard Wind Ensemble, Saturday Jazz Band, and Harvard University Band join forces for the annual Montage Concert. (October 12)

THEATER
American Repertory Theater
www.americanrepertorytheater.org
Singer, actress, and comedian Tori Scott sails into town for a one-night cabaret performance of her signature pop-torch-satirical songs. Oberon. (October 11)

Events listings are also available at www.harvardmagazine.edu.

STAFF PICK: Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race

On September 22, about 20 teams will gather to propel their human-powered machines—without their feet touching the ground—through downtown streets and a 50-foot mud pit, and then into the Merrimack River, before returning to land to cross the finish line near the Lowell Heritage State Park.

Fun and ingenuity are prized over winning, says race co-producer and artist Michael Roundy, a studio art professor at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell—and the contest supports the national STEM/STEAM educational initiative. The creators utilize all of that knowledge—the physics and mechanics involved in knowing “how to make your way through mud, how to float, how steering works,” he says—along with hands-on skills and artistry, as in welding and carpentry.

Last year, a machine featuring three bicycles and two canoes was built as a summer project by fifth- and sixth-graders in a Lowell STEM-based program. In another apparatus, “Ice Cream Floats,” co-pilots ably pedaled along asphalt but, once they hit the mud, climbed up front atop an attached, geodesic-dome-like orb made of lightweight plastic and foam tubing and manually rolled their machine (and themselves) through the pit, says Roundy. “People were really amazed at that!”

A record 5,000 spectators turned out, many in funky hats, make-up, and costumes, from hot dogs and queens to Vikings and superheroes. The festivities begin at 8:30 a.m. on Market Street—where anyone can meet the teams and see their machines—and end around 4 p.m. with an award ceremony (there’s even one for the next-to-last finisher) at the park. But throughout the day, there are live bands and street performers, along with family-friendly games and food trucks.

The Lowell event, now in its third year, was inspired by the first known kinetic sculpture competition, held in Ferndale, California, in 1969. That began, Roundy says, with artist Hobart Brown’s efforts to improve his son’s tricycle, and a neighbor who thought he’d do it even better and then challenged Hobart to a race. That friendly rivalry has blossomed into a three-day spectacle that covers 40 miles of water, mud, and sand dunes and spawned similar events across the country. Given the intensive creative process required by these inventions, the Lowell race has no registration deadlines or fees (although there is a list of safety-conscious technical requirements). “We’ll even take people up until the last day,” Roundy declares, “because we like to leave it all open.”

Every human-powered vehicle must stand the test of traveling successfully on asphalt, through mud, and into the Merrimack River.

HARVARD SQUARE

Photographs courtesy of the Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race

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The Fells

Just north of Boston, a wild park is filled with forests, lakes, and rocky hills.

by NELL PORTER BROWN

On a Sunday afternoon, 20 people troop gamely into the Middlesex Fells Reservation for a free “Tree Walk” with Harvard botanist Walter Kittredge. Along the Dark Hollow Pond Trail, in the Stoneham section of the park, he points out a “forest seep community” rich with ferns, a grove of beeches, and a sunnier swath conducive to pignut hickory and hop hornbeam trees nestled in a sea of bright green, feathery Pennsylvania sedge.

In all, more than a dozen habitats are flourishing along the trail in a landscape essentially left to grow wild for more than a century. “This is an amazing place that was set aside,” says Kittredge, a senior curatorial assistant with the University Herbaria & Libraries. “Very few cities have anything like this.”

Aptly honoring an ancient word for rugged, rocky hills, The Fells, as the state-owned park is commonly called, is also a haven for urbanites. Its woodlands and abundant reservoirs sprawl across 3,400 acres that abut five communities—Malden, Medford, Melrose, Stoneham, and Winchester—and include more than 400 miles of walking and hiking paths. Visitors can also mountain bike, picnic, sail and paddle on Spot Pond, or romp with their dogs (off-leash!) at the Sheepfold. On a beautiful day, the meadow is often more alive with happy canines than with humans.

That 10-acre tract, accessible from I-93 in Stoneham, also connects visitors to jaunts of varying lengths and rigor that zigzag across the whole preserve. Routes hugging the shoreline of North and Middle Reservoirs have the feel of being in rural Maine. A northerly trail leads to historic Bear Hill Tower, built in 1910. Or head south and take the long way to Wright’s Tower, the stone building that looms over Interstate 93, offering panoramic views of the region. The 1937 Works Progress Administration project was restored in 2008 by the state’s Department of Conservation.

