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ALLSTON'S 'GATEWAY' AT A CROSSROADS

Harvard Ave: On the Move

By Joe Clements

If there is one section of Allston-Brighton that best reflects the diversity and cultural mesh that the community has come to be known for, that area would have to be Harvard Avenue, the thin strip of bars, businesses and bustling humanity that extends from Cambridge Street in Allston to the Brookline border.

To some, like 27-year-old David Arfensem of Franklin Street, "the Ave." is a fascinating place, one he says has helped keep his interest in Allston since moving here from Connecticut seven years ago. According to Arfensem, the blend of nationalities that constantly can be found up and down the avenue often attracts him there for no particular reason.

"Sometimes I come up here just to walk around," the part-time musician said Tuesday afternoon as he stood outside Gateway Stationers. "There's always something different to see and do everytime you come up here...It's really wild."

But as positive as some people are towards the state of Harvard Avenue these days, others feel the opposite. Carol Wolfe, co-chair of the South Allston Neighborhood Association, said a growing list of neighborhood people no longer frequent the expansive business

district located adjacent to their residences. Wolfe said she herself stopped shopping the Avenue over a year ago due to dirty streets and merchandise placed on the sidewalk that makes each trek "like walking an obstacle course."

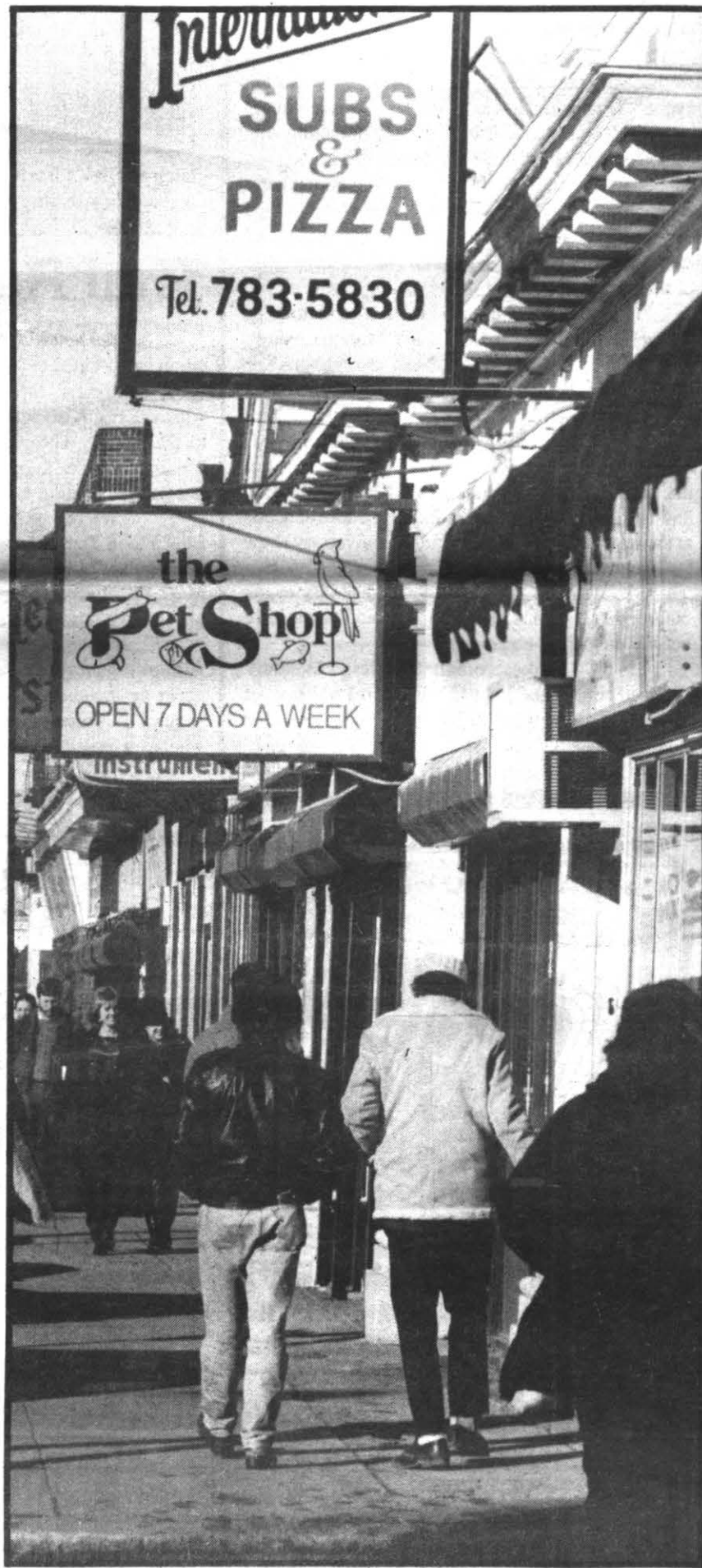
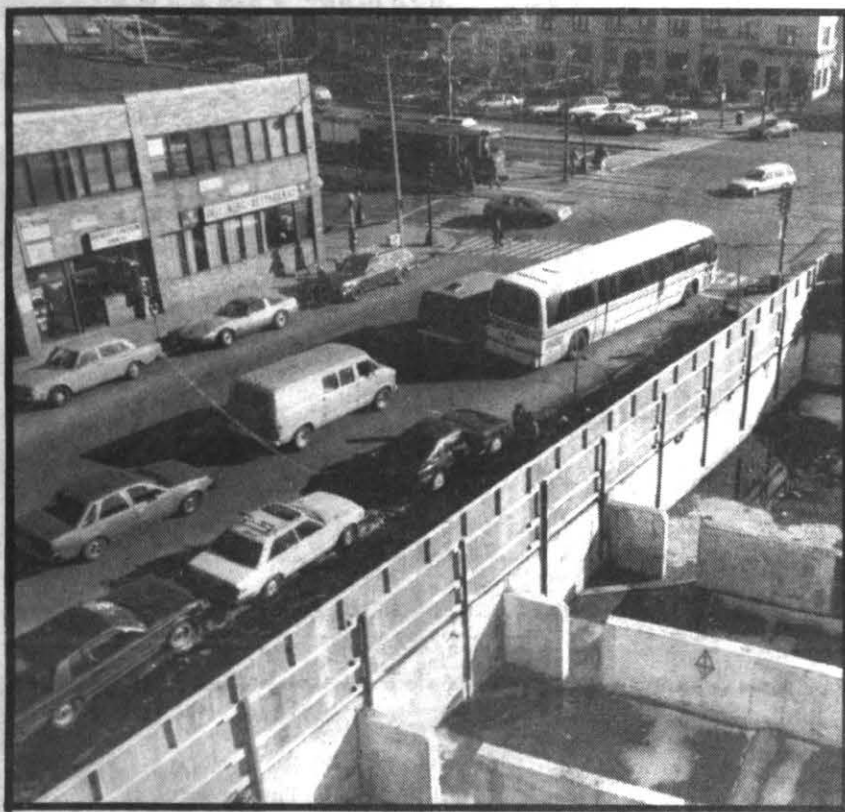
"If you want to go for a nice walk and do some leisurely shopping, you might as well go somewhere that's clean and attractive," Wolfe said.

Paul Creighton, executive director of the Allston-Brighton Area

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Right, a ground level view of Harvard Avenue in Allston, while below, a rooftop shot of the burned-out Marty's Liquor site at the corner of Harvard and Commonwealth Avenues.

Derek Szabo photos



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