Dedicated to being the collective conscience of Urban Renewal and Eminent Domain in Boston

VOLUME 16 No.4
James Campano, Editor/Publisher • Email: jcampano@worldnet.att.net • (617) 628-2479

DECEMBER 2000

The West Ender

The Controversy Continues

Richie Nedd’s Letter

To the Editor:
My name is Richie Nedd. I am a black man and a former West Ender.

After reading the story about Jim Campano in the Wall Street Journal, I was totally offended by Father Groden’s statements that West Enders were racists.

As a carpenter by trade, I was the only black man on the job at West End Place. I was hired after Jim Campano brought me to the developer’s attention that as a black man and a former West Ender, I should be working on the job.

I was let go after only three weeks on the job, leaving an absence of Afro-Americans on the project at West End Place.

From my view as a black man, the only racists associated with West End Place were the developers.

-Richie Nedd

The West Ender then received this letter from Bob Kuehn:

Dear Editors:
In your last edition, you published a letter from Mr. Richie Nedd stating that he was the only minority tradesman employed during the construction of West End Place, and he was laid off after only a brief period.

I do not know the details of Mr. Nedd’s particular circumstances. However, I do know that his statement about minority employment is incorrect. As documented in reports to the Boston Employment Commission, West End Place exceeded goals during construction as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>72,359</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>38,382</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>4,407</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203,192</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, West End Place entered into subcontracts with minority-owned companies totaling over $1.3 million with women-owned firms in the amount of about $200,000. Thank you for the opportunity to correct the record.

Sincerely
Robert H. Kuehn, Jr.
RHK/dmp

Richie’s Answer

I called Richie, and he said he was only talking about the carpenters and reiterated his statement that there were no black carpenters on the job.

When I called Bob Kuehn about the carpenters, he said he was sure there were a lot of minority carpenters on the job but separate figures for carpenters were not available. I asked why Richie was let go after three weeks and not rehired. Bob said he did not know.

I also asked Bob if they had a list of former West Enders who had been hired at West End Place fulfilling the requirement that West Enders be given preferences on jobs at West End Place. He said he was sure they had some, but hiring figures were not available for former West Enders.

*Ed. Note - Did we get a fair deal on the hiring at West End Place? I leave it up to you, our readers.
** Ed. Note - I suggest reading the following letter on the right.

Memories of liberal hypocrisy

While reading your article about Jim Campano’s career, I was reminded of an incident that occurred while I was a young teenager growing up in the West End. Hank Shnay, the originator of ‘Slush,’ and a West End legend, would frequently pack a number of us in the back of his Slush Van and take us on an adventure out to the suburbs - where we could go for a swim and maybe raise a little hell.

On this particular Sunday, we found ourselves at Walden Pond. It was a beautiful day for a swim. We were a typical West End gang made up of many different nationalities, with just one thing on our collective mind - to jump into the pond and cool off.

The pond was crowded that day and everyone there seemed to be having a great time. That was until we jumped into the water. What happened then was quite astonishing. Everyone near us left the water to head for dry land and just gaped at us as though we were from Mars.

I often recall this incident because it illustrates the hypocrisy of the liberals. Remember, this incident took place at a bastion of liberal thinking - Concord, MA - and at a liberal shrine - Walden Pond.

So don’t ever allow any of those lime- stone liberals to call West Enders racists because we foolishly trusted them. We know where the true racists are, don’t we?

-Arnold Ventresca

If you haven’t renewed your subscription to The West Ender, now’s the time -$10 Per Year

The West Ender

P. O. BOX 413
SOMERVILLE, MA 02144
(617) 628-2479
A Compliment and a Correction

Dear Mr. Campano:
I was overcome by the full page, highly professional treatment which you devoted to the article I sent you about Hayes Gordon.

There was, however, one glaring error which I hope you might consider rectifying in a future issue.

