



WILD THINGS

Damselflies, those colorful flying insects with slender, segmented abdomens, have the most startling trick to their mating ritual.

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THE WEEK

JUNE 27
-JULY 4,
2024

FREE | by CAMBRIDGE DAY

Interim school head may be just the start of three-person swap

By MARC LEVY

The chief operating officer of Cambridge Public Schools, David Murphy, was named Tuesday to become interim superintendent, stepping in for the departing Victoria Greer starting July 1.

His term is to last anywhere from 90 days to up to a year, based on approval by the four School Committee members present at a virtual special meeting held Tuesday and by Mayor E. Denise Simmons, who leads the committee.

Murphy was prepared to step up, Simmons said, citing phone calls with him. Contract negotiations would follow immediately.

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Eyes turn to trucks and crossings in deaths of riders



Vigil honors two bicylists killed in June

By TOM MEEK

Several hundred bicyclists, community members and friends and family took part in a vigil Monday for crash victims Minh-Thi Nguyen, 24, and Kim Staley, 55, who died two weeks apart in Cambridge, the result of right turns by trucks in intersections.

The City Hall vigil was organized by the Cambridge Bicycle Safety group. Many members of the City Council attended and took part in the proceedings before heading into their regular meeting.

The Rev. Lindsay Popperson of the The First Church of Christ in Marblehead spoke and led emotionally charged remembrances by family and friends of the victims.

Nguyen, who went by the nickname “Mint,” was born in Vietnam, attended Princeton and was a physics doctoral candidate at MIT, and was recalled by several classmates and friends for her “adventurous spirit, contagious laughter and unwavering support for friends.” One told of being dragged to a Nigerian rap concert; another read her tribute in Nguyen’s native language. A tribute from Staley’s family in Florida was read by Popperson.

While the event stayed focused on the memories of the victims, safety and road violence was front and center. “It’s not the time for me to make a political speech,” vice mayor Marc McGovern said.



Tom Meek

Vice mayor Marc McGovern speaks Monday during a vigil at Cambridge City Hall, top.

See VIGIL, Page 4

Naming most dangerous intersections for fixes is where councillors begin work

By MARC LEVY

After two bicyclists were killed in Cambridge traffic within two weeks, city officials and staff say they are focused on addressing the other common factors in the deaths: trucks and intersections.

Kim Staley, 55, of Naples, Florida, died June 7 as a truck took a right turn where she was riding at Mount Auburn and DeWolfe streets, on the southern outskirts of Harvard Square.

MIT doctoral student Minh-Thi Nguyen died Friday – two weeks later to the day – after being hit by a truck at Hampshire and Portland streets in The Port neighborhood near Kendall Square.

A vigil for the bicyclists took over the front lawn and steps of City Hall

on Monday immediately before a City Council meeting.

Then officials took up a policy order asking staff to target the city’s five most dangerous intersections for rapid changes to reduce risk to people walking and bicycling; and to seek state and federal action through Cambridge’s senators and representatives putting side guards on trucks to keep people from getting caught under them and run over by trucks’ rear wheels.

The guards are required on city-owned trucks and companies with City Hall contracts, but “legally, we can’t require them for other trucks,” said vice mayor Marc McGovern, author of the order.

See TRUCKS, Page 4

INSIDE

News: Housing tenants at Newtowne Court and Washington Elms protest conditions and response by managers.

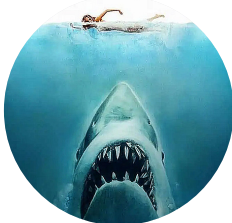
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Business: A new team handles the menu at Harvard Square’s Charlie’s Kitchen.

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Attend: Our record walk takes us to Cheapo Records in Central Square and its \$1 bins of used vinyl. But what’s in there?

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FILM AHEAD

A “Jaws” tradition resurfaces, the “Humanist Vampire” and “MaXXXine” hit town and Harvard gets schooled in a TV documentary.

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EVENTS AHEAD

An early Fourth, NibbleFest, City Hall Dance Party, farewell to Starlight, Frederick Douglass and Stand-Up Magic.



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MEETINGS AHEAD

Cambridge: Adding 151 homes in North Cambridge, most of them affordable; multifamily housing options; and Danehy Park improvements.

Somerville: Changes for several parking zones, renewal in Gilman Square and a waste business for the Inner Belt.

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MEETINGS JUNE 27–JULY 4

CAMBRIDGE

Combined 151 homes in a pair of proposals

By MARC LEVY

Multifamily housing options

Housing Committee, 2 p.m. Thursday. This committee run by city councillors Burhan Azeem and Sumbul Siddiqui talks about multifamily housing and gets an update on it from Community Development staff. The committee meets at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Improvements at Danehy Park

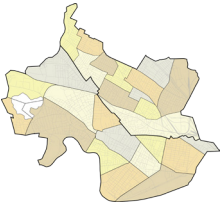
Danehy Park Improvement Plan Working Group, 6 p.m. Thursday. A look at conditions at the park – opened more than 30 years ago above landfill – and gathering of ideas, information and feedback about how to make it better. Watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Rally against Walden Square II

Anti-Walden Square II documentary screening, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday. The design of the 95-apartment Walden Square II, a 100 percent-affordable-housing project in North Cambridge, remains opposed by some – filmmaker Federico Muchnik says 1,000 people have signed a petition against it. Saturday’s event includes a screening of his 30-minute documentary, rally and Q&A at the Cambridge Friends School, 5 Cadbury Road, Neighborhood 9. Sunday’s includes a presentation, Q&A and panel at the Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway, Mid-Cambridge.

Adding North Cambridge homes

Planning Board, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday. What’s now a parking lot and a two-story retail and office building at 2400 Massachusetts Ave., North Cambridge, could become two six-story buildings with 56 condominiums and 7,161 square feet of retail (half of which is expected to be restaurant and bar space) of a total 94,867 square feet of gross floor area on a 27,786-square-foot lot. In the project by North Cambridge Partners, there are 67 below-ground parking spaces. This meeting also brings a design review for the 95-apartment Walden Square II, a 100 percent-affordable-housing project in North Cambridge under Cambridge’s Affordable Housing Overlay zoning, which means the board’s comments function mostly as suggestions. Watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.



◀ **Cambridge's City Council** next meets in a special session at 5:30 p.m. Aug. 5, being on a break for regular meetings until September at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square; televised and online.

Somerville's School Committee meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Monday of every month September through June at Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill; televised and online. ▶

◀ **Cambridge's School Committee** meets at 5 p.m. the first Tuesday in August (but may schedule other superintendent-hiring meetings) at the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Mid-Cambridge; televised and online.

Somerville's City Council meets at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill; televised and online. ▶

SOMERVILLE

Changes in parking and Gilman Square

By JACOB POSNER

Changes to parking zones

Traffic Commission, 5:30 p.m. Thursday. The Somerville Traffic Commission invites residents to voice their opinions on proposed changes to parking zones in Central Hill, Winter Hill, Spring Hill, near Lincoln Park and around Somerville High School, Winter Hill Community School and La Petite Enfance Montessori School. Residents will have the opportunity to debate the merits of permit parking and metered parking in busy neighborhoods. Watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

July Fourth antislavery oration

Frederick Douglass reading, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday. “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” by Frederick Douglass gets its annual reading at Bow Market, 1 Bow Market Way, Union Square. Organizers encourage online registration.

Renewal of Gilman Square

Gilman Square City Redevelopment Parcels Civic Advisory Committee, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday. Neighbors are invited to share input on a discussion of “urban renewal” in Gilman Square, with the long-term possibility of acquiring nearby private property to repurpose into community space. The committee, in partnership with the organization CultureHouse, has turned the area’s Homans Site into a space offering summer programming for community members. Watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

New neighbor: Waste Connections

Somerville Biosafety Committee, 6 to 7 p.m. Thursday. Waste Connections, a waste services company, is applying for business and warehouse space at 100 Chestnut St., Inner Belt. Hear a presentation from a company representatives and a decision by the committee on whether to support the proposal. Watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Enjoy Fourth of July fireworks

Mayor's Office, 6 p.m. July 4. Join in enjoying the national holiday with a city-sponsored fireworks display and food and music. At Trum Field, 541 Broadway, Magoun Square, Somerville.

THE WEEK

by CAMBRIDGE DAY

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Cambridge is mainly politically progressive; embracing of science and reason; and welcoming – and protective – of the diversity of humanity, and Cambridge Day tends to reflect the mores of its community. Its reporting is fact-based, with a separate section for expression of opinions, and all voices are welcome in its pages.

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Tenants: Managers slow to tackle mice, mold problems

By SUE REINERT

A group of tenants at two large public housing developments says the Cambridge Housing Authority has lagged in responding to residents’ complaints of mice, cockroaches and mold, taken months to replace broken appliances and handled requests for repairs improperly. About a dozen Newtowne Court and Washington Elms tenants and supporters showed up at the June 12 meeting of the CHA board of commissioners in a rare outburst of public comment.

The tenants delivered a petition with 136 signatures, mostly by people who live in the two developments in The Port. It demanded “an end to the mold, mice and cockroach infestation in CHA housing”; a plan of correction within 24 hours of a complaint; and a moratorium on evictions of “any resident with outstanding maintenance/quality of living requests that have not been serviced.” The petition also demanded that the authority end “retaliation against residents who bring up complaints” and stop making “arbitrary threats of eviction, especially for minor issues such as missing paperwork.” And it should “respect residents’ privacy” by showing up on time for maintenance appointments and must give 24-hour notice “for entering an apartment,” the petition said.

After tenants spoke, board chair Elaine DeRosa said: “We’re hearing your concerns and we will respond. You have raised some serious issues that we have heard. If people have been threatened, I want to find out who threatened them.”

The tenant group and CHA executive director Michael Johnston don’t agree about involving the commissioners in what comes next, though. Johnston said he has scheduled two meetings with residents from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. July 9 and 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. July 10, where he, senior leaders and staff at the developments will listen to tenants and address individual complaints. The residents want the board of commissioners to come as well.

“There have to be policies in place that have to be driven by people at the top,” said Tamanna Syed, a Newtowne Court resident who helped organize the petition drive. “People on the board may not understand the depth of the issue.”

Johnston said the commissioners won’t attend “because the executive director is tasked with the day-to-day operations of the authority and the issues that have been raised fall into this category. Residents that signed the petition have concerns that need to be vetted and will be addressed as need-



Marc Levy

Some residents have complained to the Cambridge Housing Authority about conditions at Newtowne Court and Washington Elms.

A petition demands an end to “retaliation against residents” who have complaints.

ed.” Johnston said. He added that Syed was given “contact information” to pass along to residents with “urgent issues” so they could get their complaints addressed before the meetings.

