



WILD THINGS

Planting tropical milkweed in butterfly gardens appears to disrupt monarch migration and pass on a very problematic parasite.

Page 12

THE WEEK

AUG. 1-8, 2024

FREE | by CAMBRIDGE DAY



Marc Levy

A runner passes the long-empty Aguacate Verde restaurant in Somerville's Wilson Square.

Development dangled again at empty eatery

By MADISON LUCCHESI

Development is being dangled again at an empty restaurant space decaying for seven years in Somerville's little Wilson Square. Aguacate Verde closed its doors unexpectedly in 2016 and has remained vacant since – still painted orange and green and adorned with a fading sign, its doorway recently covered over with drywall by its owner, Somerville's LaCourt Realty. “We plan to remodel the building hopefully sooner than later,” said a LaCourt Realty representative who would give his name only as Nick. Attempts to get his last name were ignored; a call to the owner of LaCourt, Mouhab Rizkallah, did not get a response.

See RESTAURANT, Page 5

Police unions fight body-worn cameras and unarmed crew

By SUE REINERT

Conflict has broken into the open between police unions and Cambridge over two changes long sought by activists and supported by the city: equipping officers with body cameras and establishing an unarmed response team as an alternative to police. The president of the Cambridge Patrol Officers Association, Chris Sullivan, issued a statement Monday questioning the qualifications and training of the new Cambridge Assistance Response and Engagement team that began answering some emergency mental health-related calls July 15. Sullivan asserted that police were involved in most of the initial responses and said: “This fundamentally has resulted in a duplication of services.” The statement also reiterated that police “are supportive of the deployment of body-worn cameras” – despite the fact that the patrol officers and superior officers unions sought privately to force the city to negotiate with the unions on whether to adopt the cameras.

See POLICE, Page 4

Braking e-bike deliveries



Marc Levy

An Uber Eats e-bike sits outside the Sugar & Spice Thai restaurant in Cambridge's Porter Square on March 17.

The proposal was to replace Doordash, but Cambridge shifted to another gear

By MATT ROCHA

Third-party delivery services such as Grubhub, DoorDash and Uber Eats are ubiquitous, with drivers shuttling takeout and groceries throughout Cambridge and Somerville for time-strapped residents. They're as expensive as they are convenient. According to data from McKinsey & Co., a consulting firm, Americans pay 40 percent more for takeout when they use third-party delivery services, while restaurants

pay a 15 percent to 30 percent fee when these services deliver their food. For seniors and other vulnerable residents, many of whom relied on delivery services during the Covid pandemic, it can be too much to stomach. Cambridge thinks it might have an answer. To alleviate the burden of steep delivery fees, the city is thinking about subsidizing cargo e-bikes for local businesses, essentially moving delivery services in-house for neighborhood shops. “The program we hope to offer

would provide an alternative to high third-party service fees,” said Paradis Saffari, director of economic opportunity and development at the Cambridge Community Development Department, the city's planning agency. Annie Shawn, communications manager for CDD, called the e-cargo bikes more environmentally friendly than cars often used by third parties for delivery and primed to “benefit from the continually expanding network of protected bike lanes across the city.”

It will be a while before local delivery riders are zipping around on city-bought bikes, if at all. At this point, the program is more of a dream than a plan. “We are still vetting the program, meaning it is in the very early stages. There are many steps ahead,” said Susanne Rasmussen, director of environmental and transportation planning at CDD. “However, we believe our current direction is promising.”

See CAMBRIDGE, Page 10

INSIDE

News: When temperatures rose in one neighborhood, an asphalt patchwork began melting onto tires and even shoes.

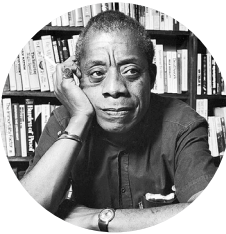
Page 3

Business: Four decades of Mary Chung will disappear, save for a Facebook group.

Page 5

Attend: The big news is the return of Great Scott in Allston, reminding us of how music venues here ride the razor's edge.

Page 9



FILM AHEAD

Tributes to James Baldwin, a Web animation pioneer, Metallica and looks back at greats from 1999, starting with “The Matrix.”

Page 8

EVENTS AHEAD

Enjoy a pop-up arcade, a Black Flag tour, plants that make music, the Openair Circus and getting funny with New Yorker cartoonists.



Pages 6-7

MEETINGS AHEAD

Cambridge: Surveillance for four squares and future payments to Cambridge by the largely tax-exempt Harvard.