The five drawings I sent you were of four young campers ages 8-10 and one of Hayes Gordon at age 17. The three shown with the article were of a few of the youngsters and mistakenly referred to in a box at the bottom of the article as “Some sketches of Hayes Gordon at 17, done by Fred Press when the two attended a performing arts camp together.” Unfortunately the one drawing portraying Hayes Gordon was not shown.

Enclosed is a duplicate - notice his name lettered at the lower left corner as it was on the one previously sent. He and I were both seventeen then and were counselors at a camp for talented 8-10 year old campers and not a camp for the performing arts.

At the right side of the page the first line of the paragraph beginning “The event that led to -” and here an important element is missing. This is how it should have read with the missing part underlined.

“The event that led to the discovery of all of this is in itself of interest. In 1938 a wealthy philanthropist by the name of Louis Agassiz Shaw who had an estate in Ipswich on the north shore of Massachusetts made the rounds of the Community Centers, etc., etc.

Sorry for the confusion for which I am probably responsible.

With much thanks,

Respectfully,

Fred Press
The Taking

Forty years ago Boston’s West End was destroyed in the name of progress. Today the people who lost their homes live in a ‘neighborhood of the mind’ and keep the past alive by telling stories.

By Andrew Weiner

Jim Campano stands in the Davis Square subway station doing what he’s done each morning for the past 15 years: selling newspapers and telling stories. In a weathered barn jacket, Campano almost blends into the brick wall behind him. His dark snap-brim cap is pulled down nearly to his glasses, and his regular customers give him a wink or a grin as they collect their papers. His voice is low but lively when he talks about growing up in the West End, the Boston neighborhood that was wholly demolished 40 years ago during the heyday of urban renewal. (Its boundaries were Cambridge Street, Storrow Drive, Billerica Street, and what is now New Chardon Street—it’s now the site of the IF YOU LIVED HERE, YOU’D BE HOME NOW sign.) He hopsscotchers quickly between stories describing the sights and smells of the old neighborhood, the corner where he used to hang out, the characters who used to pass by. Occasionally he pauses and turns wistful, caught up in remembering a time and place that are now long gone.

So it comes as a surprise this morning when Campano starts telling the sabotage stories. There’s the one about the time he and his buddies tried to topple concrete slabs onto a wrecker’s crane. Or the time they poured plaster in its gas tank. His favorite, though, is the time he hit a crane with a Molotov cocktail. He sweeps his arm in the air, his dark snap-brim cast on SCAT, his firebomb made when it ignited. Flashing a grin, he asks slyly: “Can still be a radical, right?”

In a city that trades heavily on its own past, the story of the West End is seldom told except by those who once lived there. The official account is that the old neighborhood just got in the way. Tens upon hundreds of run-down tenements were sitting on a patch of prime real estate, and the unfortunate consequence was that some people had to lose their homes. Besides, that was all a long time ago, long enough that people should have gotten over it by now. But ask any former West Ender and you’ll learn that some people don’t find it so easy. They tell their stories to each other whenever they’re at pastry shops and drop-in centers, at reunions and get-togethers. Many of those who’ve moved away communicate through The West Ender, the quarterly newsletter that Campano has edited for the past 15 years (A companion TV show is broadcast on SCAT, Somerville’s community-access channel).

Today the West End exists only as what Campano calls a “neighborhood of the mind.” The long-demolished street corners and tenement blocks have been kept alive through the concerted efforts of old West Enders to keep telling their stories. You could say that the people who grew up there continue to live in the past—a vital, colorful, necessary past. Heaps of rubble and wreckage have been painstakingly reconstructed into a virtual neighborhood, a community of memory that transcends both history and geography. If you lived there, you’d be home now.

West Enders often say things like, “It was a whole other world back then.” Though this is true of any neighborhood, the West End really was a different world—all the way up to its demise. The West End was a classic immigrant neighborhood on the model of New York’s Lower East Side: a labyrinth of narrow streets lined with densely packed rows of five- and six-story walk-ups. These tenements were inhabited initially by Irish immigrants, then successively by Italians, Jews, Greeks, Poles, Russians, and Albanians. Whereas Boston’s other neighborhoods steadily transformed themselves into ethnic enclaves, the West End featured unparalleled diversity among its 20,000 inhabitants.