Johnston said residents in the 78 households who signed the petition will be invited but all residents can attend. The two developments have a total of 443 units. He said he may call another meeting toward the end of July and notify a broader group. “Bottom line, I look forward to having a productive conversation and to hopefully come to a satisfactory resolution for all our residents at Newtowne Court/Washington Elms,” he said.

The authority only recently allowed public comment at its meetings and adopted strict time limits as well as restricting comments to items on the agenda. Conditions at the two family developments in The Port were not on the agenda. CHA staff running the meeting tried to keep the tenants from speaking – board member Susan Connelly told them: “There is a space

for public comment and right now you are being rude.” But they continued to talk and eventually board chair DeRosa said they should be allowed to testify so that the board could continue with its agenda.

Issues about environment

Syed said at the meeting that the development “used to feel like a home” but now left her feeling “uneasy and uncomfortable.” In an interview later, Syed said tenants had been coping with rodents, cockroaches and mold “for several years” and the problems “have gone unattended.”

She said tenants had complained to CHA staff about the mold and infestation and were promised that employees “will address these issues,” but nothing was done. “My family called,” she said. “It’s been months.”

Most important, she said, is an eviction moratorium for tenants who have complained about conditions, though she could not point to evidence that CHA served the notices in retaliation. Syed said the actions came for “minor issues” such as missing paperwork for rent redeterminations.

“In the last five years it has gotten worse,” she said. Tenants will get a letter saying: “You have XYZ missing paperwork. You have five days [to produce it] or you will be evicted.”

Syed said CHA employees some-

times lost or mishandled submitted paperwork, leading to the letters.

Advocate and a signer

The authority recruited another tenant at Newtowne Court to counter the protesters’ picture; Johnston suggested that Cambridge Day call her. That person, who said she wanted only her first name, Louise, to be published, said she had not experienced problems getting managers to address complaints.

She said she had told other tenants who had mice or cockroaches: “All you got to do is go to your manager and they’ll put you on the infestation list.”

Still, Louise was one of the tenants who signed the petition, she acknowledged. “I agree if you’re having a problem it should be fixed,” she said. She added that she wasn’t sure whether the complaining tenants had contacted the managers.

Tenant organizations

Public housing tenants as well as people with rent vouchers have an organization to represent them: the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants. ACT almost ended its existence two years ago because of internal disputes but recovered, partly with the help of the authority. Cambridge Day contacted ACT but did not get a response; the organization does not talk to the press without going through an approval process.

Individual developments also have elected tenant councils, but the status of the council at Washington Elms and Newtowne Court isn’t clear.

Johnston said CHA enlisted the nearby Margaret Fuller House community center to hold meetings with tenants without staff from the authority, partly in hope of organizing a tenant council there.

“We brought them into [the two developments] to help build up a community” and counteract residents’ fear of complaining to authority staff, Johnston said of the Margaret Fuller House. CHA also hoped to form a new tenant council at Washington Elms and Newtowne Court, he said.

Though Johnston said the meetings at Margaret Fuller didn’t include CHA employees, he provided a copy of a report on the May meeting that referred to local managers who “jumped in” with explanations when residents complained that they were fined for leaving “clutter in hallways.”

The report began on a good note, saying: “Tenants have noticed a lot of positive customer service changes ... In addition to reinstating walk-in hours, residents also commented on how helpful management staff are when they have questions or need assistance.”

A longer version of this story is at bit.ly/4eDMvAr.



Marc Levy

Police in action Feb. 20, 2023, in Cambridge.

Second 911 outage wasn’t the heat or a hack

By MARC LEVY

The statewide 911 emergency dispatch system experienced sporadic issues statewide June 18, leading police to recommend use of alternate numbers for the second time in around two and a half months.

The previous outages were April 12, when Cambridge suffered sporadic problems for a little under five hours, as opposed to the two hours in June.

“We did not know the cause of the outage,” Goulston said at the time of the first outage. “State 911 Department did not provide any details.”

Again on June 18, it was unclear from state officials whether the outage resulted from a power problem, the

day’s 94-degree heat or something else. The next day, the State 911 Department gave a partial answer. The outage was the result of a firewall, a safety feature that provides protection against cyberattacks and hacking.

“The interruption was not the result of a cyberattack or hack,” 911 vendor Comtech said. “The exact reason the firewall stopped calls from reaching dispatch centers remains under review.”

Calls coming in by 911 could be heard, but not responded to, so police had to dial back to whatever numbers were using the system, Cambridge police spokesperson Robert Goulston said. That’s cumbersome in an emergency, but using other phone numbers

allowed for conversations immediately, Goulston said.

In the two 911 outages, Cambridge and Somerville officials advised people to turn to a few alternative, non-emergency phone numbers and had yet another alternative to offer: “As we have been reminded in the past with recent cell communications disruption, everyone is reminded that our city fire alarm boxes are always operable. Our fire alarm boxes operate on old, but simple and proven, reliable technology.”

“They are maintained by the City’s Electrical Department staff. For a fire or emergency, pull the hook on the city fire alarm box and help will be immediately dispatched,” they said in an afternoon email.

Finding leader for long term could still be two hires away

From Page 1

In the process Simmons described, there would be three steps to replace Greer: a short-term interim superintendent in place for as little as a month or as many as three “who can provide us with the necessary working space to find a long-term interim superintendent,” then that long-term interim leader to run things so the committee can “take stock of what we truly want from the next superintendent.” Finally the committee would appoint a permanent superintendent; they tend to get three- to four-year contracts in Cambridge.

There was pushback from committee members to the plan from Simmons and committee vice chair Caroline Hunter in consultation with Carolyn Turk, who was the district’s longtime deputy superintendent before retiring to become Simmons’ education liaison.

“There’s something about the number of transitions,” member Rachel Weinstein said. “If we go from Dr. Greer to an acting or an interim, and then another acting or interim and then another permanent, I do want to think about what that means for continuity and leadership.”

Advocating for predictability

Though appointed staff will do much of the policy work, the series of transitions raised the possibility of delays or game-playing, waiting for leaders to leave or arrive. If “a big decision has to be made, but this person is going to be out the door in 15 days, you can wait,” member Richard Harding said.

Member Elizabeth Hudson agreed. “You don’t know to whom to be advocating,” she said, pointing to another concern of the three-step process: “Will we be in a position where we’re hiring for an interim and hiring for a permanent superintendent at the same time? Do we have the capacity to do that?”

The members proposed that instead of a 30- to 90-day window, the language for Murphy’s hiring was to be for “up to a year,” though Simmons and Hunter said they hadn’t meant to exclude the possibility of an extension.

If the position worked out, Murphy should also be able to apply for the permanent role, Harding said.

No deputy superintendent

Greer, who was asked to resign by a 5-2 vote of the committee May 29, recommended Murphy to replace her as part of an immediate transition plan.

“In the absence of a deputy, there is no one [else] to appoint,” Simmons said, referring to a district executive office flowchart.

Turk retired in October after serving as deputy superintendent for 21 years, capping 46 years in the district. She served as interim superintendent twice, including after Thomas Fowler-Finn left in 2008. Greer decided to retire the position of deputy superintendent in honor of Turk.

Murphy, as interim leader, will help decide how to fill his own role overseeing day-to-day operations of the district. The committee should not replace him as chief operating officer if he might return to that role after a few months, Harding pointed out.

A longer version of this story is at bit.ly/3VxGdcU.



Tom Meek

Portraits of crash victims Minh-Thi Nguyen and Kim Staley at a Monday vigil at Cambridge City Hall.

Trucks are an outsized challenge for streets

From Page 1

That’s where the other request comes in, McGovern said: “We clearly need to elevate the intersection conversation, given the tragedies that we’ve had.” Staffers embraced the order, with City Manager Yi-An Huang describing a flurry of texts and calls over the past weekend as people grappled with “the lives that were lost and what can be done.”

Transportation officials had preliminary intersection data to get started on but would go through police reports to identify where to target the first intensified improvements, transportation commissioner Brooke McKenna said. Staff expected to present to councillors at their next meeting, a midsummer session set for Aug. 5.

“There’s a lot of work to be done improving intersections, but it is something that we have done consistently in the past,” McKenna said, pointing to a project that turned Inman Square – “a place that was just terrifying,” she said – into two simplified intersections from a single, elongated one with up to seven legs to navigate.

“We have a lot of planning to do and and we’ll jump right into that,” McKenna said.

The Cambridge Bicycle Safety group posted a list of possible improvements Sunday that included “daylighting,” which increases visibility by removing parking spaces close to turns; “turn hardening” that adds physical elements to force vehicles to slow for a turn and into an angle that lets drivers see more of where they’re heading; light-signal phasing that has vehicles moving at different times than bicyclists; and models that extend separated and protected bike lanes farther into intersections.

Bike lane success

Councillors had been getting emails arguing that the deaths show the failure of the city’s bike lanes, McGovern said. The installations are part of a Cycling Safety Ordinance passed in 2019 to create more than 25 miles of the lanes within the next few years. The deaths showed only that “they don’t work for everything,” he said.

A co-sponsor of the order, Jivan

Vigil hears vow for action by leaders

From Page 1

“I will say this,” Marc McGovern said. “We must do everything together that we can to ensure that nothing like this ever happens again in our city.”

Stephanie Wasiuk, a biotech worker in Kendall Square, said the death of Nguyen at Hampshire and Portland streets has shaken her. “I bike through the intersection where Minh-Thi was killed. So it’s hitting very close to home for me.”

“It’s surreal,” said Lena Webb, a member of the Somerville Bike Committee. “I went away on a trip two weeks ago and when I left, someone had just been killed in Cambridge by a box truck. And when I came back, someone was killed again by a box truck in Cambridge.” John Adams, the owner of Flat Top Johnny’s pool hall, said he was initially too angry to comment on the crashes directly. “As a Cambridge business owner for 30 years, I strongly support and urge the City Council to take measures for public safety and the safety of vulnerable users, and to do it quickly,” he said.

Councillor Patty Nolan, the swing vote on an April policy or-

der that altered the timeline of bike lane installation, said: “As someone who regularly bikes through the Mount Auburn Street intersection and have cycled through the Portland-Hampshire one as recently as last week, I am devastated by the loss of two cyclists in two weeks. We need to keep building protected bike lanes, and we must do more.”

“The city has done a lot to create a safe cycling network through our city, and the work is not done. These tragic accidents, unfortunately, occurred at intersections. We need to work to make our intersections safer and work to make trucks safer when driving through our city,” Toner said.

Cambridge Bicycle Safety group organizer Chris Cassa said in a speech, “It’s just incredibly challenging to know that we may not have done enough in the right amount of time, and we need to do whatever we can to prevent something like this from happening.”

