

Lowell was born in 1855, near the State House—the epicenter of “the Hub of the Solar System,” as Oliver Wendell Holmes famously called the city. More than most, Lowell helped Boston live up to that claim, with his relentless research into the heavens. The astronomical symbol for Pluto, a P and L mashed together, is a tribute to him. And by laying out instructions for where to look for the celestial object he called “Planet X,” Lowell was like the owner of a shoveled-out parking spot, leaving a battered lawn chair as a space-saver, to mark his territory forever. How Boston is that?

Lowell was an unlikely astronomical pioneer. He grew up privileged, one of a brood that included Harvard’s future president, A. Lawrence Lowell, and the poet Amy Lowell (whom he called “Big Fat Baby”). He could have coasted, the way so many wealthy Americans did in the smug years that followed the Civil War. But three deep passions seized him, and helped him to achieve escape velocity—enough to leave Boston’s gravity forever.

The first of these was Japan. In 1883, after a brief period managing family investments, he set sail for what he called “the morning land,” in search of spiritual enlightenment. Americans had begun to appreciate Japanese design at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, so fresh and direct in contrast to the grandiloquent statements of the Gilded Age. A small wavelet of Bostonians traveled there, or even established residence, including William Sturgis Bigelow (who gave 40,000 Japanese artifacts to the MFA), Isabella Stewart Gardner, Edward Sylvester Morse, and Ernest Fenollosa. Lowell happily joined this expatriate tide, which fit perfectly his desire to declare independence from the Hub.

He lived in Japan for 10 years, and wrote prolifically about Shintoism and other aspects of a culture that he found un-Bostonian in every way—except for its ancestor worship. At the same time, Boston helped him immensely, by distributing his esoteric musings through well-trusted outlets like *The Atlantic*. His writings inspired other Japanophiles, and they helped Lowell gain the confidence to explore other worlds. These he was beginning to glimpse, by climbing Japanese mountains, where it was understood that spiritual understanding came more quickly. The Buddhists revere what they call “celestial” enlightenment. Typically, Lowell found it in his own way, by searching the skies for unusual objects.

In 1893, he began to devote intense study to the planet Mars, the second of his three obsessions. Learning that Mars would be approaching close to Earth the next year, he dropped everything and began to prepare. He purchased land on an elevated plateau near Flagstaff, Ariz., brought two large telescopes, and for the next 23 years devoted his attention to the place he named Mars Hill. It became a kind of transcendental-astronomical paradise for him, and he delivered philosophical musings, like, “To stand a mile and a half nearer the stars is not to stand immune.” Lowell’s principal thesis—that Mars contained a network of canals, and was likely inhabited—was more imaginative than scientific.

But despite Lowell’s failure to find signs of extraterrestrial life, his years of close observation yielded much valuable data, and helped people see our planetary neighbor in new ways. The science fiction industry was not slow to follow his lead, and tales of Martian invaders have never failed to sell. He built an important establishment in Arizona, the Lowell Observatory. And once again, he fell in love with an exotic land—this time, the Southwest, where he wandered happily, collecting plant specimens by day, and stars by night.

Lowell’s third passion took him even further afield. Earlier in life, as a young man recently graduated from Harvard, he had tired of Boston’s predictability, and written, with the studied weariness of the young, that he was considering “migrating to another planet or ceasing to exist.”

In 1905, he began an obsessive search for a new planet, beyond Neptune, the legendary “Planet X.” He predicted where it might be found, and even photographed it in 1915, although he was not aware that he had. He died a year later, but it would have delighted this otherworldly thinker to know that his research lived on and provided a road map to the sky-gazers who followed in his wake.

In 1930, when Pluto was finally pinpointed, there was universal excitement. Walt Disney named Mickey Mouse’s dog after the discovery. The element plutonium was also named after Pluto. There were now nine planets—a number that felt right. It seemed as if Lowell had found final vindication, after all those years chasing Japanese ghosts and Martian canals.