Frank Lavine grew up there. The son of Jewish Lithuanians, he was able to spend the first six years of his life speaking nothing but Yiddish. “My family lived in a little shetl,” he says. However, tolerance in the community made it possible to straddle the Old and New Worlds, maintaining traditions while learning respect for other cultures. “People talked about the melting pot, but we lived there,” he says.

Jim Campano agrees. “I don’t want to make it sound like heaven, but we all did get along,” he says. “If I could figure out what it was, I’d bottle it and sell it.”

Looking at old photographs of the neighborhood, it’s not hard to understand why West Enders are so nostalgic. Kids in knickers and vests play games like Kick the Wicket and Buck-Buck; hunchbacked peddlers hawk ice from pushcarts; old women in black dresses lean out their windows to chat while a hurdy-gurdy serenades them from below.

Such scenes were only the backdrop for the drama of a remarkably rich and public street life. The players, Campano says, included characters like Doc Seganky, a dentist who ran a numbers game in his spare time. Back issues of the West End are filled with stories about Tabashnik, an itinerant kook who played musical instruments picked from the trash, and whose voice was so sweet that local synagogues would ask him to sing during holiday services.

What you can’t see in the photos, though, is the close network of informal ties that held the neighborhood together. Everybody knew everybody else. Almost everyone belonged to a fraternal association or a storefront club. The West Ender House, one of the largest of these and a forerunner of the Boys’ Clubs, claimed more than 600 members at its peak.

The West End, it seems, was not just a neighborhood but a way of life. In fact, the sociologist Herbert Gans held up the West End as a model of cohesive community in his 1962 book The Urban Villagers. For those too young to have known such a place, the stories inspire a kind of imaginary nostalgia for an impossibly enviable past. But for those who lived there, it’s still hard and painful to believe that it’s gone. Asked to describe his memories of the West End, former resident Sam London hesitates and declines. “It was so different, it’s unreal,” he mutters ruefully.

If the West End belonged to a different Boston, so too does the story of its demolition, an event former residents would later call “The Taking.” It was a time, in the decade following World War II, when the city’s center was stagnating as suburbanization gained momentum. Declining population necessitated tax hikes, and the businesses that hadn’t left the city were desperate to lure middle-income families back downtown.

The early 1950s were also the glory days of urban renewal. In practice, such projects were little different from what had earlier been called slum clearance. But city planners at agencies like the Boston Redevelopment Authority used a new vocabulary of modernity, technology and progress. They had the example of recent projects in Chicago and Philadelphia, and the promise of funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

So it was that the residents of the West End found themselves standing between a cash-strapped city and a potential windfall. With $11 million in federal funds at stake, who was going to say that the run-down tenements of the West End weren’t a slum? Not Mayor John Hynes, who said at the time, “Our problem with urban renewal is that it doesn’t move fast enough.” Not the banker who described the neighborhood as a “cancer,” called for a “Municipal hysterectomy,” and claimed, “there’s only one way to go down.”

The city decided to replace the neighborhood with a series of upscale apartment towers. After the project’s top bidder pulled out, the contract was awarded to Jerome Rappaport, who, it turns out, had served on THE TAKING, Page 10
Obituaries

Isabel C. Arria, 96
Candy Packer

Born in Medford, Mrs. Arria was a Medford resident for many years and formerly of Boston's West End. She worked for many years as a candy packer at Schrafft's candy in Charlestown. She also worked as a sales clerk for Woolworth's in Boston.

She was the wife of the late Concetto Arria. She is survived by four sons: Salvatore F. Arria of Winchester, Santo P. Arria of Clinton, Thomas P. Arria of Malden, and Anthony J. Arria of Melrose; two daughters, Pauline Bottari and Marie E. Arria, both of Medford; 23 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren.

Interment was in the Oak Grove Cemetery in Medford.

