

# OPINION

**EDITORIAL**

## Inspectional Services should know better

### Asbestos removal case an embarrassment

Clearly there was a major procedural oversight for Lynn's Inspectional Services Department (ISD) that it twice called in an unlicensed firm to remove asbestos from city schools.

It is important to point out that the air quality at Marshall Middle School and Lynn Woods Elementary School tested clean and so far as known did not affect schoolchildren, teachers, administrators and parents in and around those facilities.

ISD Director Michael Donovan on Monday admitted his department was unaware the company, Lynnfield-based AEI Environmental LLC, was not licensed to do that work. AEI was called in twice last fall; first, to remove asbestos insulation from pipes at Marshall Middle School and later to remove asbestos from the base of a boiler being removed from Lynn Woods School.

AEI is now under indictment on myriad state environmental and conspiracy charges for its alleged illegal handling and storage of asbestos, hundreds of bags of which were found by authorities at a self-storage facility in Lynnfield.

Donovan and School Superintendent Catherine Latham said they have been cooperating fully with the state investigation since last September, upon being informed by the state Department of Environmental Protection that AEI was unlicensed to perform the work it did in Lynn.

Donovan said AEI was brought in when an inspector in Lynn's ISD contacted AEI principal David Harder Jr., whom, Donovan said, had formerly done work for the city with a licensed company. Donovan said he was unaware Harder was now working for his own, unlicensed company.

Be that as it may, Donovan was asked if it was an oversight by his department not to check if AEI was licensed and qualified. All Donovan told the Item was, "It's done now."

Indeed it is — and the buck stops with Donovan, as it is a major embarrassment that the city's Inspectional Services Department, one of the primary functions of which is to ensure permits are in place and work is done in compliance with the law, would unknowingly and/or unwittingly hire an unlicensed and unqualified company to perform such sensitive work.

When it comes to bringing in contractors to do jobs directly tied to public health, criteria should not be about "who you know;" it should focus instead on "who is qualified."



The buck stops with Donovan on this one.

## Mary Baker Eddy's life and legacy

**GUEST COMMENTARY /**  
**BRAD HUGHES**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The following guest commentary was submitted by Lynn resident Brad Hughes to celebrate the legacy of Mary Baker Eddy during Women's History Month.*

One hundred years ago when she died on Dec. 3, 1910 at age 89, Mary Baker Eddy was a household name. Hundreds of tributes appeared in newspapers around the world, including The Boston Globe, which wrote, "She did wonderful and extraordinary work in the world and there is no doubt that she was a powerful influence for good."

Ironically, Mary Baker Eddy's rise to historical worldwide significance started with a fall in Lynn. On a bitterly cold Thursday evening, Feb. 1, 1866, she was walking with friends to a temperance meeting at the Linwood Lodge of Good Templars. She had a severe fall on the ice at the corner of Oxford and Market and was taken up in critical condition into the nearby Bubier home for the night. A homeopathic surgeon came to her assistance. The Lynn Reporter carried a short item about her condition in its Feb. 3, 1866 edition. By that Sunday friends caring for her at home did not expect her to survive one more day and summoned her minister. Having no more faith in material remedies to help her, she asked to be left alone with her Bible to read and pray. As she read one of Jesus' healings from the Gospels she felt a powerful closeness with God that changed her thinking and consciousness. This mental change had immediate effects on her body and she was able to get up and move freely again without pain.

Looking back on this recovery, she referred to this incident as the discovery of Christian Science because she experienced a divine law at work that brought her freedom. At this time she could not explain how the healing took place. Growing more confident with every setback that she overcame, by the latter part of 1866 she came to understand what she had discovered.

She discovered a science that brought health, harmony and spiritual understanding to human lives. It healed her and enabled her to heal others through what she was learning from new insights into the Bible. She wrote, "The Bible contains the recipe for all healing." She gave the name Christian Science to what she understood as this divine principle and law of good that Christ Jesus practiced and demonstrated centuries ago.

Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross and heroine on the Civil War battlefield, said that "Mrs. Eddy should have the respect, admiration and love of the whole nation, for she is its greatest woman." Miss Barton again commenting on Christian Science in the New York American said, "It is doing more in the world today and will continue to as more people become cognizant of the beauty of its teachings, than any other one influence for good." Suffragist Susan B. Anthony took a class on Christian Science but did not pursue it further; however, she valued the teachings and later publicly wrote in support of Eddy.

Even Mark Twain, a critic of Christian Science, wrote at one point in his book, "When we do not know a person — and also when we do — we have to judge the size and nature of his achievements as compared with the achievements of others in his special line of business — there is no other way. Measured by this standard, it is thirteen hundred years since the world has produced anyone who could reach up to Mrs. Eddy's waist belt." He also commented, "In several ways she is the most interesting woman that ever lived and the most extraordinary."