Clockwise from top: Autumnal mist over Spot Pond; panoramic views from a craggy summit; Wright’s Tower at sunset; Virginia Wood (the first preserved tract, donated to the Trustees of Reservations in 1891 by a mother in honor of her daughter); meandering along the Cross Fells Trail in the eastern sector.

Photographs by Mike Ryan, unless otherwise noted

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and Recreation (DCR) and named it Elieur Wright, an abolitionist, mathematician, and pioneering insurance regulator. In the mid-1800s, as the American industrial revolution gathered strength, he and Wilson Flagg (a writer and naturalist who attended Harvard) were among the first to call for parks in the land that became the Fells in 1894.

DCR organizes hikes to Wright’s Tower, among other events and activities year-round. Check the website for Fall calendar listings, public transportation and parking options, and maps.

Harvard botanist Walter Kittredge leading one of his monthly tree hikes; and a scenic slice of Quarter Mile Pond with recommended bikeways and hikes, from the easy one-mile Spot Pond Brook Historic Trail to the “difficult” 6-mile Skyline Trail Loop. Through mid September, Boating in Boston also rents rowboats, canoes, and paddleboards on Spot Pond. Balancing multiple uses of public space is tricky. “We have had some user-conflicts among the dog walkers, bikers, walkers, and mountain bikers,” allows Thomas M. Walsh, DCR director of north region park operations. “People in general should be respectful of others in public and adhere to our regulations. We try to create the best experience here for everybody.”

The park is open from dawn to dusk. Mountain bikers are allowed only on certain trails on certain dates (outside of mud season), to limit the environmental damage. And, although dogs and their owners love to roam the Fells, there are leash and pooping rules in place for aesthetic reasons, and because nearly a quarter of the park is covered with water. “The Fells is the watershed—the kidneys—for the Mystic River. And that is extremely important to the Boston area,” says Ron Morin, executive director of the nonprofit Friends of the Fells. Spot Pond and the Fells Reservoir are back-up water supplies controlled by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority; the other reservoirs, by the Town of Winchester. The 1,500-member Friends group, celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, promotes “harmonious use” of the park, he says, and preservation of “ecological, historical, and recreational resources.” To that end, it offers responsibly enjoyable ways to explore the natural world, including Babes in the Woods and Hide ‘n Seek (at Beliveau Pond); and a self-led walk featuring the hunt for pages of a picture book posted along the trail for younger children and grandparents. The Friends also sponsors volunteer-led activities, such as Kittredge’s monthly tree hikes, historic walks with Doug Heath (co-author, with Alison Simcox, of the Images of America books: Middlesex Fells and The Lost Mill Village of Middlesex Fells) the annual Coastwatch Clean-up (September 22) and Fall for the Fells festival and trail run (November 4).

A new Friends partnership with Earthwise Aware, a nonprofit ecological education organization, has resulted in two year-round series—“Fells’ Biobliss: Biodiversity and Citizen Science,” a monthly group gathering to document ecosystems in areas around Long and Beliveau Ponds and Bear Hill Trail, explains Earthwise Aware president Claire O’Neill, and the twice-monthly “Fells Naturalists and Sketchers Circle.”

Yet without the activists Flagg and Wright, and others who joined their effort, sketches would have scant trees, plants, and wildlife to record. Though the land had long been used as a respite by city-dwellers, it had also been farmed and logged since the 1700s. From 1840 to 1867, Spot Pond Brook was a focus of mill development, including the Hayward Rubber Company, founded by Nathaniel Hayward, co-inventor, with Charles Goodyear, of the vulcanization of rubber, according to Simcox and Heath. Hikers can still find archaeological remnants of the industrial community of Haywardville, like mill ponds and ancient foundations.

In 1895, Sylvester Baxter, a newspaper writer and city-planning promoter, took up the conservation cause, introducing the term “fells” in a piece for the Boston Herald supplement: “…northerly from Boston lies a great tract of country, all stony hills and table lands, almost uninhabited, and of wonderful picturesqueness, and wild rugged beauty. The nature of this region cannot be better characterized than by the application of the old Saxon designation fells, a common enough word in England, meaning a tract of wild stone hills, corresponding to the German word Felsen”

George E. Davenport, a fern expert, botanical writer, and photographer (some of his papers and about 700 of his specimens...
CURIOSITIES: A Trip To “The Dark Side of Boston”

On a Friday evening, Boston’s North End is buzzing. Done with tours of Old North Church or the Paul Revere House, or just arriving for a fun night out, visitors stroll through the North End neighborhood. Mark’s body was then moved to a spot along a cobblestone street at 35 miles an hour. “Most of the 21 people killed were not drowned,” Perkins reports. “They were crushed…. It spawned one of the first-class-action suits in the country.” The 90-minute walk is one among dozens offered by the non-profit organization Boston By Foot. All tours are led by volunteers, typically history buffs like Perkins, who passionately aim to enlighten. “I just love Boston,” he says. “I gave 167 tours last year alone.”