Benedetta, “Betty” (LoBlundo) Napoli, 80

Benedetta "Betty" (LoBlundo) Napoli, a longtime Medford resident passed away at the Shrewsbury Nursing Home in Shrewsbury. She was 80 years old.

Mrs. Napoli was born in Boston, the daughter of the late Liborio and Maria Cervera of Revere. Mrs. Napoli was married to the late Frank S. Napoli and the mother of Marie E. Richard of Princeton, Frank Joseph Napoli of New York City, NY, and Linda Ann Cervera of Revere. Mrs. Napoli was the grandmother of Cheryl Robillard, Sheila Loan, David Cervera and Steven Cervera Jr.

She was the sister of Angie Venezia of Woburn, Anna Cogswell of Florida, Frances LoBlundo of Somerville and the late John LoBlundo and Freddy LoBlundo.

Mrs. Napoli was the great-grandmother of Katie.

Stephen J. Sansone, 86,
local restaurant owner

Stephen J. Sansone of Boston and Lexington, a local restaurateur, died on September 19 in the Lawrence memorial Hospital in Medford after a lengthy illness.

Born in Boston, Mrs. Arria was a Medford resident for many years and formerly of Boston's West End. She worked for many years as a candy packer at Schrafft's candy in Charlestown. She also worked as a sales clerk for Woolworth's in Boston.

She was the wife of the late Concetto Arria. She is survived by four sons: Salvatore F. Arria of Winchester, Santo P. Arria of Clinton, Thomas P. Arria of Malden, and Anthony J. Arria of Melrose; two daughters, Pauline Bottari and Marie E. Arria, both of Medford; 23 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren.

Interment was in the Oak Grove Cemetery in Medford.

Alexander A. Levine, 83

Alexander A. Levine, 83, of Atlanta and formerly a longtime resident of Boston passed away March of this year in Atlanta. Mr. Levine grew up on Beacon Hill and retired at age 77 after 30 years of service from Jordan Marsh. He was a member of both the West End House and the Hilltop Club. He is survived by his wife, Sylvia Werber-Levine; daughter and son-in-law, Gail and Lawrence Reid; grandsons, Jay Evan Reid, Scott Marshall Reid, all of Atlanta; and brothers, Charles Levine of San Francisco, Robert Levine of Boston.

In Memory Of

Milton (Mike) Sarver from Len and Sadi Sarver

Joseph Salamone from Frank V. Miscioci

Isabel C. Arria from Sam Arria

Theresa Russo, 89; Active in school reform and tennis, educator

Trained as a social worker, Mrs. Russo participated in the settlement house movement working at the North End Union and various locations in Eastern Mass. Later, she found a new career in education. As president of the Boston Latin School PTA 1960-61, she campaigned actively for educational improvements, bringing problems directly to the attention of then-Mayor John Collins.

At the time she was teaching learning-disabled children at the Hosmer School in Watertown, a post she held for over 20 years.

In 1972, she made an independent, comparative study on learning-disabled children in British primary schools. Until 1997, she continued to volunteer to teach reading in elementary schools.

A resident of Beacon Hill for sixty-four years before moving to Gulfstream, FL, Mrs. Russo was the founder of the Beacon Hill Tennis Club in 1967 and ran its program for many years.

Born in Boston, she was the daughter of the Mass. Spa restaurant owner Carmine Minichello. She graduated with a B.S. in Education Psychology from Boston University in 1933 and received an M.S. in Education from Lesley college in 1960.

She was a member of the Mass. Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. She was also a member of the League of Women Voters, the Boy Scouts Auxiliary, Committee (Old South Church), Friends of the Public Garden, Mass. Committee to Further Outdoor Recreation, and the New England Forestry Association.