After the vigil, state Rep. Michael Connolly said of Nguyen, “She had her whole life ahead of her, and it’s a reminder we have to do more at every level of government.”

Sobrinho-Wheeler, elaborated. (Other co-sponsors were Sumbul Siddiqui and Burhan Azeem.)

“The protected bike lanes have been successful. We’ve not seen anyone killed in the protected bike lanes we’ve added,” Sobrinho-Wheeler said. That there was a death on Hampshire Street shows how successful they are, in a way, and why a friend of his riding with their child happened to see Nguyen being removed from the scene of her fatal collision.

“They would rather be biking on Cambridge Street. But Cambridge Street is much more dangerous right now and they have to go out of their way to go to Hampshire Street to get their kid to school” using bike lanes, Sobrinho-Wheeler said. “The reason people are on these high-traffic,

high-volume streets is because we don’t have protected bike lanes on other streets. And there’s still time for us as a council to reverse that.”

Trucks a disproportionate challenge

There are fewer things the city can do about the presence of trucks. The Interstate Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution forbids the city from banning trucks, acting city solicitor Megan Bayer noted. And restrictions against trucks entering certain streets have to go through the state, which has strict guidelines for approval, McKenna said.

Even if a restriction is approved, it doesn’t apply to trucks with a “local destination,” a term with no clear definition. Putting up a sign saying only trucks with side guards can use

Cambridge streets would also need state approval.

Even the city’s demand for side guards is somewhat porous, as it provides for a few waivers and exemptions, deputy city manager Owen O’Riordan said. They can apply to companies that use such a variety of subcontractors that the rule is functionally impossible, and to trucks whose shapes make side guards physically impossible to put on.

“The fragmented nature of that industry” is a challenge, Huang said of trucking – and yet more must be done. The percentage of vehicles on Cambridge roads that are trucks is under 5 percent, yet up to 80 percent of traffic fatalities over the past 10 years involve trucks. “The culprit in many of these crashes is trucks and size, and blind spots. It is just a disproportionate challenge in terms of how we regulate our streets.”

“Please, please, please be careful”

The council was aligned in calling the bicyclist deaths tragic, including members who angered some bicyclists in April by passing a policy order that could delay construction of bike lanes on Main Street, Cambridge Street and Broadway if work mitigating parking loss – by allowing for off-street spaces to be rented – isn’t finished by May 1, 2026. They offered extra resources for the Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department to enable the intersection study to be added to their workload; one said they were “shattered” by the deaths and bicycled themselves “through one of those intersections almost daily, and the other one at least monthly.”

What’s needed most, McGovern said, “is a culture shift.”

“I get for the last 100-plus years, roads have been all about cars,” McGovern said. “The roads are for all of us. Cars do not own them. They’re public roads – cyclists have a right to be on those roads. We just need a culture shift and understanding that things are moving in a different direction than how they have previously been. We are all in this community together, and we are all responsible for each other’s safety. So please, please, please be careful and cautious.”

■ Do you know of a business opening or closing in Cambridge or Somerville? Send news to business@cambridgeday.com.

BUSINESS & MONEY

Charlie’s Kitchen hands off its menu to a new generation

By MARC LEVY

The venerable Charlie’s Kitchen is seeing a change in Cambridge’s Harvard Square, and the incoming management team will be a pair who recently remade another area classic: R.F. O’Sullivan & Son, on the Beacon Street line dividing Cambridge and Somerville, which recently became The Cornerstone.

Whereas that burger joint has become a gastro-pub with Japanese and Hawaiian touches, Charlie’s Kitchen will keep its name and stay familiar even after a potential sale process over the next couple of years, co-owner Paul Overgaag told the License Commission on June 6.

“That’s part of the reason why I was happy to find these two young men,” Overgaag said of David Toraji Oshima and Derek Luangrath. “They loved Charlie’s Kitchen when they were young and have good memories of it and want to keep it as Charlie’s Kitchen.” It just needs to be updated, he said, “and older people like me are just not capable of connecting with that.”

In this change of officers and directors and manager, as well as a transfer of stock, the Overgaags retain 98 percent ownership, with the other 2 percent being gifted in equal amounts to Oshima and Luangrath, commission chair Nicole Murati Ferrer said. The expectation is that they will buy the business in the future if all goes well. For now, Oshima



Marc Levy

Charlie's Kitchen in Cambridge's Harvard Square seen Nov. 25, 2020.

and Luangrath have come on as operators only, Overgaag said.

The Overgaags have been looking for buyers for the past two years hoping Charlie’s Kitchen will go on rather than “just shutting it down and selling the real estate,” Overgaag said. Talks with Oshima and Luangrath began in January.

Charlie’s Kitchen opened in the 1950s at 10 Eliot St. – prime, two-story Harvard Square real estate for a customer base of students and tourists – and looks like it hasn’t changed much, with its linoleum-tiled floors, spinning bar stools and red-upholstered booths. Paul and brother Jaap Overgaag took it over in 1996 and expanded its food

and beer menus, Overgaag said, and now in addition to cheeseburgers there are lobster rolls and somewhat elevated grilled cheese sandwiches (made with Iggy’s bread and including lobster and avocado versions) as well as dual bars and entertainment such as karaoke, trivia and, for a time, live music. It once shared a kitchen with the upscale Red

House restaurant around the corner at 98 Winthrop St., which also remains in the Overgaag family, run by daughter Molly and her husband, Ryan Lindbergh. The kitchens are now separate.

“After 28 years, the interest from the Overgaag brothers to run Charlie’s Kitchen got less and less. We couldn’t keep up with the new times, to new ways things are being done,” Overgaag said, referring to innovations in social media and cooking that could be important even at a diner with an old-school feel.

Thirty years ago, the burger landscape in Harvard Square was largely Charlie’s and Mr. Bartley’s Burger Cottage on Massachusetts Avenue. The Tasty Burger and Shake Shack chains have added to the sense that Charlie’s needs to compete, he said.

Overgaag said he’d been fortunate to meet “these two young gentleman” when they’d just opened The Cornerstone. Before opening The Cornerstone, Oshima worked at the lines-around-the-block Japanese noodle destinations Yume Ga Arukara and Yume Wo Katate in Cambridge – and before that was an acquaintance of Paul Overgaag’s son.

“They’re familiar with the restaurant industry and very hard working,” Overgaag said. “And I’m trying to put them in a position where they can operate a successful restaurant and pay the landlord – which is me – a street rent that would be satisfactory from an operating point of view.”

Warning sign: Arts nonprofit cuts cafe hours

By MADISON LUCCHESI

The Rooted Armory Cafe stops daytime service Monday as part of Somerville’s Center for the Arts at the Armory. The center can no longer afford to run the cafe and pay the city fees it generates, said its co-director and chief operating officer, Jess White.

The cafe, hidden behind the walls of a literal fortress, didn’t attract walk-in traffic; it was largely empty during the day and made money only during events, White said in early June. But the city charged \$90,000 in rent yearly – comparable to when the Armory was owned by the Sater family, who set up the nonprofit center as an anchor tenant in 2008.

During the day, the cafe will become office space for arts center employees, who got squeezed out by other uses. It could also be used as an artist “green room” for performers waiting to take the stage in the performance hall.

“It’s really sad. It’s a real bummer,” White said of the cafe closing. “The interactions that we see with people in our cafe that don’t know each other are amazing. I want that to exist for a really long time.”

In addition to the cafe, Rooted served as a free space for local artists to show work on a rotating basis and for performers. Other spaces at the Armory can be rented, including its Lavender Room and a recently upgraded performance hall with a new stage, seating, lighting and sound systems.

The cafe will open to serve patrons during performances and events, but its menu is changing to cut costs. It will use resources from Somerville Winter Farmers Market vendors, who also sell in the performance hall Saturdays from November to April.



Marc Levy

Pedestrians pass by a sign for the Rooted cafe inside Somerville's Armory arts building.

The Center for the Arts at the Armory faces continued financial and operational hardship and had a \$10,000 fundraising goal for June.

The City of Somerville seized the Armory at 191 Highland Ave. by eminent domain in May 2021 “under the guise of sustainability” and preserving the arts, White said, and it was “largely thought of as a blessing” at the time.

Under city ownership, the Armory hasn’t had a dedicated management or maintenance team, and the Somerville Arts Council and the City of Somerville have not set a plan for the Armory after two unpopular processes; two counter proposals and a petition sent to the city by the center haven’t been acknowledged, said White, who is trying to schedule a meeting with Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and plans to submit its master plan survey results to the City Council.

“We hope [the Arts Council] wakes up,” White said, because the center needs “stability and support” from the city.

Without a plan for the Armory, White and Stephanie Scherpf, chief executive and co-director of the nonprofit, are considering an exit strategy. Because the center hosts more than 700 events per year, its loss “would be devastating to the City of Somerville.”

Industrial area gets green space exemption

Placing a park at site is basically pointless, zoning board rules

By GRETA GAFFIN

A stretch of Mystic Avenue around Assembly Square is so industrial, polluted and unfriendly to pedestrians that a development will be allowed to eliminate plans for a pocket park and move required civic space off-site, the Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals decided June 5. Boston Pinnacle Properties presented its variance request for 45 Mystic Ave. to build about 51,000 square feet and seven stories to become incubator lab space for small startups and an eventual “employment hub.”

When the plan arrived before the Planning Board in October to go into what staff deemed a “high outdoor heat exposure” zone, it included significant amounts of green space and shading from vegetation and overhangs. After multiple design attempts, the idea has turned out to be “impractical,” said Anne Vigorito, the firm’s lawyer.

The Mystic Avenue site does not work well for civic space: it’s right next to Interstate 93 and several industrial facilities, which would make it a loud and unwelcoming environment. It would also be difficult to provide a large enough space within this relatively small parcel.

The site is occupied by an auto body shop, which would be torn down.

“Not only would the petitioner struggle with managing the space amidst heavy traffic and a lack of sunlight, but both the public and building residents would face usability challenges. Users would find the space to be loud, unsafe,” Vigorito said. “Pollutants in the air, for anyone like me who suffers from severe allergies, makes it much worse.”

It would be more beneficial to



Google

A cacophony of wires atop concrete and asphalt on Mystic Avenue in Somerville, an area expected to welcome a seven-story incubator lab space.

Somerville residents to grant a variance that allows the firm to contribute into a fund going toward civic space elsewhere, Vigorito suggested.

The zoning was intended to provide more accessible green areas to residents, but civic space for this project in its highly industrial location would not help advance that goal, she said.

Resident use at 45 Mystic is “incompatible with its environment,” she said. Zoning board member Ann Fullerton agreed, saying the area by Interstate 93 is too disconnected with the Assembly Row development and “would actually end up being a fairly unsafe space for the public to use.”