Somerville: A request to let shoppers buy recreational pot without an appointment and demolition for a home with a giant front lawn.

Page 2

MEETINGS AUG. 1-8

CAMBRIDGE

Surveillance cameras and Harvard payment

By MARC LEVY

Future payments by Harvard

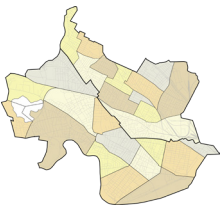
Economic Development & University Relations Committee, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday. This committee run by city councillor Paul Toner will get an update on and offer suggestions about city negotiations with Harvard for future payments in lieu of taxes (since so much of the institution's land is tax-exempt). The committee meets at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Surveillance in four squares

City Council special summer meeting, 5:30 p.m. Monday. The full list of topics for this special meeting mid-way between a July-August break isn't posted, save for the city manager's presentation of a surveillance technology impact report with discussion of cameras going up in Central, Harvard, Inman and Porter squares in an "overt" way – a response to calls for more surveillance after a few incidents of violence citywide. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Norris preschool, Harvard homes

Planning Board, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday. So controversial more than a decade ago as a former school being converted to homes, 40 Norris St., North Cambridge, is back on agenda to return to a use for children: turning a couple of basement commercial spaces into a preschool or the like. Also before the board is a request to extend a 2022 permit to put a three-story addition of 38 apartments on the Crimson Galeria at 57 John F. Kennedy St. by Harvard Square's historic Winthrop Park. "The main reason that construction on the addition has not commenced yet is the significant increase in interest rates since the project was initially planned," the developer told the board in a letter. "We plan to commence this project once we are able to obtain construction financing at a reasonable rate." A two-year extension is asked. Watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.



◀ **Cambridge's City Council** next meets in a special session Monday, 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 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday from September through June and at 5 p.m. the first Tuesday in August 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

Pot shop wants end to appointment need

By MATTHEW SAGE

Insurance expansion, pot retail

Planning Board, 6 p.m. Thursday. Liberty Mutual Insurance is set to open offices on the periphery of Assembly Square, a process that's now taken more than half a decade to complete. Discussion began July 18 on a request to change the ground-floor use at a project called Alta Xmbly planned for 290 Revolution Drive – an eight-story building with 324 multifamily units and five townhouse units with a 188-parking-space garage. The request is to have 4,543 square feet of insurance company offices at the base instead of retail.

Union Leaf, aptly a pot store at 71-72 Union Square, is appealing a stipulation of the board, arguing against the need for the appointment-only business model forced upon all Somerville dispensaries in 2021. Another cannabis vendor, Seed, operated by Core Empowerment LLC, makes the case for a special retail sales permit to allow it to replace a former liquor store at 500 Medford St., Magoun Square. Seed has a Boston location and wants to expand.

The board, as an adviser to the City Council, will also discuss changes to zoning asked by residents and landlords and give input on the development of Brickbottom, home to several businesses nestled between McGrath Highway and train lines. City staff have targeted Brickbottom as an area for "extensive change" and are aiming to finalize a development plan this summer, paving the way for street renovations and new building designs. Watchable via videoconferencing.

Demolition of historic home

Historic Preservation Commission, 6:45 p.m. Tuesday. Hear updates on the proposed multibillion-dollar expansion of the Somernova business and tech campus in Ward 2 between Union and Porter squares and the first step in the demolition of a small home for redevelopment of 80 Curtis St., West Somerville. The home is more than a century old and its owner needs commission permission to tear it down. Owner Anthony Seretakis, who owns at least a half-dozen other homes in Somerville, has not said publicly what will take the place of the cottage bungalow-style structure with its huge front yard. Watchable via videoconferencing.