She leaves a son, J. Edward of Ithaca, NY; a son John Paul, of Coconut Grove, FL; and two grandchildren, Joseph and Silviana of Ithaca, NY.
Early memories remain
To The West Ender:
I look forward to every issue of this delightful paper. I was born at 53 Barton St. although our family moved to Malden when I was five years old. I still have some memories of the West End. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Sarah Kravitz
P. S. Hi, Dominic Longo. Thank you for that very nice tribute to my beloved husband, Max (Star) Kravitz. He was a great guy and my son (Jerry) and I miss him very much. If he were alive, he would enjoy reading The West Ender. Kind regards and good health to you and your family.

Many thanks
Many thanks for The West Ender - it brings back many old and fond memories. Keep Up the good work.
-Phil Risan

Paper takes them back
We look forward to The West End, we feel we are back home when reading, and seeing pictures of our long time friends. Thank you for the memories that will always remain with us. Keep up the spirit of the West End. Keep up the good work.
-Ralph & Mary Mele

So True
Jim;
Keep up the good work. Enclosed is my yearly dues in memory of my family and friends that are deceased.
Everything I read in the paper is so true. Believe it or not, it takes me right back there even after 49 years.
God Bless,
Mary Pietrafitta

Say hello for me
Hi Jimbo:
Sorry it has taken me so long to write, say hello to Richie Terranova and the others for me. Also say hello to Bobby Freccero, Billy Sarcia, Irene Capone, Angela Lupe, Nancy Hood and others for me.
Thanks,
Charlie Russo

Remembering Joe Salamone
I would like to make mention of former West End and Ice and Oil Man of the West End Joseph Salamone who passed away this summer on June 18th
-Frank Miscioscia

Thanks a million
Dear Mr. Campano:
Thanks a million for all the years you have been sending The West Ender. I look forward to receiving your paper in the future.
Very Sincerely,
Anna Mae Smith

Coffee and memories
Keep the paper coming! Everything stops when my paper comes, I sit with my cup of coffee and reminisce!
-Irene Collyer

Always alive in our hearts
Hi Jim;
As old West Enders, June and I really enjoy the paper; through it we're in touch with lots of old friends. And some have gotten in touch with us. I (Sandy) lived at 99 Green St. and June lived at 80 Staniford St. I went to the Blacky and June went to St. Joe's. Many people thought we were young and complete opposites of each other to marry. June's mother worked at Godspeed's on Causeway St. for years.
Anyway we fooled a lot of people because we recently celebrated our 52nd wedding anniversary and intend to celebrate many more! Keep up the good work, Jim, it's great reading about times gone by, but will always be alive in our hearts.
-June and Sandy Catania

Remembering and maturing
Recently I received a copy of The West Ender from a former west Ender, Bill DiCicco. Bill's dad, Paul, was Godfather for my brother and I. In our youth, our Sunday afternoon ritual was a visit to Allen Street to see the DiCicco family and my maternal grandparents (Cataldo). How well I remember the area - and the five-floor walk-ups. A thrilling neighborhood of many ethnic backgrounds living cohesively was annihilated. The newspaper is a wonderful way for people to reunite as well as remembering the past as we mature gracefully.
-Flora (Eramo) Bell

People Looking For People
If anybody has any information on the following people, please get in touch with The West Ender.

617-628-2479; P.O. Box 413, Somerville, MA 02144
Anthony Nastasi-Chambers St.
Norm Swanston-Worked for the Peabody House
Ruth Potzko-Brighton St.

Questions about broken promises
To The West End;
What has happened? Is there a West End Museum in our future? I have not heard or read of any progress in what I believed to be the goal of The West Ender.
Wasn't there a promise made by the Mayor of Boston to donate a room in the Lowell apartments to the West End Museum?
I'm confused. The present trend is that there will be fewer and fewer readers and less and less people who care about The West End Museum.
I hope that good news is forthcoming on the West End Museum and that those of us West Enders remaining will live to see it become a reality.
-Salvatore Ferraguto

Ed. Note—The Mayor of Boston, Lowell Sq. Assc., and Maloney Properties keeps refusing to honor the land disposition agreement that says we should have the museum and office spaces.