“I don’t see a problem with it,” board chair Orsola Susan Fontano said of a variance to the green space requirement. “The people aren’t going to want to sit there.” Vice chair Anne Brockelman asked about removal of the pocket park, noting it provided setback from

the adjacent lawn. The proposal does involve a 3-foot buffer on each side, and Somerville does not require setbacks on the side or the back.

Boston Pinnacle Properties hopes that stretch of Mystic Avenue will eventually fill in with other buildings, creating a more continuous urban wall. With elimination of the pocket park, the building will be the same size but seven stories instead of 10, the height in the initial proposal last fall. The board voted unanimously to approve the request.

The City of Somerville Public Space and Urban Forestry staff will determine what amount of payment would be appropriate, staff said. This payment would go toward providing green space elsewhere in Somerville. “It’s not a pedestrian-friendly area at all,” board member Zachary Zarembo said of putting green space in that part of Mystic Avenue. “There’s no potential for it to be in its current form.”

EVENTS AHEAD JUNE 27–JULY

7 p.m. July 1
Porter Square Books, 25 White St., Porter Square, Cambridge

Rachel Zimmerman reads from “Us, After: A Memoir of Love and Suicide”

Free. The former Wall Street Journal reporter has a memoir about her obsessive search of answers after the 2014 suicide of her husband – Seth Teller, the East Cambridge activist and Massachusetts Institute of Technology robotics professor. She interviewed doctors, researchers and even a man who jumped off the same bridge and lived and now looks at the struggle between public and private selves, shifting perspectives, motherhood and secrets. Alysia Abbott, author of “Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father,” joins.

Noon to 3 p.m. June 30 (rain date: July 7)
Longfellow House and the Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site, 105 Brattle St., West Cambridge

Longfellow Pride Picnic

Free. Celebrate Pride at the “Queerest House in Cambridge” with history tours, lawn games, food and music to enjoy from your own picnic blanket. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own picnic foods to supplement what’s provided. A concert by the Pete Smith Trio follows at 3 p.m.

6 p.m. June 27
First Parish in Cambridge Meeting House, 3 Church St./1446 Massachusetts Ave., Harvard Square

Jon Favreau, Jon Lovett and Tommy Vietor discuss “Democracy or Else: How to Save America in 10 Easy Steps”

\$38 with book. During this Harvard Book Store event, the former White House aides during the Obama administration and co-hosts of the podcast “Pod Save America” describe how to be politically involved and make a real difference without giving in to a sense of impending dread. Dan Pfeiffer, President Barack Obama’s former communications director and author of “Yes We (Still) Can,” joins.

5 to 9 p.m. June 27
Calderwood Courtyard at Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy St., near Harvard Square, Cambridge

Harvard Art Museums at Night

Free. During this recurring event wander exhibits, catch spotlight tours, make art in the Materials Lab, browse the shop, enjoy sounds from DJ C-Zone and buy snacks from LuLu Green and drinks from Lamplighter Brewing.

Harvard Book Store, 1256 Massachusetts Ave., Harvard Square, Cambridge

7 p.m. June 27

Joseph Earl Thomas reads from “God Bless You, Otis Spunkmeyer”

Free. The author of “Sink: A Memoir” discusses his debut novel which “War Porn” author Roy Scranton calls “a staggering literary achievement, one ... that breaks and remakes the very idea of the novel. With unflinching courage, luminous spirit and a virtuosic flow, Joseph Earl Thomas has written a Joycean ‘Ulysses’ inside a Philly E.R.”.

7 p.m. June 28
The Rockwell, 255 Elm St., Davis Square, Somerville

Stand-up Magic

\$20 to \$25. The first Boston-area show for a New York staple combining comedy and magic by Max Davidson, Tess Tregellas and Jason Silberman.

8 p.m. July 2
Somerville Theatre’s Crystal Ballroom, 55 Davis Square

Os Mutantes plays

\$30 to \$35. The influential Brazilian psychedelic rock band formed in 1966 and re-formed twice since has been paid tribute by everyone from Beck and Flea to Kurt Cobain and David Byrne. They arrive as a six-member band, still trippy.

6 p.m. June 27 (rain date: June 28)
Trum Field, 541 Broadway, Magoun Square, Somerville

Somerville Fourth of July Celebration

Free. DJ Philip Tan spins, the Search Party band plays some funky music, food vendors from Nibble Kitchen and Italian Wizard sell snacks and then ... fireworks.

1:30 p.m. July 4 (through Thursday)
Longy School of Music, 27 Garden St., Harvard Square, Cambridge

Divergent series classical music

Free, but register. A concert of new pieces in a program called Divergent Speed: Students were given only 24 hours to write 2 minutes of music for small mixed ensembles, who are then given an additional 24 hours to learn and rehearse the music. “This concert is a true test of students’ artistry, limiting opportunity for refinement and relying totally on raw creativity,” the school says.

7 to 8 p.m. July 3
Grolier Poetry Book Shop on 6 Plympton St., Harvard Square, Cambridge

Poets Jules Jacob, Steven Riel and Amanda Shaw

\$5 to \$10, but register. With an introduction by Joshua Nguyen.

6 to 10 p.m. June 28
City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square

Cambridge City Hall Dance Party

Free. Music and a light show and pop-up entertainments on a street closed to traffic, again with free family activities at Temple Street.

4 to 6 p.m. June 29
Mass Audubon Nature Center at Magazine Beach, 668 Memorial Drive, Cambridgeport

Meet the beekeeper

Free, but register. Beekeeper Mel Gadd shows bees in an active hive and explains the importance of honeybees and other pollinators and some honeybee-keeping basics.

■ List your cultural happenings at events@cambridgeday.com.

Go to bit.ly/3XcsfzY to see the calendars day by day

Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Ave., Somerville

7 p.m. June 29

Blowwlympics

\$25 to \$45. The Boston League of Wicked Wrestlers celebrates 20 years of “vaguely friendly competition between state-mandated smoke breaks” with rounds in the ring, drag, vendors, and dazzling feats of strength by our friends at New England Black Circus.

7:30 to 9:30 p.m. July 2 (and the first Tuesday of every month)

Smut Slam

\$10 suggested donation. An open mic invites participants to tell five-minute, real-life dirty stories. The top three slammers win swag from Good Vibrations. Kat Sistare hosts.

11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. June 29 (rain date: June 30)

Mystic River Basin, Somerville and Medford

Mystic River Pride Flotilla

Free. A pride parade on the water to showcase that the Mystic River is for everybody has good views near Blessing of The Bay Boathouse in Somerville and from Torbert Macdonald Park in Medford. Watchers can simply show up on the riverbanks; on-the-water participants are encouraged to register here to get email instructions and other information. The event is co-hosted by the Gentle Giant Rowing Club and Mystic River Watershed Association.

Noon to 8 p.m. June 29

358 Medford St., Gilman Square, Somerville

Gilman Park Marketplace and Winter Hill Brewing beer garden

Free. A project led by the CultureHouse organization brings the undeveloped Homans Site to life with an every-other-Saturday event through Aug. 24. Shop from makers, artisans and vintage vendors until 6 p.m., enjoy local brews for another two hours.

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (free and all ages) and 8 to 10 p.m. (\$10 and for those 18-plus) June 29
Connexion, 149 Broadway, Somerville

All She Wrote Pride Book Fair

The all-ages event features books and other items for sale from local vendors, a coloring book station, drag story times and tabling from nonprofits. The adult party has books for sale, store five-year anniversary merch, music, performances, vendors and snacks provided by Watertown’s Ritcey East restaurant.

Bow Market, 1 Bow Market Way, Union Square, Somerville

5:30 to 7 p.m. June 27

Sixth annual “Reading Frederick Douglass Together”

Free, but RSVP. The Somerville Museum hosts this reading of Douglass’ famous address, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (We wrote about last year’s reading here.) This year, Steven Flythe of the Department of Racial and Social Justice leads small group discussions before the reading of Douglass’ speech (all attendees are encouraged to queue up and read a section). A community discussion follows.

Noon to 4 p.m. June 30

NibbleFest

Free. The Nibble Kitchen food incubator celebrates its fifth anniversary at the marketplace with pop-ups from chefs-in-residence past and present, drink collaborations with Remnant Brewing and the Nook cocktail bar, live music and dancing, arts activities and face painting. The food includes vegan Brazilian from Brazil Green, baked goods from Elena’s and Boukan’n’en Afro-Haitian Cuisine, as well as alums BanglaAdda Bengali, Petra Jordanian, Riti’s Kulfi Ice Cream, Taquisimo Tacos, Nagomi Bento and Carolicious arepas.

Noon and 7:30 p.m. June 27 (and continuing through June 30)
Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second St., East Cambridge

Boston GuitarFest

\$20 to \$80 per show. Eliot Fisk and Zaira Meneses founded this premier guitar event in 2006 at the New England Conservatory of Music. This year, its second in Cambridge, BGFest features four days of noontime performances by acclaimed guitarists; an opening gala performance competition with four finalists (Wednesday); performances by Russian Flamenco guitar virtuoso Grisha Goryachev (June 27) and Croatian classical guitar virtuoso Ana Vidović (June 28); a signature solo recital by BGFest co-director, classical guitarist and educator Eliot Fisk (June 29); and a finale concert with the competition winner and the John Dearman Ensemble (June 30).

6 to 9 p.m. June 27
Urban Park Roof Garden atop the Kendall Center Green Garage at 90 Broadway, Kendall Square

Green Cambridge 20th Anniversary Celebration

RSVP, with \$20 to \$200 suggested donation, and all ages. Socializing, music, food and drinks for an organization focused on urban farms, urban forests and the beauty of trees and improving the habitat for all life within Cambridge. Special honors to former city councilor and departing board member Quinton Zondervan and his wife Radhika Nagpal.

8 p.m. to 4 a.m. June 29
Cloud & Spirits, 795 Main St., The Port, Cambridge

The Basement Project dance night

\$28.55. A night of music and visuals from DJs Mârelle, Daví, Simon 4:16 and Franziv at an event space between Central and Kendall squares and “a late-night set at a secret location.”

2 to 5 p.m. June 30
Starlight Square, 84 Bishop Allen Drive, Central Square, Cambridge

Best Last Day: A Starlight Lovefest

Free. The outdoor entertainment complex by the Central Square Business Improvement District closes after five years with music and dance, a “family photo” at 4 p.m. sharp and offers to take home a piece of the project.

7:30 p.m. June 27
Museum of Science, 1 Science Park, Boston, on the Cambridge border

Mars Symphony

\$20 and 18-plus. Cutting-edge research and audio bring the real sounds of Mars’ winds, dust devils and seismic rumbles, joined by orchestral melodies created from data collected from the red planet and stunning original visuals from the planetarium.