THE WEEK

by CAMBRIDGE DAY

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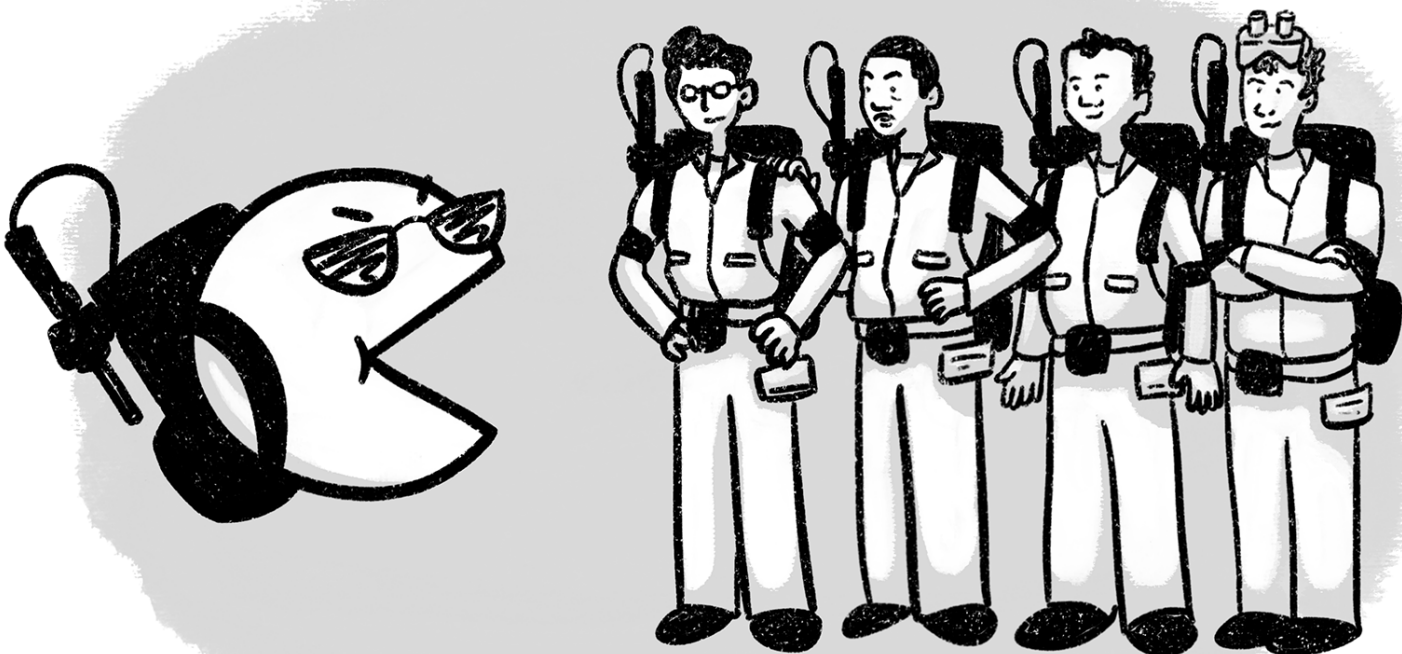
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Star Jelly Comics

See more at [instagram.com/starjellycomics/](https://www.instagram.com/starjellycomics/)



STAR JELLY '24

"I AIN'T AFRAID OF NO GHOST."

Boat drops in Cambridge street, no day at the beach for owner

By JULIA WEEKS

Traffic was halted at an East Cambridge intersection on Saturday night when a 30-foot boat landed in the road, Cambridge police said.

Around 6:40 p.m., a driver towing the boat on a trailer stopped for the traffic light at Cambridge and Third streets. When the light changed, the driver accelerated and the safety chains on the trailer failed, causing the boat to slide off the trailer and into the road near the crosswalk, police said.

“There’s a boat on Cambridge Street – literally like a boat on the street, on the road,” a dispatcher said, according to scanner reports. “We probably need some units over here.”

Police closed the road to traffic at around 7 p.m., they said, as the owner of the boat reached out to AAA but had “no luck” and they searched for a tower with a flatbed big enough to handle the



A 30-foot boat is in the road Saturday evening at Cambridge and Third streets in East Cambridge.

job. The driver said he couldn’t afford the price quoted him for a tow that he’d have to pay out of pocket, which meant the boat would have to be impounded, police said.

The intersection reopened about 40 minutes later, after a tow company was able to place the boat back on the trailer. No injuries were reported in connection to the incident.

An officer on the scene said it was the “first time in 29 years we’ve had a boat in the road.” In a statement on the department’s social media feeds, police called the incident “unusual.”

In previous odd boat-out-of-water news, an MBTA Fitchburg Line commuter rail hit a boat left on the tracks at 12:15 a.m. April 10 between Cambridge and Belmont. An “unknown person/s left a boat on the right of way,” transit police said, but there were no injuries reported and no damage to the train.

Asphalt patchwork melted when temperatures got high

By NICOLE BELCASTRO

As Patrick Sullivan pulled out of his parking spot and began a drive down Mount Vernon Street near Cambridge’s Porter Square, he heard thumping and felt the vibrations usually associated with a flat tire. Sullivan pulled over to find the problem.