Remembering the glory days
Dear Jim Campano;
Enclosed is my change of address from Florida back to the greater Boston area. Thank you for the most ideal way that a person has to keep their memories alive of all the glorious years when they were growing up.
I love whatever items carry from time to time reminding me of that time in my life, even if it's getting scarcer and scarcer of those glorious days. One of those items I am referring to is the letter you printed last month from Frances Cohen Paone, one of the mainstays of that great Cohen Family she mentions in her letter. I, of course, knew them all (the Cohens) and I'm sorry to hear they are shrinking, just as my family has also. My brothers and sisters are all gone, but I'm sure that any of the West Enders still around know some of my family -like my brother "Jack Groppman" who was, I'm sure, a great influence in helping some of the kids growing up. In my case, I hope some of the guys around still remember me. If you have a picture in your group of remembrances of the W.E.H. during WWII honoring those in the service with the American Flag being raised by a group W.E.H. servicemen in uniform, I was the guy in the Navy uniform showing the World that we were spread in all sections of the U.S. war effort.
Please keep up the good work and thank you for your previous issues which I always enjoyed -Would like to hear from any of my friends still around.
-David (Doodle) Groppman
25 Pinewood Rd., Canton, Ma. 02021
Tel: 781-821-8896

Letters
Write to us at: The West Ender, P.O. box 413, Somerville, MA 02144

December 2000 THE WEST ENDER Page 5
A Night to Remember

On September 23, 40 years after first exchanging wedding vows, Frank and Jean Privitera decided to celebrate their successful and happy union.

It was a gala fit to honor their forty years of wedded bliss.

Over 700 guests were in attendance at the Park Plaza, all of them decked out in tuxedos and gowns. It was a study in elegance - from the elaborate ice sculptures to the delicious hors d’oeuvres.

Frank and Jean greeted their guests, which included many prominent people from all walks of life: from politicians and business leaders to judges and many West Enders.

As the guests feasted on shrimp, oysters, and an array of assorted delights, the walls slowly slid open to reveal an elegantly decorated Grand Ballroom. It was gorgeously adorned with floral displays and decorative balloons.

The guests settled into the ballroom for an evening of fine dining and great entertainment. Dinner consisted of salad, soup, pasta, filet mignon, white and red wine, and a fine array of sweets. As the diners ate, they were treated to performers singing classical opera.

After the guests had stuffed themselves sufficiently, the entertainment began. First the dynamic Tony Orlando sang and danced his heart out, enchanting and energizing everyone in the audience. Then Don Rickles came out and insulted everyone - including Frank Privitera, who took it all in stride.

The men received a miniature crystal Big Ben clock and a silver ice bucket for the ladies. When all the entertainment and celebrating was over, a massive sweet table appeared and the partygoers who stayed had a late night snack or took the sweets home with them.

West Enders in attendance included: Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Mignosa, Phil and Sandy Ternullo, Charlie Cherlemi, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Russo, Tillie and Sal Purpua, Mary Curro, Carlo and Jennie Caccia, Jimmy Logrippo, Frank and Margaret Spinale, Peter Athanas, Vinny Loguidice, Jimmy Nutile, Josephine Silvestro, Joe and Dell D’Ambrosio, Dominic Saia, Peter Privitera, Dom Spinale, Al Raso, Ralph Silvestro, Dickie Spinale, Peter Limone, Lou Caccia and Peter Privitera.
THEIR 40th ANNIVERSARY

Over 700 guests at Park Plaza Gala Event

West Enders at the shrimp table during the reception: (l to r) Jimmy Campano, Charlie Cherlemi, and Phil Ternullo

West Enders together again: (l to r) Dominic Saia and Peter Privitera

Frank with his boyhood ‘Best Friend’ from Hale Street, ‘Dickie’ Spinale

Hale Street Girls with Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Russo (Green Street): (l to r) Tillie (Spinale) Purpua, Mary (Petrella) Curro, Jennie (Spinale) Caccia, Pauline and Joe Russo

Enjoying Cocktails and hors d’oeuvres before dinner (35 different kinds of hors d’oeuvres were served). Seated: Mrs. Charlie Cherlemi; Standing (l to r) Josephine (Spinale) Silvestro, Mrs. Margaret (DiMare) Spinale, Mrs. Jennie (Spinale) Caccia and Mrs. Mary (Petrella) Curro, all formerly from Hale St. in the West End

Some West Enders toast the honorees: (l to r) Lou Caccia, Ralph Silvestro, Carlo Caccia, Sal Purpua, Charlie Cherlemi, and Joe Russo.