The “Dark Side” also delves into a range of other unsavory, immoral, and horrifying events. Among them: the anti-Stamp Act mob that in 1765destroyed the North End mansion of lieutenant governor Thomas Hutchinson (class of 1727), and the Colonial era’s “Pope Night,” celebrated throughout New England, during which North End and South End gangs fought for the territory that in 1765 destroyed the North End mansion of lieutenant governor Thomas Hutchinson (class of 1727), and the Colonial era’s “Pope Night,” celebrated throughout New England, during which North End and South End gangs fought for the territory that North End residents had died, many in the overcrowded North End. Within a few months, that community was also hit, literally, by the Great Molasses Flood. A Commercial Street storage tank full of the sticky stuff burst, releasing a 25-foot wave that roared down the street at 35 miles an hour. “Most of the 21 people killed were not drowned,” Perkins reports. “They were crushed…. It spawned one of the first-class-action suits in the country.”

He stops at the site of the Great Brink’s Robbery, near the corner of Prince and Commercial Streets. What’s now a garage was, in 1950, a Brink’s vault building from which an armed crew extracted nearly $3 million (almost $30 million today) in a meticulously planned theft; then authorities “spent another $29 million investigating,” he adds, and finally caught the robbers a few days before the statute of limitations ran out—thanks only to a snitch seeking leniency for a different crime. By far, the most haunting story Perkins tells on his signature tour is that of slaves Mark and Phillips, driven to poison their Charlestown master John Codman (a man known to be violent) in 1755. Mark, also distraught by being separated from his family, procured arsenic from another slave who worked for a doctor in the North End, and after seven doses were hidden in his food, Codman died. When the plot was uncovered, the two slaves were tried (all three justices and the prosecutor were Harvard alumni), and executed. She burned at the stake and he hung at Gallows Lot, on what is now Avon Hill, in Cambridge. Mark’s body was then moved to a spot along a Charlestown (now Somerville) thoroughfare. And 20 years later, in Paul Revere’s own account of his famous midnight ride, he mentions passing “Charlestown Neck, and got nearly opposite where Mark was hung in chains.”

Perkins says: either the spot was by then still unmarked or “the bones of Mark and Phillips are still there.”

‘93, with Eliot in a new lead role there, was commissioned to design many elements of the multi park system. Everywhere across the Fells is evidence of these concerted—and continuing—efforts to protect and enjoy the land. On the tree line, Kittredge highlights the threats of invasive plants, the dire need for trees in society, and the problem of mountain bikers gouging “rogue trails” that destroy the forest floor. Walkers snap photos and scribble notes about leaf and branch configurations. Kids skip about, finding pinecones. Parents carrying babies, and elders with walking sticks, take the trail more slowly, talking together. “It’s nice to connect people with trees, with the natural history here,” says Earthwise Aware president O’Neill, a regular on Kittredge’s walks. “There are more than 60,000 species of trees in the world, a 1,000 native in the United States. You cannot know them all. It’s very humbling. But, you are going to learn something new each time you go out.”

Kittredge has researched plant life in the Fells, co-authoring a nine-year study of changes in vascular fauna, and is currently conducting work on mosses and lichen. His hikes help people “value the forest for more than just recreation,” he says, making up for the “lack of nature education in our school systems.” He stops, for example, to explain a talus slope, and how the zone’s rich topsoil has long nourished a sugar maple-oak-hickory forest. “And you see that?” He points off the trail to a hickory tree. At 80 feet and 30 inches dbh (diameter at breast height), “it’s the largest tree of its kind in the Fells. It’s huge. And it’s probably not long for this world,” he adds, as walkers look on, wide-eyed. Then he smiles. “But its progeny are all over these woods.”