He ran his hand over one of his car’s tires and felt a clump of tar. It hadn’t yet worn into the tire’s grooves, and Sullivan was able to peel the tar off his tire easily.

Since this incident in mid-June, Sullivan’s tires have been damaged twice more: once when his wife was driving and another time to him. That time Sullivan tried to again peel the clump of tar off and burned his hand.

Now, Sullivan inspects spots carefully before he parks on the street.

And he isn’t the only resident reporting tar coming off onto tires.

A Nextdoor post by resident Marla Felcher on July 3 asking about tar problems from the asphalt patchwork melting on Hillside Avenue in Neighborhood 9 drew several responses from people with similar experiences. Some pointed to melting patchwork on other roads in Neighborhood 9: Whittier Street, Avon Hill Street and Bellevue Avenue.

Hannah Farbstein said she needed to buy replacement tires after damage as a result of parking in front of her family’s house on Hillside Avenue. The “street is a hazard that requires urgent maintenance,” she wrote.

Tire marks can be seen in the asphalt on Hillside Avenue, she said.

Another Nextdoor user said she needed new shoes after hers were damaged by the melting patchwork – and asked if residents could send the bills for replaced items to the city.

These incidents are connected to a contractor called Indus hired by the city last summer to patch various roads, said Kristen Kelleher, community relations manager for Cambridge Public Works, in a July 17 email. Indus, based in Braintree, completed the work last fall.

Residents reached out for help to city councillors including Patty Nolan and to John Nardone, deputy commissioner for the Department of Public Works. In passing along residents’ concerns, Nolan said she was given

the contractor’s explanation via Public Works: that the patchwork is melting due to heat-related issues present at the time the asphalt was poured.

“They should’ve waited for the weather to be within the boundaries of tolerance of the particular material being used,” Nolan said.

Todd Connors, Indus’ regional manager, said July 23 that there were no weather-related concerns at the time the patchwork was done. Connors said nothing out of the ordinary occurred during the project.

Residents say they’re waiting for a response and reimbursement from the city – and frustrated because they feel complaints posted on the Public Works section of the city’s website were brushed off. “The response in general to the complaints was, ‘Oh, well, it’ll come off. Don’t worry about it,’” Sullivan said. Formal complaints must be made within 30 days.

Sullivan said he was prepared to sign an open letter to the city draft-

ed by a neighbor, Steven Kusiak, who has been gauging interest to see how many neighbors would sign and what they’d like it to say. Kusiak said he’s still considering the letter and speaking with the city directly.

Nolan said the liability should lie with the contractor. “This is definitely something that the contractor should be held responsible for and and should show that the residents’ costs are covered,” Nolan said.

Indus was ahead of Nolan in that regard: Connors said the company is prepared to respond to residents whose tires have been damaged by the melting asphalt. Residents can file a claim for Indus to clean damaged tires, Connors said.

Nardone was unavailable for an interview, according to emails from Kelleher and city spokesperson Jeremy Warnick, but Kelleher said the city has asked Indus for “samples to be taken to ensure the crack seal material meets city standards and specifications.”

Indus has agreed to take and analyze samples of the crack seal and hopes to work with the city again, Connors said.

Avon Hill and Hillside Ave are slated to be milled and paved this fall.



Tire tracks are seen July 21 in asphalt patchwork on Hillside Avenue in Cambridge’s Neighborhood 9.

State infrastructure change needs input from residents, Cambridge councillors say

By MARC LEVY

Residents of Cambridgeport worrying they’re being left out of planning for a \$51 million state reconstruction of the Boston University Bridge rotary and its William J. Reid Overpass have a defender in Cambridge city councillors, the officials have said.

Though the land belongs to the state Department of Transportation, the officials said June 10 that they’ll intercede on the neighborhood’s behalf for plans to be shared and discussed before the process goes too far.

“The rotary is bad. We’re grateful for infrastructure investment. That’s not the problem,” Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association president Rebecca Bowie said at the City Council meeting. “The problem is that this is our last chance for significant rethinking of the rotary in our lifetimes.”

Solutions for the area might involve changes to traffic patterns – which clog frequently, sometimes for hours, other residents testified – or a modified overpass. But “solutions for the area might involve the overpass as is,” Bowie said. “We are asking that MassDOT seriously consider the possibilities and challenges of different road configurations before they commit to this one – and that they take time to hear from people who live with this rotary every day to inform their decisions.”

Councillors were taken by surprise by the project. Sumbul Siddiqui said a Jan. 30 letter from Bowie sounded an alarm that she passed onward to city staff. A reminder came June 2 from the association after members visited the site with state Sen. Sal DiDomenico and state Rep. Mike Connolly.