Some of the old “West Enders” kid with Frank: (l to r) Publisher Jimmy Campano, Peter Athanas, Vinny “Inzie” Laguidice, Frank, Jimmy Nutile, and Jimmy Logrippo

Frank and Jean with boyhood chums Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Mignosa

Mixing with the stars after stellar performances: (l to r) Phillip, Jeannine, singer Tony Orlando, Frank, Jean and comedian Don Rickles.
English High School, Class of 1950, Celebrates Reunion

The Class of 1950 of English High School, Boston, the oldest public high school in America, contained 528 graduates. Since 1950, that class had never had a reunion. But thanks to an extremely dedicated Reunion Committee of nine members, which included a West Ender, Santo "Joe" Aurelio, who served as Chairman, 79% of those 528 graduates were accounted for in the last year and a half. The breakdown was 289 located, 127 deceased, and 112 missing.

Their reunion finally came to fruition on Thursday, September 28, 2000, when 217 persons attended the Golden Anniversary Reunion of the Class of 1950 at Lantana's in Randolph, Massachusetts. All attendees received a souvenir cup, a souvenir pen, a demographics sheet, and a complete list of the whereabouts of all 528 grads, plus a list of the names of the 112 missing grads. A fabulous time was truly had by all—and guess what? Many of the attendees want to have another reunion soon!

Rosalie L. Warren
100th Birthday Celebration
August 29, 2000

Longtime West End resident ROSALIE L. WARREN was honored at Suffolk University on the occasion of her 100th birthday. Rosalie was presented with a tote bag (above) commemorating the event. Rosalie has both a bachelor's and graduate degree from Suffolk.

West End Couple strikes success with Mystery Series

Former West Enders Dorothy and Sidney Rosen have written a mystery novel. The Rosens are the husband and wife team behind Belle Appleman, the spunky Jewish widow who is the heroine of their mystery series. The first in the Belle Appleman series, Death and Blintzes, met with high acclaim, and Death and Strudel reads with just as much historical flavor and suspense.

Sidney Rosen was born in Boston in 1916, and grew up in Boston's West End—the setting for Death and Strudel. Graduates of UMass Amherst and Mount Holyoke, the Rosens lived and worked in Boston before moving to Illinois, where Sidney has a professor at the University of Illinois since 1958.

The Rosens are a gregarious couple—their 1986 Death and Blintzes tour included an appearance on The Today Show, and National Public Radio in Boston is planning an interview.

Anyone wanting more information on the Rosen's novels can contact Allison Liefer at either (312) 751-7300 or (800) 248-7323.
Mercury Club Holds 11th Annual Reunion

MERCURY CLUB Then & Now


A good time was had by all

They came from near and far, they came from far and wide; from north and south; from east and west. They were fifty men whose affinity and consanguinity dated a half century and more. They were young and old, rich and poor, tall and short - but West Enders, all of them. They gathered as the Hilltop Steak House in Saugus, Mass., on the first Friday of last October. They reminisced of the “days of old,” of times gone by, and times that would never come again. You could hear the excitement in their voices and see the smiles on their happy faces.

Never would you find a happier group of men: they ate, they drank and they were merry. They displayed a camaraderie that surpassed that of best friends sharing a winning lottery ticket. It was a show of friendly spirit and good fellowship rarely seen in this competitive world.

When you’re having a good time, “time flies,” and so it was with them. If you listened closely, you could hear the nostalgic names of streets: Hale Street, Norman Street, Green Street, Leverett Street, Poplar Street, Chamber Street, Spring Street, Blossom Street, etc.