As sisters who grew up in Belmont, we have a passion for the unique communities we serve, and the neighbors we know. With parents in real estate, we have lived the commitment required to serve clients with our heart and soul. We welcome every client like a member of our family, and treat each one with equal respect and care.
Comedor
A homey Chilean-American restaurant in Newton
by NELL PORTER BROWN

Comedor, which means "dining room" in Spanish, is the latest addition to Newton’s culinary scene. It’s owned by Jakob Couto and Fernanda White, a couple known for their love of food and cooking. They met at Boston University, where they both studied culinary arts, and their shared passion for food has led them to open their own restaurant. The restaurant is open for dinner, and the menu is designed to reflect their Chilean background, but it also incorporates other culinary influences, such as Greek and Middle Eastern. The couple is known for their flexibility and creativity, and they encourage their staff to take risks in the kitchen. The result is a menu that features dishes that are not only delicious but also beautifully presented. The space itself is warm and inviting, with high arched windows and a brick wall that creates a cozy atmosphere. The open kitchen is the heart of the restaurant, and diners can watch as the dishes are prepared. The cocktails and sangrias are also a highlight, with a range of options to choose from. Whether you’re looking for a casual dinner or a more formal experience, Comedor is the perfect choice for anyone who loves good food and a warm, friendly atmosphere.
FALLING FOR ART: Creative Classes in Cambridge and Boston

School’s back in session for students—but those of us with diplomas can learn new things, too, thanks to autumn classes, lectures, and workshops at cultural hubs in Harvard Square and beyond. Here’s where to brush up on ballet, practice poetry, or even design your very own Greek animal-head mug.

Stuck in a recipe rut? Visit the Cambridge Center for Adult Education to cook staples from the American South, the Caribbean, and Africa in a six-week, three-hour Sunday night class. “Oldways: A Taste of African Heritage” focuses on spices and herbs, leafy greens, whole grains, beans, tubers, fruits, and vegetables. Cook, eat, and take home recipes from Roxbury-based chef Samantha Anson. www.ccae.org

Or bring smaller chefs to the Boston Public Market to cook alongside vendors at the family-friendly, hour-long Saturday morning Kids in the Kitchen series, each with a theme that spotlights local products. Make chocolate éclairs using ingredients from Somerville’s Taza Chocolate, or join farmers from Phillipston’s Red Apple Farm to bake apple bread pudding. Classes are geared toward “toques” ages 6-12. www.bostonpublicmarket.org

Speaking of novices: Brush up on ballet at the José Mateo Ballet Theatre, which holds 10-week, 90-minute introductory fall sessions for adults—no experience required. If you’re confident, drop into 90-minute classes designed for dancers who have mastered the basics and want to sharpen their skills. www.ballettheatre.org

Or leave dancing to the professionals and visit the Boston Ballet for Genius at Play, a celebration of choreographer Jerome Robbins, staged at the Boston Opera House. The performance highlights three Robbins works: Interplay, set to jazz; Fancy Free, a collaboration with composer Leonard Bernstein set in 1940s New York; and Glass Pieces, a tribute to urban life scored by Philip Glass. The company joins the audience for a lecture on September 7. www.bostonballet.org

If you long to adopt a pet but worry about maintenance, consider Plan B: form and decorate ceramic vessels in the style of ancient Greek animal-head mugs, guided by Harvard Ceramic Studio’s Kathy King. Tuesday and Saturday workshops dovetail with the Harvard Art Museums’ exhibition “Animal-Shaped Vessels from the Ancient World: Feasting with Gods, Heroes, and Kings.” www.harvardartmuseums.org

For a more laid-back experience, visit the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum’s Bertucci Education Studio, which hosts drop-in art-making activities every Saturday throughout the fall, inspired by current exhibits. The workshops are family-friendly and free with museum admission. www.gardnermuseum.org

The Museum of Fine Arts launches a collaboration with advocacy group Mass Poetry this season. Notable poets guide guests through writing exercises during free drop-in classes on Wednesday evenings through the fall. www.mfa.org

Or find your voice (literally) at the New School of Music. Their weekly, audition-free group vocal classes focus on classical and folk songs. They’re designed to help beginners learn basics such as breath. www.newschoolofmusic.org

Meanwhile, Cambridge comedy studio ImprovBoston—known for its interactive shows—hosts free, introductory workshops for aspiring comics on Saturday afternoons throughout the fall, led by the theater’s improvisers. No experience is required, but as with any new class, a sense of humor always helps. www.improvboston.com

~ KARA BASKIN