Since state plans for the area were brought up five years ago at a Department of Conservation and Recreation public meeting, with a second meeting two months later, councillor Patty Nolan was “a little surprised to hear the city hasn’t been involved.”

“It’s more than five years ago that the community was invited to talk,” Nolan said. She suggested that DCR be added to Cambridge’s request to be included in state planning.

It’s not just the rotary and overpass. The city is ringed by and riddled with state projects: McGrath Highway; a

“road diet” on Memorial Drive; work on Storrow Drive and the Massachusetts Turnpike in Allston; and the Grand Junction rail path – “all projects that involve the state as the main driver with heavy impacts on Cambridge,” councillor Paul Toner said, suggesting a meeting with state planners that addresses their combined effect.

A roundtable was not added to the final policy order, but a request to DCR commissioner Brian Arrigo was. Vice mayor Marc McGovern advised working with to get state staff to at least attend a Transportation Committee meeting.

Calling for upkeep

The condition of the bridge worried Nolan, who recalled being told at the Morse School meeting that the overpass “was in really bad shape, and that we should be really concerned – and now it’s five or six years later.”

The overpass assessment she wanted from the state was taken care of, though. The state examines all its bridges annually, “so from a structural perspective, I am not overly concerned,” deputy city manager Owen O’Riordan said. “Though I recognize it’s old and it does need a significant long-term investment.”

The overpass last got reinforcement in 2013 – closed to all forms of traffic in both directions for much of the six months starting in early April – after structural issues in the bridge were discovered during one of those routine inspections.

Improving the rotary was appealing to Cambridgeport residents who spoke and to elected officials.

“This is one of those areas that’s not working well for anyone right now. It’s frustrating and scary to drive through, it’s scary to walk through, it’s scary to bike through,” councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler said, calling for a seat at the table for Cambridge to avoid the “chance we could get locked into the same design for another 40 or 50 years. We want to look at all the options.”

“While they do own the land, we end up feeling the brunt of the work if we’re not actually included in the conversations,” councillor Ayesha Wilson said of the state. “We’re starting to see this across several different areas.”

METRO

Public-housing provider will fight mice better, but defends warnings on rent

By SUE REINERT

The head of the Cambridge Housing Authority is pushing back against allegations of poor conditions and unfair evictions made by a group of tenants at two large family developments.

But executive director Michael Johnston also said the authority will strengthen its response to mouse infestation at Washington Elms and Newtowne Court after listening to tenants at two public meetings that CHA called to hear from residents after the tenant group interrupted a board meeting June 12 with a petition demanding changes.

“It was clear from recent discussions that mice are a concern for many residents,” Johnston said in an email. “We plan to reexamine our practices, become more aggressive with our vendor approach and implement a resident education campaign, as resident actions are vital to extermination success.”

Though many at the first resident meeting on July 9 voiced frustration with the authority, some residents castigated those who made the complaints. One woman said tenants asserting they had mice in their apartments should clean their homes better. Another woman criticized the protesters for not working with the tenant council for the two developments.

Johnston, in his email, said the authority “is always available to respond to requests for services from our residents,” though several at the meeting recounted instances when a promised exterminator didn’t show up and when maintenance staff didn’t answer emails or phone messages.

“You could conclude by the tone of the meeting, that while some wanted to vent their concerns with issues in their units, most folks at the meeting were happy with the site staff’s responsiveness and willingness to address any concerns brought to their attention,” Johnston said. “We certainly recognize that we don’t get things right 100 percent of the time. However, CHA is steadfast in its long-standing commitment to produce, support and sustain safe, innovative affordable housing options.”

Mice and roaches

Problems with mice produced some of the most emotional stories from tenants. One young

woman told of her fear of going into any room in her apartment, including the bathroom, because she dreaded seeing or hearing a rodent. “I hear the mice every day,” she said. “I think every day of how I can’t make my house a home.”

Another woman said the exterminator who answered her call was an “old white man” who couldn’t bend down to close up holes allowing mice to get in. “He said he would send someone else,” she said. “No one ever came.” Another tenant said a worker handed her some steel wool to close the cracks and holes; “that’s not my job.” A man said a worker put a mousetrap in his apartment but not in the one next door.

“We’ve had mice and roaches off and on for years,” another resident said.

Mold was another problem that residents said was sometimes not addressed. One woman, holding a child, said she was blamed for the mold in her apartment that worsened her child’s asthma.