But year by year, as scientists got to know Pluto better, they liked it less, finding it smaller than expected, icy, and dubious in other ways, including its orbit and its relationship with neighboring objects. In 2006, 101 years after Lowell began his search for it, Pluto suffered the ultimate indignity when it was downgraded to a “dwarf planet.” The fleeting fly-by this Tuesday may help restore luster to the object formerly known as Planet X. But more than likely, we will have to look elsewhere for Lowell’s vindication.

Fortunately, it’s not too hard to find. In June, scientists began to get excited again about the possibility of life on Mars, and research is coming into the Martian subsoil. A different monument to Lowell exists right here, in Cambridge’s Mount Auburn Cemetery. He is not buried there, that would be too predictable (his actual grave is at Mars Hill, in Arizona). But a piece of petrified rock, left by his instruction, gives his grave’s real location, and testifies to the enduring individuality of a Bostonian who wanted to be present, but not too present. Percival Lowell always encountered the world on his own terms.

CONGRATULATING NEW HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL FOR ITS BRONZE MEDAL AWARD

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating New Haven High School on its Bronze Medal Award as a top Missouri High School from U.S. News and World Report.

This school’s administration, teachers, and students should be commended for all of their hard work throughout the past year and for their commitment to education.

I ask you to join me in recognizing New Haven High School for a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO STANLEY AND WILMA EMBREE

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Stanley

and Wilma Embree on the very special occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary on June 17, 2015.

This couple was married in North Carolina in 1945 and farmed in Adams County until the 1980’s. Stanley and Wilma now live in Atlantic, Iowa in Cass County. Stanley and Wilma’s lifelong commitment to each other and to their children and family truly embodies Iowa’s values. I congratulate this devoted couple on their 70 years together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

DISTINGUISHED OFFICER EDWARD ALFRED THOMAS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Houston Police Headquarters will soon be renamed in honor of the retired Senior Police Officer Edward Alfred Thomas, a fitting tribute to his lifelong service to the city of Houston.

Police Officer Edward Alfred Thomas, also known as “Mr. Thomas” around the station, has provided 65 years of service as an officer to the Houston Police Department.

Officer Thomas served the Houston Police Department from January 12, 1948 to July 23, 2011. His accomplishments are numerous and include The 100 Club, Officer of the Year, the Lifetime Achievement Award, and a Chief of Police Commendation.

Officer Thomas served nearly 20 years prior to the Civil Rights Movement and was one of the first African-American police officers to integrate into the Houston Police Department.

Fellow officers declare that Officer Thomas has been an incredible example of perseverance, courage, and duty to the Houston Police Force.

Several organizations support the proposal to name the Police Headquarters in Officer Thomas’s honor such as the African American Police Officer League (AAPOL), Houston Police Officer’s Union (HPOU), the Houston Organization of Public Employees (HOPE), and Houston Police Organization of Spanish Speaking Officers (OSSO).

The City Council unanimously approved the proposal to name the Houston Police Headquarters in his honor on June 15, 2015.

And that’s just the way it is.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,151,921,010,337.51. We’ve added \$7,525,044,062,425.42 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could

have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

CONGRATULATING FT. ZUMWALT
SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL ON ITS
BRONZE MEDAL AWARD

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ft. Zumwalt South High School on its Bronze Medal Award as a top Missouri High School from U.S. News and World Report.

This school's administration, teachers, and students should be commended for all of their hard work throughout the past year and for their commitment to education.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Ft. Zumwalt South High School for a job well done.

DULLES ACADEMIC CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dulles High School on being named the 2015 6A Academic State Champions. This win marks Dulles' third state title in four years.

This impressive achievement brought the gold medal to Dulles for the third time in just four years. This year's win also marks the eighth consecutive academic championship title for Fort Bend ISD. Dulles earned first place team honors in Science, Math, and Speech and Debate and second place team honors in Number Sense. No doubt, these students worked diligently all year to win this championship. Their success would not have been possible without the support of their teachers, principal, and parents. We are all looking forward to the continued achievements of this bright group of students.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Dulles High School's Academic State Champions. This victory makes the entire Fort Bend ISD community proud.

RECOGNIZING MOMS2B PROGRAM

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Moms2B program in Columbus, Ohio for receiving the Supporting the Safety Net Award from the Association of Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP). The award was given at the 2015 ACAP CEO Summit. ACAP works with not-for-profit Safety Net Health Plans in their efforts to improve the health of lower-income and vulnerable populations.