In 1907 *Human Life* magazine proclaimed Eddy "the most famous, interesting and powerful woman in America, if not the world today." In 1992 her main work *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* was named "one of 75 books by women whose words have changed the world" by the Women's National Book Association. In 1995 Eddy was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame for founding a "lasting American-based religion." Her legacy and ideas continue to make a profound mark today but her name and story have receded in public recognition.

Lynn's legacy as the "City of Firsts" added new footnotes to its history as



Mary Baker Eddy, courtesy of The Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston.

a result of the ground-breaking accomplishments by Mary Baker Eddy when she lived in Lynn.

The beginnings of a new religion were born here as well as the first steps for forming a worldwide church. In Lynn, the first public address on Christian Science was delivered May 23, 1875 by Eddy at Concert Hall on Market Street: "Christ Healing the Sick." Also in 1875 she finished writing *Science and Health* from her attic room at 12 Broad St.

Philosopher Bronson Alcott wrote that her book had "the seal of inspiration." On June 6, 1875 the first Sunday services were held at Good Templars Hall at 30 Market St. And in 1879 a small group of her students met in her home and voted to organize a church. On Jan. 31, 1881 she founded and received a charter for her Massachusetts Metaphysical College. She was ordained Pastor of her church at her home in Lynn under the laws of Massachusetts on Nov. 9, 1881.

During these years she was learning more of Christian Science even as she was teaching others. She daily dug into the Bible for three years straight after her healing and wrote down her findings. Interestingly, for 20 years prior to her discovery she had "been trying to trace all physical effects to a mental cause." She researched and experimented with various medical and alternative systems of the day such as allopathy, water-cure, homeopathy and the use of placebos. Thus when her search for divine healing was finally achieved, then began her lifelong work to share it with humanity.

She made some mistakes along the way but learned from them all. Trying to share her discovery stirred up immense antagonism, resistance, scorn and brought upon her severe character defamation. It also brought results. People were healed and word spread beyond Lynn quickly. Still it was rough going all along the way. She taught that it was the divine Mind that heals and not the human mind. It was not faith healing. Neither was it mind over matter. Put simply it was divine Love that does the healing. On several occasions a number of headstrong students rebelled who wanted to dilute, mix and alter Christian Science practice with their own method. They received Eddy's patient compassion but also her tough love as well. Some venomously turned on her with the hope of misrepresenting her teaching and ruining her reputation. This gave rise to a number of sensational books and articles still in circulation today.

Initially Mrs. Eddy had hoped that all denominations would embrace her discovery because it was a law that anyone could use in their lives no matter what their religious inclinations or convictions were. That of course did not happen and thus began her efforts to protect this movement and begin steps toward organizing a church of her own. She maintained her membership in the Congregational church for 37 years up until 1875 when she finished writing her textbook.

She lived in Lynn from 1864 to 1866,

just briefly in 1868 and then from 1870 to 1882. Today her home at 12 Broad St. (her home from 1875-1882) is a historic stop on the Essex National Heritage Area trail. Owned by Longyear Museum, it is currently undergoing renovation, thanks in part to a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund.

A local branch of The First Church of Christ, Scientist is located on Lynn Shore Drive across from Red Rock Park. The Mary Baker Eddy Library in Boston is located at her church's international headquarters and has a captivating, historic exhibit on her life, accomplishments and spiritual journey. It has extensive displays, research, reference, archival resources and affidavits.

For research online, christian-science.com, marybakereddylibrary.org and spirituality.com are excellent resources.

The extent of Mrs. Eddy's philanthropic work and donations in later years was monumental in generosity but most of it was not known by the public. For example she provided a thousand pairs of shoes to needy children, contributed to earthquake victims in San Francisco and Sicily, several YMCAs, the Newton Hospital, other church denominations and a number of various groups. The Peace Flag from the 1907 Peace Congress in New York was given to Mary Baker Eddy in honor of her support of this and other peace movements.

Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy recently paid tribute to Mary Baker Eddy as a "daughter of Lynn" with the rededication of her monument (sculpted by Reno Pisano) at the corner of Oxford and Market. It is a timely reminder of a woman whose life was dedicated to God and in helping humanity find their innate freedom. She said that "The seeker of Truth shall find it." She also wrote in her book, "Citizens of the world, "accept the glorious liberty of the children of God" and be free! This is your divine right."

*(Following is a poem by Mary Baker Eddy written to the editor of the Lynn Item and originally published on July 7, 1877)*

**Wish and Item**

*I wish the heart that's hungry  
For better things in store,  
Would find within its portals  
An item on the floor.*

*That melancholy mortals  
Could count their mercies o'er,  
And ask of truth and wisdom  
One little item more.*

*That when a wrong is done us  
It stirs no thought of strife;  
But love become the substance,  
As item, of our life.*

*That if we've done to others  
Some good ne'er told before,  
When angels may repeat it  
T'will have an item more.*

*That every ragged urchin  
With bare feet soiled and sore,  
May find God's tender mercies  
An item at our door.*



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