

Cary Lecture Series Committee
Report to Town Meeting
March 20, 2023

Madame Moderator,

Once more, it's my pleasant duty to report to Town Meeting on the Cary Lecture Series. As you may recall, the series is wholly supported by the Isaac Harris Cary Fund, set up by the Cary sisters in 1921. Each year we are able to offer four free lectures to the citizens of Lexington. The Committee thanks the fund trustees for their continued support of our efforts.

During the pandemic we offered remote lectures via Zoom, with the help of our partners at Cary Memorial Library. We began reconvening in person in March 2022 with a talk by the economists Angus Deaton and Anne Case. It was very well attended and, despite its gloomy subject ("Deaths of Despair"), joyful in tone. That was followed in May by a hands-on origami session with Michael LaFosse and Richard Alexander, also joyful.

We reconvened on September 10, 2022 with **Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg of Tufts University**, whose "**Inspiring Young People to Vote**" was scheduled early to help us do exactly that. We rarely schedule in September, and this lecture was sparsely attended. Those who were there, however, were most enthusiastic, and many were already active in this crucial effort to support our democracy.

Our second speaker, on December 10, was **Ekuah Holmes**, a Roxbury-based artist and children's book illustrator who's had a recent show at the MFA. Her topic was "Stories, Activism and Dreams" She works mainly in collage, and the evening was downright exuberant, with many questions and comments after the talk. I believe we sold out of all her books, a first!

As of tonight you will have heard our third speaker, Meghna Chakrabarti, on March 18. I'm sure you all recognized her from WBUR'S "On Point". Her subject, "The Art of Conversation", was literally illustrated in conversation with Maggie Pax, my colleague on the committee and a skilled and suave interlocutor herself.

Please watch for the advertising for our fourth and final lecturer of the year on April 22. Scheduling complications prevented our putting him on the initial flyer that you all get around Labor Day.

He's **Dr. Kevin Simon**, Chief Behavioral Health Officer, City of Boston, and he'll be speaking on "Safeguarding the Mental and Behavioral Health of a City". This is a subject of acute interest to us all, and I hope to see many of you there.

One of the effects of the pandemic has been to reduce physical presence at public meetings, as our own experience at Town Meeting testifies. But the difference between a Zoom presentation and the questions, hum and laughter of a live one is incalculable, and I think reflects on the topic of our last speaker, community and mental health. I implore you to support us and to return to the talks that have taken in place in Lexington for over 100 years in the building dedicated to the Cary Lectures and to Town Meeting as well. We can always return to Zoom when we need to, but we'd prefer that to be a default.

We're working on a fascinating list of speakers for next year, and we continue to cultivate our partnerships with other entities in town. We no longer demand tickets upon entry and have an ever-growing presence online. We ask you, though, to hold on to the trademark yellow flyers that arrive in the fall as a memory aid.

Our Committee still consists of our chairman, Kevin Oye, Monica Galizzi, Maggie Pax, and me.

We continue to work to improve our website, carylectureseries.org, and our electronic means of communication. We would like to thank the tireless staff and

volunteers at Lex Media for broadcasting lectures, bringing our educational and entertaining programs to a wider audience; the resourceful custodial staff and technicians at Cary Hall, especially Kyle Walsh and Vince LeRow; Laurie Lucibello at the Department of Public Facilities, Cathy Severance at the Town Manager's Office, and Karen Packard and her crew at Wales Copy Center. A special shout-out to Matt Schuman, Helen Lui and Koren Stenbridge at Cary Library, our long-standing partner.

We always welcome suggestions from the community for future speakers. We maintain a long list of possibilities and are glad to add to it. Please look out for our yellow tickets in the fall (they can also be printed from the website) and be sure to stay tuned. Most of all, please attend the lectures. They are always rewarding and fun.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Cary Lecture Committee,

Rita Goldberg

Pct. 2