Moms2B was founded in 2010 and began as a 10-week nutrition course. The program

has now grown into a multidisciplinary program with a variety of healthcare professionals serving the neighborhoods of Columbus.

The program is designed to address maternal and infant health issues in low-income communities with high rates of infant mortality. Specifically, there is a focus on helping pregnant women deliver full term, healthy babies. Moms2B also partners with a variety of organizations, including the American Red Cross, The Mid-Ohio Food Bank, the Ohio State University Outreach and Engagement, and many others in an effort to improve their outreach and care to the families in Central Ohio.

Moms2B has enrolled more than 350 women into the program, and has seen great success in its short time in operation. Through August 2013, program participants had a 50 percent reduction in low birth weight babies compared to the Medicaid expected number.

Winning the ACAP Supporting Safety Net Award is a true testament to the incredible impact Moms2B has had on families in Central Ohio. On behalf of the people of Ohio's 15th Congressional District, I thank Moms2B for all they do for our community and wish them continued success in the future.

CONGRATULATING FATIMA HIGH
SCHOOL ON ITS BRONZE MEDAL
AWARD

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Fatima High School on its Bronze Medal Award as a top Missouri High School from U.S. News and World Report.

This school's administration, teachers, and students should be commended for all of their hard work throughout the past year and for their commitment to education.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Fatima High School for a job well done.

2015 CARNEGIE HALL NATIONAL
YOUTH ORCHESTRA

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 2015 National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America.

Each summer, Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute brings together some of the finest young musicians from across the country to form the prestigious National Youth Orchestra. The musicians, ranging from ages 16–19 years old, undergo a comprehensive audition process; the 114 talented, dedicated musicians who are selected reflect the breadth, diversity and quality of young musicians in the United States.

After an intensive two-week training residency at State University of New York Purchase College with faculty from some of the country's finest professional orchestras, the players travel the world on an annual tour to top music capitals. Our musicians have the

opportunity to interact with local young musicians and sightsee wherever they travel, and they inspire their audiences with their music-making.

In its inaugural season in 2013, the Orchestra traveled to Russia and the UK. This year, from July 10–26, they will travel from New York City to China. In Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and four other cities, the Orchestra will share their talent with Chinese audiences while experiencing firsthand the richness of China's culture and history. As musical ambassadors for America, the orchestra will strengthen ties between citizens of the US and the People's Republic of China through culture.

I am thrilled to announce this summer's performers include two young musicians from my own Congressional district. Martine Thomas, 17, plays viola with the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. She was a member of the National Youth Orchestra's inaugural summer tour in 2013, and this will be her second appearance with the group. She enjoys spending her weekends busking at a farmers market and performing at assisted living centers. Additionally, Helen Wong, 17, plays violin and attends Webster Schroeder High School is a performer in this year's National Youth Orchestra. She enjoys performing piano and violin at senior centers and churches in her free time.

Participating in the arts can have incredible benefits on our nation's students. From higher test scores to better behavior, stronger critical thinking skills, and better decision making skills. Team building skills along that these students will cultivate in the orchestra are essential to today's interconnected workplace.

Again, I would like to congratulate all of the young musicians of the 2015 National Youth Orchestra and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF JAMES
SICILIANO

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. James Siciliano. Mr. Siciliano will be honored by the Italian American Memorial Association (IAMA) on July 18, 2015 and I would like to join with its members in congratulating Mr. Siciliano.

The son of first generation Italian Americans, Mr. Siciliano honors his heritage and continues to uphold the objective of the IAMA to promote social, cultural and recreational activities for the betterment of the residents of Long Branch, New Jersey. His dedication to the community and the IAMA is truly deserving of this body's recognition.

A native of Long Branch, Mr. Siciliano has been involved with the IAMA since childhood. Having participated in the IAMA Little League, Mr. Siciliano knows first-hand the positive influence the association's recreational and athletic activities have on the community's youth. As a member and President of the IAMA, he maintains active participation in the association and ensures its continued success. Under his leadership, the IAMA has grown in membership and activities. He also helped begin