FILM AHEAD JUNE 27-JULY 4

LOCAL FOCUS



Madeleine Pélouquin plays Sasha, a teenage vampire.

A ‘Humanist Vampire,’ ‘MaXXXine’ hit town, and ‘Jaws’ resurfaces

By OSCAR GOFF

This week sees a pair of releases making premiere runs at **The Brattle Theatre**. In addition to the new documentary “Flipside,” moviegoers will have a chance to see one of the year’s best – and best-titled – horror-comedies: Ariane Louis-Seize’s “Humanist Vampire Seeking Consenting Suicidal Person.”

Madeleine Pélouquin plays Sasha, a teenage vampire whose pathological inability to take a human life worries her parents. Her prayers seem to be answered by Paul (Félix-Antoine Bénard), a depressed high schooler contemplating ending it all. The two form a pact – he’ll agree to become her “first time” – until feelings inevitably get in their way.

“Humanist Vampire,” which won the audience prize at this year’s Boston Underground Film Festival, taps into the irresistibly morbid vein of classic Tim Burton, the darkness of its story made palatable by its candy-colored visuals, a streak of cheerfully black humor and the adorable chemistry of its two leads. “Humanist Vampire” and “Flipside” run Friday through Monday at The Brattle.

If “Humanist Vampire” whets your appetite for Halloween-in-almost-July, the **Somerville Theatre**’s Midnight Special series continues Saturday with Stuart Gordon’s classic zom-com “Re-Animator” (1985). One of the undisputed classics of the golden age of the video rental store, “Re-Animator” borrows its title and general premise from a short story by H.P. Lovecraft, but uses them as a springboard for a gleefully gruesome bloodbath of a comedy.

In anticipation of Ti West’s horror threequel “MaXXXine,” which releases in theaters July 5, The Brattle hosts on Tuesday a double feature of its predecessors, “X” and “Pearl” (both 2022). I wrote about “X” a couple of weeks ago, so it feels only right that I should give “Pearl” her due. Despite being conceived literally as an afterthought – West and star Mia Goth wrote the screenplay during quarantine as they prepared to shoot “X,” and convinced studio A24 to extend their shoot to film it – “Pearl” has in many ways surpassed its sister-film in the public consciousness.

Set in 1981, this prequel trades the grindhouse grime of “X” for MGM Technicolor, with Goth playing the title role as a farm girl on the verge of a nervous breakdown. It’s a shame the Academy is so famously allergic to hor-

The “Admissions Granted” documentary by BB&N alum Miao Wang and Hao Wu plays at 9 p.m. Sunday on **MSNBC**. The film examines the Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard case that brought affirmative action and Harvard admissions standards before the Supreme Court. Talking heads include notables from Harvard and Tufts universities.

TOM MEEK

ror, because Goth’s performance here – terrifying, hilarious and heartbreaking, frequently all at once – is nothing short of extraordinary. It’s not necessary to see either film to enjoy the other, but the conversation between the two about sex, violence and stardom is fascinating, and it will be interesting to see how it is continued in “MaXXXine.”

Next week is, of course, the Fourth of July, and while many people will host cookouts and watch fireworks, movie fans have their own tradition: The Brattle’s annual screenings of “Jaws” (1975), which will unspool on 35 mm across several showtimes Wednesday and Thursday.

“Jaws” is, of course, one of those movies that changed everything, ushering in the age of the Hollywood blockbuster (while prompting a miserable business year for beaches). It is also, however, a product of the “New Hollywood” boom of the 1970s, and as such holds up better than nearly any film that’s followed in its footsteps in the 49 years since. Its trio of protagonists, played unforgettably by Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfuss and Robert Shaw, are at once archetypes and undeniably human, and its supporting cast – many of whom were non-actors discovered by Steven Spielberg on Martha’s Vineyard – make the fictional seaside town of Amity feel like a real, lived-in place. It is also an absolute machine of entertainment, as finely tuned as John Williams’ iconic score: Its scares and laughs still play like gangbusters to a crowd, even if they’ve all seen it a million times. As blockbusters go, we’ve honestly never needed a bigger boat than this one.

Oscar Goff is a writer and film critic based in Somerville. He is film editor and senior critic for the Boston Hassle, and a member of the Boston Society of Film Critics, Boston Online Film Critics Association and the Online Film Critics Society.

Cambridge-Somerville is a film mecca, with a half-dozen sites with a total 36 screens open daily:

The Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St., Harvard Square, Cambridge.

Founded in 1953 and a nonprofit since 2001. One 250-seat theater with 7.1 surround sound and 35mm capabilities with a specialty in themed repertory programs and classic, cutting-edge, foreign and art-house films as well as some first-runs and new releases of classics. **(617) 876-6837 and brattlefilm.org**

Harvard Film Archive at The Carpenter Center, 24 Quincy St., Harvard Square, Cambridge.

Founded in 1979 at Harvard University. One 188-seat theater with DCP, 35mm, 16mm and Super 8 capabilities and a repertory archive of more than 40,000 pieces of cinema history from around the world. **(617) 495-7578 and harvardfilmarchive.org**

Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square.

Founded in 1914. Three screens with 1,566 seats, including one with Dolby Digital Sound and 24 surround speakers and 70mm capabilities for a mix of first-run and repertory fare and classics. **(617) 625-5700 and somervilletheatre.com**

Landmark Kendall Square Cinema, 355 Binney St., Cambridge.

Opened in 1995. Nine screens with 682 seats with DLP digital projection and sound showcasing independent film, foreign-language cinema, restored classics and documentaries with some first-run and even blockbuster films mixed in. **(617) 621-1202**

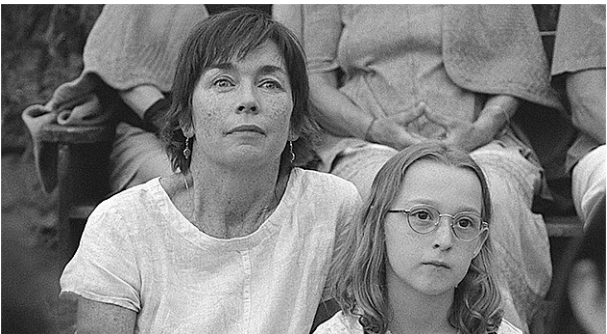
Apple Cinemas Cambridge, 168 Alewife Brook Parkway, Cambridge

Highlands near Alewife and Fresh Pond. First opened in 1965, reopened in 1990 with 10 screens. A specialty in screening South Asian cinema along with first-run films. **(617) 229-6555**

AMC Assembly Row 12, 395 Artisan Way, Assembly Square, Somerville.

Opened in 2014 with a dozen screens for first-run films with IMAX capabilities and Dolby sound. **(617) 440-4192**

FILM CLIPS



Zoe Ziegler, right, alongside Julianne Nicholson.

‘Janet Planet’: Orbiting mom

By MADELEINE AITKEN

The first shot of “Janet Planet,” the debut film from Pulitzer-winning playwright Annie Baker, is nostalgically picturesque: A girl runs through a grassy field at twilight to a warmly lit house, crickets and birds chirping in the background. Once inside, the girl, 11-year-old Lacy (Zoe Ziegler), gets on the phone and tells her mother in a tone that is almost unnervingly matter-of-fact: “I’m going to kill myself. I’m going to kill myself if you don’t come pick me up.” She wants to leave camp because she doesn’t have friends, though she doesn’t know why that is. The film follows the rest of her 1991 summer at home in Western Massachusetts with her mother Janet (Julianne Nicholson) with pacing that captures the plodding way time can pass for a child. The narrative is split into three parts for the three characters who come into and out of Janet and Lacy’s orbit over the course of those months. There’s Wayne (Will Patton), Janet’s sort of live-in boyfriend who doesn’t do much more than grunt until he starts to yell, which is when Janet kicks him out; Regina (Sophie Okonedo), Janet’s old friend who moves in after breaking up with her sort-of cult leader boyfriend Avi (Elias Koteas); and finally Avi himself, with whom Janet strikes up a relationship after Regina leaves. The performances are solid, especially Nicholson, but Ziegler is the real star, capturing a character who is somehow both hilariously precocious and deeply childlike. She’s lovably quirky, a kind of mini adult when she wants to be, evidently the result of spending most of her life around her mother and her friends. It’s the kind of film that risks being boring without actually being boring; though the plot trudges at times, there’s something about Lacy’s little life that is impossible to look away from. The film sees her through the vacation and into sixth grade with no real conclusion other than the fact that the season has ended. It needs nothing more.

At Kendall, Davis and Assembly squares.



Jane Squibb and Fred Hechinger in “Thelma.”

‘Thelma’: Wasting some youths

By TOM MEEK

Silly, funny and rewarding, this feature debut from comedy writer Josh Margolin saddles up on an unlikely hero, the senior citizen of the film’s title played by a brilliant and game 94-year-old Jane Squibb. Over her career Squibb, whose voice is currently onscreen in “Inside Out 2,” has worked with the likes of Scorsese and Woody Allen and in 2013 was Oscar nominated for her screen-dominating performance opposite Bruce Dern (also nominated) in Alexander Payne’s “Nebraska.” Hard to believe this is Squibb’s first leading role – as a senior who gets caught in a phishing scam, duped into believing her grandson (Fred Hechinger) has been kidnapped to pony up \$10,000. Thelma’s response is to get even with the scammers. She teams up with a senior named Ben (Richard Roundtree, in his last appearance, layering in subtly compassionate nuance instead of going all “Shaft” in the role) who lends her his scooter so she can rocket after the bad guys. It’s an empowering go for seniors, and though the ensemble includes Parker Posey and Clark Gregg, this is Squibb’s show and may just see her back in the golden glow of Oscar. It’ll be another first for Squibb, and the reason “Thelma” is a must-see.

At Kendall Square.



MUSIC

ATTEND

What’s in the bin?

By MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

The beat marches on with our latest spotlight from the “Totally Excellent” Cambridge Day Record Walk: Cheapo Records (538 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square, Cambridge).

You’ll recognize the beloved Central Square music shop by the discount shelves flanking your left and right as you enter through the vestibule. That’s the proper way to start an afternoon of crate digging – respectable \$1 selections on offer before you even walk through the door.

Once inside you’ll notice the shotgun-style floor plan. The inventory is packed into shelves along the wall and in the central island, which customers circumnavigate via a narrow aisle, clockwise or counterclockwise, more or less cognizant of other souls as they flip through the stacks intently.

The inventory trends toward used, exactly what you’d expect in a place called “Cheapo Records.” Vinyl predominates, but there are plenty of CDs to hunt through, plus a few tapes and DVDs.

And like most record shops, Cheapo Records doesn’t miss the opportunity to stock whatever pop culture detritus or music paraphernalia it thinks will sell. You will find an impressive collection of bootleg T-shirts, posters and pins. You can even buy a portable record player in the shade of lavender, if it strikes your fancy.