Further, you could hear nicknames and surnames: Spinale, Passanise, Privitera, LoGrippi, Caccia, Raso, D’Ambrosio, Purpua, DiMare, Scalise and so many more. You could hear exciting stories from yesteryear falling on willing and listening ears. From gleaming eyes, you knew the listener and the speaker were synchronized on the same wavelength.

Yet all good things come to an end, and so it was with these happy brothers of long ago. John Raso shouted, “Let’s do it again next year!” In unison, the voices of Joe D’Ambrosio, Charlie Romeo, and Billy Scalise, responded fervently in the affirmative.

And so, with tears in their eyes and love in their hearts, these many friends of yesteryear reluctantly went their separate ways until the next time.

-Submitted by Phillip Privitera

Dinner at the “Hilltop Steak House” during the Mercury Club Reunion (l to r): Phil Privitera, Joe D’Ambrosio, Frank Privitera, Lou Caccia, Sal Purpua, Augie Michaels

MERCURY CLUB 1941-42 Picture by Vincent J. Tringle (deceased)
THE TAKING

From Page 3

The taking.

Hyde Park's development committee. The new Charles River Park would be nothing like an urban village: fliers for prospective residents touted the availability of valet services and wine storage, and the advantages of privacy and in-town shopping.

Before long, the city had completed the findings it needed to condemn the West End and seize properties by eminent domain. Residents greeted news of the plan with disbelief. Even their representatives were dumbfounded. As Frank Levine recalls, local pol Joe Lee declared simply, "They wouldn't dare."

Lee was wrong. At the beginning, only a few West Enders trickled out of the neighborhood, but soon the 7000 remaining residents realized that they were alone in their dumbfounded. As Frank Levine recalls, local pol Joe Lee declared simply, "They wouldn't dare."

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Only half the former West Enders actually received relocation payments, which averaged just $69 per family. The new apartments were priced way out of reach, and the city-subsidized housing - in recently constructed projects - was deemed no replacement for the old neighborhood.

In 1992, the BRA reclaimed the parcel from the original developer and announced its intention to build a complex of low-and middle-income apartments. When Campano and other former West Enders were invited to participate in the planning, it appeared that the city might finally be awarding them some measure of redress.

They understood that displaced former residents would have a prominent place in the new development, and they secured space for a museum and new West End offices. But fair-housing law held that first dibs on space in the new West End place would go to minorities, meaning that West Enders were left with the higher-priced units.

Campano and the Old West End Housing Corporation claimed reverse discrimination and sued under a state statute, but lost. About two dozen West End took apartments, but many others felt they'd been sold out again. Hard feelings abounded. Campano used The West End to launch attacks against the developers and their partners in the Boston Archdiocese. In the fall-out, the plans for the museum and the newspaper offices were put on hold. Although attorneys have been working to effect compromise on the museum, it appears unlikely that The West End will exchange editorial freedom for office space. Regardless of what happens, though, Campano and the majority of his fellow West Enders seem resigned to disappointment. A museum would help them get the historical recognition they feel they deserve, but what they really want is for the old neighborhood to have never been taken in the first place. Nobody can give them that, but neither can anyone destroy the neighborhood they've rebuilt in their memories.

REPRINTED FROM THE BOSTON PHOENIX - DECEMBER 1, 2000

DONATIONS

The following people have given a donation to the West End in the last quarter

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Salvatore Gilbert  Joseph Toronto
Rose M. Fodale  Charles R. Fiore
Marie Walsh
THE WESTERN VIDEO NEWSLETTER: A recent show highlighting St. Joseph’s Church. Pictured (l to r) are Roy LaPointe, Jim Campano, Fr. Gabe, Ann Lazzaro, Vinny Raso, and Tom Simmons

FlashBack

West enders, all of them. Can you name them?

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CENTURY CLUB

The following West Enders have contributed $100.00 or more to our cause in 2000. We salute them! Now is the time to send your check in the amount of $100.00 if you are interested in becoming a member.

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