Boston: one big city or many small ones?

By Glenn Brownstein

Boston 200, the local bicentennial organization, answers the question "Where's Boston?" with a fascinating multi-media display currently being shown at the Prudential Center. Since the prime focus of the bicentennial is the city, it would be easy to forget that border the eastern end of the Charles River, our own Cantonbargia and Boston, it's probably worthwhile to answer a more general question, "what's Boston like?"

First of all, Boston is the self-proclaimed Hub of the Universe, the nerve center of New England, the capital of Massachusetts and the key city in the urban eastern half of the state. Over 600,000 people live within the city limits, although another 75,000 students take up residence during the fall semester. For most MIT students, Boston is simply Back Bay, Boylston Street, the North End, and Kenmore Square. Actually, there's much more to Boston than that. Boston is a unique among major Eastern cities, a collection of neighborhoods lumped together into one city.

In many ways, Boston is a mistake. It would probably be far more preferable to have many many small city units than the Boston of today. For many parents, the thought of sending children away from "the neighborhood" was as much a factor in their protests as the racial issue, which is justified by the city's demographic status. For many students, the thought of sending out of state for college was also a factor. In many ways, Boston is a mistake.

This, in fact, is the cause of most of Boston's problems. Unlike New York, the Hub is not a melting pot. Far from it, in fact. It's like New York, the Hub is not a melting pot. Far from it, in fact. It's like

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