Among the genres, rock is most prominent. Soul comes a close second. And the local music bin is a head scratcher, featuring artists such as Andy Pratt (so much Andy Pratt!), Robin Lane, Human Sexual Response, John Butcher and a band called New England. All fine picks, but none of those artists were born after 1975. Maybe the newer stuff just gets filed under Indie?

Another question to ponder: What’s the rubric for deciding which music gets sent to the \$1 Cheapo Records bins and which music stays in the standard used bins? Shuffling through the stacks, I came up with a few guiding principles.

What’s getting sent to the \$1 Cheapo Records bin?

- Any classical record with a ravishing blonde in a ballgown on the cover
- Any holiday album older than five years, unless Bing Crosby and David Bowie are involved
- Any album with a xylophone, flute or sousaphone on the cover
- Any album by a guy named Mort, excluding the pioneer composer Mort Feldman
- Any album with a midcentury bourgeois couple lounging on a bear rug drinking martinis
- Any album with a white musician who is marketed as “the best white version” of black music, excluding Eric Burdon, whom you’ll still pay full price for
- Any volume past Volume 2
- Any stag party album with hits such as “I’m Late” and “My First Piece,” sung by Terri “Cup Cake” O’Mason
- Any album with a Bible verse on the cover
- Any album with an artist photo that zooms in too closely on the teeth
- Any minstrel album
- Any album dedicated to marches, waltzes or square dances

- Any brother-sister musical duo whose artist photo reads as incestuous
 - Any album with a roaring hearth on the cover
 - Any album by singer and actor Jim Nabors (aka Gomer Pyle)
- That’s about it. Cheapo Records has really hit on the value formula, and other record shops would be wise to fall in line.

Hit this

Friday *Mountain Movers, The Spatulas, Mordecai (Lilypad, Cambridge)*

A constellation of weird and wonderful indie rock bands, labels and at least one blog have conspired to throw a triple-stack indie rock fête at Inman Square’s favorite mural gallery. Join the party.

Sunday *Les Savy Fav, Kal Marks (The Sinclair, Cambridge)*

Les Savy Fav have come a long way since the five members met and started jamming in 1995 at the Rhode Island School of Design: about 55.3 miles via Interstate 95 if you don’t mind paying tolls, according to Google Maps. Boston’s Kal Marks, who keep insisting they’re from Providence, open.

Tuesday *Os Mutantes (Crystal Ballroom, Somerville)*

Super mega uber influential Brazilian psych outfit Os Mutantes are rolling through Crystal Ballroom, and you’ve got to roll with them. Every music celeb from Beck, Flea and Kurt Cobain to David Byrne has praised, promoted or otherwise drooled like a fanatic over this mutant crew of avant art pop. Find out why so much of contemporary pop music is still in love with these South American sweethearts. Find out what the hell “Tropicália” is. Find out whether the Crystal Ballroom has finally added a second bartender to cut down the ludicrously long wait for adult beverages.

Live: Twen, Raavi, Small Pond at Warehouse XI

Jane Fitzsimmons and Ian Jones are the twin suns illuminating the Twen solar system. The once-upon-a-time local rockers have spread their wings, left the nest and are living the #vanlife in search of the perfect sound somewhere in the Sunshine State. But all bets are off once the tour starts.

The Warehouse XI show Saturday found the band in fresh and fine fettle at the start of the journey. Twen performed as a five-piece, with a trio of touring members providing a deep rhythmic foundation for Fitzsimmons’ vocals and Jones’ guitar. The approach is Britpop with a shade of psych rock. You hear the British influence especially in their seamless transitions between dance-hall grooves and more conventional, lick-driven numbers. Psych trippers such as “Feeling In Love (From The Waist Down)” or “Fortune 500,” off their LP “One Stop Shop,” are those kind of happy hybrids from a time when rock’n’roll was trying to get you to move with your hips instead of just banging your head.

Indie outfits Raavi and Small Pond opened in support for the northeastern leg of the tour.

Michael Gutierrez is an author, educator, activist and editor-in-chief at Hump Day News.

FOOD

WHAT WE’RE HAVING



Tom Meek

A banh mi at Saigon Tiger in Somerville’s Davis Square.

Banh mi at Saigon Tiger

By TOM MEEK

Vietnamese victuals are all the rage. Pho Pasture has been holding court in Chinatown for decades, Bon Me trucks have gone storefront (another just opened in North Point) and Cicada, the Vietnamese coffee bar and snack shop, morphed into a hip nighttime dining spot, followed by the folks behind it launching haute destinations The Eaves in Bow Market and, more recently, the roof deck refuge Saigon Babylon in the Sonder 907 Hotel in Central Square.

Early this year An Nam opened in Assembly Row, and in Davis Square there’s Saigon Tiger, which has been serving up some of the best banh mi sandwiches in town since it opened last year. (Coming soon to Porter Square will be Phinista Cafe, blending French-Vietnamese culinary traditions to serve banh mi and crepes.)

Saigon Tiger hides in plain sight, right across from the Somerville Theatre on Holland Street. From the outside you might think it a dental office. Once you step inside, it has that total cafe vibe: spare and clean, with a short bar and several small tables served by friendly staff.

Unless you order pickup, it’s all table service – which threw me at first – for lunch and dinner with a focused menu of that banh mi, rice and noodle bowls (cold Vietnamese vermicelli with peanut sauce is a yummy heat-beater), bao buns (they call them “baozi”) and street food offerings.

The latter features a pretty decent fresh spring roll with some of those cool vermicelli noodles that comes with some marinated, lightly friend tofu, pickled carrots and radish wrapped in a super thin, translucent bánh tráng (rice paper); fried okra; lemongrass chicken wings; and coconut shrimp. As far as side sauces are concerned for noodles, rice bowls and beyond, there’s that classic peanut sauce, a fish sauce that comes in a vegan variation, a chili sauce, soy and Sriracha.

■ **Saigon Tiger, 7 Holland St., Davis Square, Somerville**

The banh mi list offers up traditional pork and chicken (grilled or crispy) with pork pate, picked veggies, jalapeños and super fresh cilantro sprigs. You can get a breakfast variation that comes with perfectly sunny-side up fried eggs or even one with eggs and

Saigon Tiger hides in plain sight, right across from the Somerville Theatre on Holland Street.

spam (let the Monty Python joke fly!). You can add a sunny-side up egg to pretty much anything on the menu.

The thing to have, though, is the grilled chicken banh mi.

The French baguette is crunchy and moist in the right places (too fresh and chewy or too flaky are banh mi misses), and the chicken comes right off the grill hot and juicy and melds well with the rich pate and accoutrement of pickled veggies. It’s simple and sinful, a comfort food that always feels like a discovery.

Saigon Tiger also offers a host of Vietnamese-styled coffees, smoothies and a full bar where you can get such libations as a lychee martini or the Vietnamese spin on an old-fashioned – basil and bitters are involved.

Tom Meek is a writer living in Cambridge. His reviews, essays, short stories and articles have appeared in the WBUR ARTery, The Boston Phoenix, The Boston Globe, The Rumpus, The Charleston City Paper and SLAB literary journal. Tom is also a member of the Boston Society of Film Critics and rides his bike everywhere.

SNACK



CheeZaatar manaqeesh

Price: \$6.25

Though Yafa has many fancy sweets, its savory breads are a great way to pick up energy on meandering walks down Somerville Avenue. The CheeZaatar (cheese and zaatar) manaqeesh flatbread at this Palestinian bakery and cafe is a luscious combination of carbs and spice. Like any thin cheesy bread, it goes best with a drink or a dip in oil-drizzled hummus for few more dollars. The manaqeesh doesn’t skimp on flavor, and is coated in a thick crust of zingy Zaatar seasoning. The sesame seeds in the seasoning are fresh and rich, and they were my favorite part. Most of the other flavors of manaqeesh – a labneh and cheese and tomato – use the same boatlike shape; the plain cheese is round like a pizza. For anyone who has not stood in line sipping a free chai sample while admiring the decor and debating which breads or confections to buy, Yafa bakery is an overdue discovery.

MAREN CLARK

■ **Yafa Bakery & Cafe, 594 Somerville Ave., Spring Hill, Somerville**

ARTS

LAUGH

It’s crystals, body oils and comedy at the boutique

While Cambridge and Somerville await the return of club comedy at venues such as The Comedy Studio and Duck Duck Goofs, we’re seeing no slowdown of shows presented in nontraditional venues – and this week’s highlight is no different. If you’re up for a laugh but also want to explore the handmade artistry Cambridge has to offer, the MIT-area Black-owned Popp Boutique will serve as a serene and welcoming host for a night of local comedy. A far cry from the typical trappings of a comedy club, show attendees will get to laugh among “beautiful artwork, handcrafted scented goods, crystals, body oils and so much more” from Mahogany Expression and The Journey Within. Chef Phil has assembled a variety of talented local comedians, including Uzair Malik (Boston Comedy Festival), Ariana Seymourian (Portland Maine Comedy Festival), Alexis Cristaldi, Guerby Laguerre and Trent Wells.

AMMA MARFO

■ **The Popp Boutique Comedy Show is 7 p.m. Saturday at Popp Boutique, 301 Massachusetts Ave., The Port, Cambridge. \$15**



Comic Uzair Malik during a set at Vera’s in Somerville’s Union Square.

READ

All She Wrote Books closes out Pride with a Scholastic-style fair

By MADELEINE AITKEN

In a nod to the Scholastic book fairs she grew up with, All She Wrote Books owner Christina Pascucci-Ciampa will host a two-part book fair Friday that combines nostalgia with the end of Pride month for an event she’s dubbed “the gayest book fair ever.”

All She Wrote Books is an intersectional feminist and queer bookstore that started as a pop-up at Bow Market in 2019 and now occupies a storefront on Washington Street in East Somerville – so the book fair serve as a celebration of the store’s fifth anniversary.

Pascucci-Ciampa hopes it will evoke the feelings of the school events many have in common, but better.

“You’re going to see probably the most gay books you’ve ever seen in one place, aside from our bookstore – but we’re still going to have all the nostalgic stuff like the tote bags and the pencil cases and the pencils,” Pascucci-Ciampa said. “I want to bring that nostalgia into it, but with different books that weren’t part of the original experience.”

During the daytime portion, there will be books and other merchandise available for sale from All She Wrote. Nonprofits such as Fenway Health, the ACLU of Massachusetts and the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth will table, along with Rebecca Minor, a gender specialist and clinical social worker who works with trans and gender-nonconforming youth. There will be drag story hours.

During the nighttime portion, for

which tickets need to be bought online for \$10, tables will include Lavender Education, an adult education group dedicated to LGBTQ+ history, and the Crafty Queer Studio, who will have Pride pins, jewelry and stickers. There will be a coloring book station, and All She Wrote Books will again have books for sale, along with bookmarks, tote bags, stickers, pins, and five-year anniversary merch. FemMenThem, a queer cabaret group, will perform two book-themed shows.

Food will be provided by Ritcey East in Watertown. “Nineties style comfort food but better: homemade Pop-Tarts, tater tots paired with delicious burgers,” Pascucci-Ciampa said.

For Pascucci-Ciampa, the book fair is an ode and an upgrade to her youth.

“When I was a kid, I didn’t have money for the Scholastic book fairs, but I used to pore over those catalogs and dream about the curated bookshelf that I would have in my bedroom,” she said. “The books I really wanted, though, the books that I would’ve seen myself in, weren’t there.”

This gay-ified book fair is a reflection of the queer book community Pascucci-Ciampa has cultivated at All She Wrote Books over the past five years.

“It’s an opportunity to do what we already do in the bookstore, but make it a fun event,” Pascucci-Ciampa said.

■ **The All She Wrote Pride Book Fair is 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (free and all ages) and 8 to 10 p.m. (\$10 and for those 18-plus) at Connexion, 149 Broadway, East Somerville**

Legal ads

■ Send legal ads and public notices at least six business days ahead of the intended publication date to advertising@cambridgeday.com with contact information that includes a contact name, phone number and address.

Legal Notice Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

Notice is hereby given that the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, July 1, 2024 at 6:00PM to consider the following applications under Ch. 2.78, Article III of the City Code and the Order establishing the District.

The meeting will be held online with remote participation. The public can participate online via the Zoom platform (<https://zoom.us/>) from a phone, tablet, or computer. To join the meeting, register at <https://tinyurl.com/MCJuly2024> or call (301)715-8592 Webinar ID: 883 7001 9877.

MC-7037: 393 Broadway #18, by Maureen, Chris & Blake Bunney. Replace windows.

MC-7038: 3 Leonard Avenue, by Tatyana Raphael. Solar roof panels.

MC-7039: 29 Line Street, by Yi Yue. Alter fenestration, front

porch; new dormer and deck.
MC-7047: 106 Inman Street, by Brian Lavelle for Hawthorne Development Ventures Deux LLC. New single-family home in rear of lot.

Tony Hsiao, Chair
Cambridge Day, The Week,
06/20/24, 06/27/24

LEGAL NOTICE CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that a public meeting will be held on **Thursday, July 11, 2024, at 6:00 PM** to consider the following matters under M.G.L. Ch. 40C and Ch. 2.78 of the Code of the City of Cambridge:

This meeting will be held online with remote participation. The public may participate via Zoom webinar (<https://zoom.us/>) from a phone, tablet, or computer. To join the meeting, register at: <https://tinyurl.com/CHCJuly11-2024> or call (301)715-8592. Webinar ID#: 816 8522 0175. Confirm meeting details and materials at <https://tinyurl.com/CHistComm>. Submit

written comment prior to 24 hours before the meeting to histcomm@cambridgema.gov.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties
Case 5117 (continued): 18 Farwell Pl., by C. Rieder & Gary Chafetz. Construct new covered entrance landing.

Public Hearing: Landmark Designation Proceedings
Case L-147: 43-45 Mt. Auburn St., by petition of registered Cambridge voters. Consider petition to initiate a landmark study for the building (1846 double house, 1928 clubhouse addition).

Bruce A. Irving, Chair
Cambridge Week, 6/27/24, 7/3/24

Cases may be taken out of order and approved at the beginning of the meeting. Persons who wish to have a hearing on a case should notify the Commission in advance or be present at the beginning of the meeting when the Consent Agenda will be discussed.

City of Cambridge Massachusetts BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL

831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, MA. 617) 349-6100

The Board of Zoning Appeal will hold a Virtual Public Meeting, THURSDAY – JULY 11, 2024. Members of the public can participate or view the meeting remotely using the Zoom Webinar link: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/85299551558>
Or join by phone: Dial +1 929 436 2866 or +1 301 715 8592 - Webinar ID: 852 9955 1558

6:00 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-272231: 41 TIERNEY STREET Residence B Zone
41 TIERNEY ST LLC – C/O GERALD J. MCCARTHY
Special Permit: To rebuild front staircase to add height needed to enter front doorway. Staircase is within the front yard setback.

Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.2.d (Non-Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

6:15 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-268599: 17 MILLER AVENUE Residence B Zone
PAUL FOMBELLE – C/O GINA FOMBELLE
Special Permit: To modify window & door sizing on rear of existing house within rear

setback, add skylight within side yard setback and add railing to existing front porch roof within front setback. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements).

Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.2.d & Sec. 8.22.2.c (Non-Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

6:30 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-274800: 50 WENDELL STREET Residence C-1 Zone
REBECCA M. HENDERSON – C/O MICHAEL W. WIGGINS, ESQ.

Special Permit: To increase the width of an existing dormer located on the third story resulting in an increase to an existing nonconforming Floor Area Ratio. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.2.d (Non-Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

6:45 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-271439: 47-20 COGSWELL AVENUE Residence B Zone
DANA SCHAEFER & MATTHEW PESCI – C/O MICHAEL W. WIGGINS, ESQ.
Variance: A small addition is planned to the rear of the residence that will slightly increase the currently nonconforming FAR. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.3 (Non-

How we can create LGBTQ+ and other kinds of community

By RAYSHAUNA GRAY

When I moved to Cambridge from Chicago in 2009, I found community in meetups throughout the city. I jumped at opportunities to expand my communication skills through an American Sign Language group. I connected with my inner (and outer) dork while battling Cylons and rolling 20-sided dice at MIT. I learned more about the inclinations of different personality types through a Myers-Briggs group that met in Porter Square.

And while I had an amazing time, some groups also deepened my historical understanding and helped me strengthen my politics.

Over many vegetarian and vegan meals with a feminist meetup in Central Square, I listened to others’ stories – ones of personal and cultural triumph.

I participated in building a community from a place of integrity and radical joy. I saw how it helps honor our collective dignity and increase the quality of our lives. I saw firsthand how communities and people are better equipped to thrive when we treat one another with decency and operate with an intersectional vision of justice.

When I learned that History Cambridge was working on an LGBTQ+ History Hub, I was eager to help compile content. I scoured resources and was bowled over. I saw liberation movements convene on Cambridge Common, where George Washington gathered Continental army troops. Colleges and universities that draw people from around the world cultivated deep reflection, set standards for representation in curricula and celebrated the meaningful work of their alumnae and the broader community.



Cambridge Historical Commission

A station wagon painted with pro-gay affirmations parked in front of Christ Church, Cambridge, circa 1970.

There were narratives of Cantabrigians whose unions and civic contributions (such as those of Jarrett Barrios, Kenneth Reeves, E. Denise Simmons and Katherine Triantafillou) heralded possibilities for others throughout the country.

I saw the generation of potential futures, the commemoration of spaces such as The Marquee and ManRay and, when the devastating realities of our current society claimed people, I saw how beloved community members such as Chanelle Pickett and Charley Shively were memorialized for and through advocacy.

As I mull these examples of self-determination, I remember those meetups that taught me how to show up in community. Through the lives of others from a range of identities, I learned to listen, serve and bear loving critique. I recognized the work of the Southern-Midwestern Black women who taught me how to receive people and brought it to New England.

This matters – the acknowledg-

ments of names and pronouns, the careful consideration of each other’s needs and the tender interpersonal dynamics that help us signal that we matter to one another.

“Can somebody in a wheelchair get here? Is the space accessible by public transportation? How can we facilitate a movie screening about menstrual cycles in ways that aren’t reductive about what’s between our legs? I should list the ingredients in this meal in case of allergies. Do we have child care and eldercare available? Can folks take food home? Y’all got rides? Did you get home safe?”

I joined those meetups, hosted and fed people in my home and local spaces, facilitated deep and shallow conversations about society (all meaningful, all necessary), and some of those attendees became friends. I opened myself up to radical and intentional community by creating, safeguarding and improving upon it.

Then those new friends became colleagues. Those meals and movie nights

became coalition-building meetings for MassNOW’s former legislative task force. Academic institutions conducted inclusive restroom studies and working groups amid the landscape of menstrual equity and transgender equal access and public accommodations work. Organizational testimony and demonstrations spoke to healthy youth and anti-shackling legislation. Pay equity work affected the financial abundance of people throughout the commonwealth. The personal was also political ... and it influenced culture.

Like many, I searched my moral landscape while I heard things that challenged my worldview and values (and the social circumstances I was taught to believe were normal and necessary). I lent my time, abilities and cultural insight in community to benefit my community ... and we got great (albeit imperfect) work done.

We know that the past creates a foundation for our present and possible futures, and so the work continues. There are many ways to affect our communities, and preserving history and sharing stories are a couple of great ones. Our LGBTQ+ History Hub is a work in progress, and we welcome your contributions.

As we conduct interviews for our Queer History of Cambridge Oral History Project, we’re mindful of the

need to interview Cantabrigians of different demographics and to create an institutional archive to be made available to researchers interested in Cambridge’s LGBTQ+ experience. This project is in partnership with The History Project and we want to hear from you. If you have any questions, please contact Marieke Van Damme, History Cambridge executive director.

If you’re interested in local Pride events, the Longfellow House Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site hosts a Pride Picnic (in partnership with the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission) and a guided 55-minute Deep Dive Tour about its Queer history on Sunday. In the event of rain, the picnic takes place July 7. Both events are free, and no reservations or registrations are required.

Rayshauna Gray is an entrepreneur and public historian who has done extensive work with History Cambridge, Boston’s Museum of African American History, Tufts University’s Center for the Study of Race & Democracy and the National Organization for Women. She is also one of the researchers delving into Harvard’s legacy of slavery at Cambridge’s Longfellow House and George Washington Headquarters, a project led by the National Park Service and National Council on Public History.

About History Cambridge: History Cambridge started in 1905 as the Cambridge Historical Society. Today we have a new name and a new mission. We engage with our city to explore how the past influences the present to shape a better future. We recognize that every person in our city knows something about Cambridge’s history, and their knowledge matters. We listen to our community and we live by the ideal that history belongs to everyone. Throughout 2023, we are focusing on the history of Cambridgeport. Make history with us at historycambridge.org. ■ History Cambridge is a nonprofit organization. Our activities rely on your financial support. If you value articles like this one, give today at historycambridge.org.

Legal ads

Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.30 (Variance).

7:00 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-272790: 63-65 RESERVOIR STREET #63

Residence B Zone
RAFAEL JARAMILLO & MARGO LEVINE – C/O ALISON HAMMER, ARCHITECT

Special Permit: Two small second floor additions which further increase the nonconforming GFA in a pre-existing non-conforming two-family condominium structure. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements).

Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.2.d (Enlargement of Pre-existing Nonconformity). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

7:15 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-272791: 37 BELLIS CIRCLE

Residence B Zone
ROGER S. BERRY & SONIA PEREZ VILLANUEVA – C/O LEVI TOFIAS, ARCHITECT

Special Permit: Addition to the 3rd floor and minor renovations to the 1st floor mudroom. The proposed 3rd floor Addition is conforming to setbacks and GFA, but the addition adds over 10% of the existing Gross Floor Area (GFA) and volume. 1st floor renovations include relocation of windows in the right yard setback. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements).

Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.2.d & Sec. 8.22.2.c (Non-Conforming

Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

7:30 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-269729: 145 FIFTH STREET

Residence C-1 Zone
CHRISTOPHER SMITH – C/O ADAM GLASSMAN, ARCHITECT

Special Permit: To add a new full second story, raise existing half story and add dormers. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements).

Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.2.d (Non-Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

7:45 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-272620: 27 MELLEN STREET

Residence C-2A Zone
JEREMY SEEGER – C/O ADAM DASH, ESQ.

Variance: Re-establish the previously existing lot lines of the Property by subdividing the Property from land which merged as a result of common ownership by Lesley University. This subdivision creates nonconformities for abutting lots, but the proposed 27 Mellen Street lot and structure will be conforming. The existing structure at 27 Mellen Street will be altered and expanded to allow for its use, conversion from university offices to residential units. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Sec. 5.15 (Subdivision).

Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.3 (Non-

Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.30 (Variance).

8:00 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-272623: 29 MELLEN STREET

Residence C-2A Zone
JEREMY SEEGER – C/O ADAM DASH, ESQ.

Variance: Re-establish the previously existing lot lines of the Property by subdividing the Property from land which merged as a result of common ownership by Lesley University. This subdivision creates nonconformities for abutting lots, but the proposed 29 Mellen Street lot and structure will be conforming. The existing structure at 29 Mellen Street will be altered and expanded to allow for its use conversion from university offices to residential units. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Sec. 5.15 (Subdivision).

Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.3 (Non-Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.30 (Variance).

8:15 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-272139: 378-380 RINDGE AVE

– UNIT 1 Residence C-1A Zone/ MXR
AL-AMIN, INC. – C/O ADAM DASH, ESQ.

Variance: Additions for a third floor, at the Northeast corner, and in the rear of the existing non-conforming structure. Variances are required for Gross Floor Area,

Floor to Area Ratio, Open Space, and alteration of a nonconforming structure.

Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.3 (Non-Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.30 (Variance).

8:30 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-271432: 9-11 MT AUBURN STREET

Office 2/Harvard Sq Overlay
MT. AUBURN MLD LLC – C/O SARAH L. RHATIGAN, ESQ.

Variance: Conversion of buildings from office to residential dwelling units, requiring variance from open space requirements; and removal of connector between buildings requiring variance to allow maintaining of the distance between existing buildings.

Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Sec. 5.26 (Conversion of Dwellings). & Sec. 5.13 (Distance Between Buildings).

Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.30 (Variance).

Special Permit: Renovations and additions to nonconforming structure increasing Floor Area but not creating new nonconformities.

Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.2.a (Alterations to Non-Conforming Structure). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

TO VIEW BZA CASE APPLICATIONS, PLANS & SUBMISSIONS, GO TO: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/inspection/zoning.aspx> at top of page, click “Calendar” > Click hearing date >

Click “Board of Zoning Appeal Agenda.” Any information filed after the agenda has been posted can be viewed at the Inspectional Services Department located at 831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge

by appointment only. Copies of this petition are also on file in the office of the City Clerk, City Hall, Cambridge, MA. Interested persons may provide comments to the Board of Zoning Appeal by

participating during the hearing and/or may provide written comments for the Board’s consideration by mailing or delivering them to the attention of the Secretary, Board of Zoning Appeal,

831 Mass Avenue, 02139 or by emailing them to mpacheco@cambridgema.gov. Comments must be submitted prior to the Hearing and include the Case Number.

Continued cases are not re-advertised but are posted on the office board at the City Clerk’s Office in City Hall & on the same BZA Web Page 48 hours prior to hearing.

WILD THINGS

■ Send your high-resolution images of urban wild things with location, date, photographer's name and other useful information for possible use online to photography@cambridgeday.com.



The fragile forktail, as well as the eastern forktail damselfly, lower left, are so named because the males have tiny projections off the end of their body.

Tom Murray

Damselflies create children in a most complicated way during their brief adulthood

By JEANINE FARLEY

Damselflies, also called darning needles, mosquito hawks or even neon toothpicks, are colorful predatory flying insects with slender bodies, large eyes and clear wings. They are similar to dragonflies but smaller and slimmer. They fold their wings along their body – unlike dragonflies, which hold their wings out from the body.

Fossil records show that ancestors of damselflies with 30-inch wingspans flew more than 300 million years ago! They had wingspans similar to the wingspans of pileated woodpeckers or small hawks. These giant insects flew tens of millions of years before dinosaurs roamed the planet, and 150 million years before flying birds evolved.

Damselflies go through three stages: egg, a larva or nymph (a small adult without wings) and adult. Although we most often see the adults, this stage lives only days or weeks. Damselflies spend most of their lives – one to three years! – as tiny underwater nymphs.

The nymphs lie in wait until water fleas or small offspring of snails, worms, crayfish or clams swim by. Then their lower lip, with two hooks on the end, rockets out to snatch prey. You might see something like it in a sci-fi thriller.

Damselfly nymphs breathe dissolved oxygen in water using three bladelike gills that protrude from the end of their body. They can also absorb some oxygen through damp skin, so if oxygen levels in the water are low, the nymphs surface to the open air. The bladelike gills also function like a rudder, helping steer them through the water.

Damselfly nymphs shed their skin up to 15 times as they grow larger. During their last molt, they climb out of the water. Their skin splits down the back, and a winged adult emerges. They swallow air to pump up the wings and body, resting in the sun to dry out. The adult damselflies breathe through 20 holes (called spiracles) on the sides of their bodies, for they do not have lungs. The spiracles are connected to a tubular network that delivers oxygen to cells and collects carbon dioxide to be expelled.

The new six-legged adults move away from the water to sheltered areas

where they feed on small insects, especially mosquitoes, flies and aphids. They often hover over low vegetation, picking off prey from leaves and stems (unlike dragonflies, who prefer to capture flying prey).

Although adult damselflies are capable of living for 15 weeks, most damselflies die within a few days. Some die due to harsh weather conditions. Others are eaten. Birds, frogs, spiders, fish, dragonflies and salamanders all eat damselflies!

Damselflies return to the water to mate, where males are very territorial, guarding their turf, chasing away rival males and approaching any females that happen by. The males recognize the females by their color patterns.

Damselflies have long, slender abdomens with 10 segments. Male damselflies have two penises – a primary one and a secondary one. Hundreds of millions of years ago, they had only one at the end of their long abdomen on the ninth segment, and that is still the primary penis in modern damselflies. At the other end of the abdomen, on the second segment near the damselfly's midsection, is a secondary penis that stores sperm.

The male must fill his storage penis with sperm before he can mate. He does this by looping the tip of his abdomen in a circle to the storage penis at the other end of his abdomen to make the transfer.

Mating may be preceded by a courtship dance in which the male displays his wings, abdomen or legs to a female. The female pays close attention to the male's coloration, size, ability to defend his territory and even his body temperature.

To mate, the male grabs the female behind the head with claspers at the end of his abdomen. The female curls her abdomen around to collect the sperm the male has stored. (The female's reproductive organs are at the tip of her abdomen.) The entwined bodies form a heart shape.

After mating, the male hangs on and flies in tandem with the female as she lays her eggs. He wants to prevent other males from mating with her. If a rival male is successful in dislodging the first male, the rival male scrapes out the first male's sperm and deposits his



Tom Murray



own – all while the pair is locked in the heart formation.

The female lays eggs in plant stems or leaves in or near water as the male hangs on or hovers nearby. The eggs hatch in two to five weeks, depending on weather conditions. Eggs laid in the fall suspend their development until spring, when temperatures warm.

Damselflies, like dragonflies, have compound eyes made up of 20,000 to 30,000 photoreceptor cells (resembling a honeycomb). These eyes produce astoundingly clear images. They can spot prey from 40 feet! They can also see colors, such as ultraviolet, that humans cannot. In addition to their main eyes, damselflies have three simple eyes arranged in a triangle between their large eyes. These are light sensitive organs that help them follow movement.

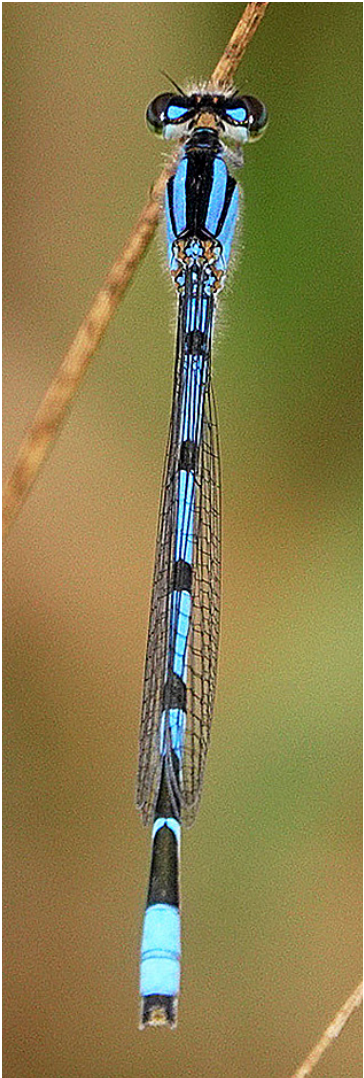
The species' flying ability is also fantastic. Their front and hind wings beat in opposite directions, which makes

them highly maneuverable. They are among the fastest flying insects, and they can hover or fly backward.

When you see dragonflies or damselflies near water, this is a good sign. It means the water is relatively unpolluted. Damselfly dependence on water is also concerning, because it makes these insects vulnerable as our wetlands diminish.

When the weather is cool (below 60 degrees Fahrenheit) or raining or windy, damselflies rest on vegetation instead of flying. If you want to photograph or take a close look at a damselfly, look early in the day when the temperature is cooler. Once the weather warms up, damselflies flit about so much that it is more difficult to get a close look.

Jeanine Farley is an educational writer who has lived in the Boston area for more than 30 years. She enjoys taking photos of our urban wild things.



Norm Levey

A bluet in Lincoln seen in 2020.