Eviction notices

As for evictions, residents spoke of getting repeated “five-day notices” warning of possible evictions when rent payments were barely late. “I hate five-day notices,” Johnston agreed. He said the authority had proposed eliminating them, only to have the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants and its lawyer at Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services oppose the move, “so we backed away,” Johnston said.

A member of the tenant alliance at the meeting, Bill Cunningham, said the organization wanted to continue the notices so tenants would know when they owed rent, but ACT also wanted the eviction threats to be eliminated. Johnston told tenants in the audience it would be fine to throw away the notices when they got them.

Johnston also told tenants that the authority evicted very few people even when it won the right to oust residents from their homes in court. He also said the “minor paperwork” that the petition said was the basis for some eviction threats was very important: It’s required for the subsidies that support the developments and keep tenants’ rent low, he said.

Johnston invited residents at the end of both tenant meetings to report specific problems to staff members who attended. He reported to CHA commissioners at their board meet-



Sue Reinert

Cambridge Housing Authority executive director Michael Johnston speaks at a July 9 meeting at The Pisani Center in The Port neighborhood.

ing Wednesday, the day after the first resident meeting, that 31 tenants responded, resulting in 68 work orders. Fourteen of the work orders were for pest control, he said.

A few days to respond

Johnston also presented work order statistics for dating back to the start of 2022 for Washington Elms and Newtowne Court, for only the 78 households involved in the resident petition. The agency changed its work order system last year, though, making it difficult to compare 2022 figures to the next two years.

The numbers show that the average time to complete work orders for the 78 households was four days in 2023 at both developments, and six days at Washington Elms and five days at Newtowne Court this year so far.

Cambridge Day asked CHA for the maximum times to complete work orders. In response, the authority’s deputy executive director, Brenda Downing, broke down the orders into categories such as appliances, pest control and plumbing. The figures showed that electrical problems accounted for the longest maximum completion time: 71 days. Trash problems were corrected

immediately. The longest time to complete a pest control work order was 14 days. “Miscellaneous” was the category for 181 work orders; the maximum completion time was 61 days.

Downing added “context,” saying that the average time to complete a work order was “typically one to three days.”

It wasn’t clear what period Downing’s figures covered and whether they were for all residents at both developments.

Letting tenants talk

Johnston put his report on the response to the tenant petition on the agenda of the Wednesday authority board meeting, which allowed tenants and anyone else to give public comment on the issue; CHA permits public comment only on matters included in the meeting agenda. At the June 12 board meeting when residents presented their petition, the issue was not on the agenda and residents spoke despite efforts to prevent them from commenting.

Johnston said he intends to make the issue a continuing part of the agenda so residents can comment at future board meetings.

Tenants at other affordable housing developments have complained about poor conditions. In January 2022, then mayor Sumbul Siddiqui and vice mayor Alanna Mallon wrote a letter to the city’s Affordable Housing Trust urging the trust not to help finance an expansion of Walden Square Apartments because of “egregious” pest issues and mistreatment of residents. Siddiqui now supports the project, saying owner Winn Management has improved.

Trudi Goodman, a tenant leader at Inman Square Apartments, has said nonprofit affordable housing developer Homeowners Rehab Inc. has neglected the building, endangering tenants. Last November the City Council condemned HRI after Goodman reported there was no heat in the building. HRI executive director Sara Barcan has denied the building is in dangerous condition but said it does need an expensive upgrade.

Siddiqui and councillor Ayesha Wilson attended the authority’s July 9 meeting with tenants at Washington Elms and Newtowne Court. The authority’s deputy executive director, Downing, said they both “pledged continuing support with any upcoming resident meetings.”

Police unions objected to body-worn cameras, while Care team begins work after negotiations

From Page 1

The unions’ complaint to the state Department of Labor Relations was dismissed July 10, but the two sides continue to talk about impacts of body cameras on police work.

Sullivan said an agreement with the union on cameras is taking longer than it could because of “the city’s position of not compensating [union] members fairly for the care and maintenance of the new equipment.” A spokesperson didn’t immediately say why the union continues to say it supports deploying the cameras when it tried to require the city to negotiate that decision.

According to newly revealed information, the two unions representing patrol and superior officers filed a complaint with the state Department of Labor Relations last year, saying the city “failed to bargain in good faith regarding the decision to implement body cameras,” said a spokesperson for the city, Jeremy Warnick, quoting the city’s human resources department.

The unions lost, with a department investigator saying the body cameras was a management prerogative. “I disagree [with the unions’ position] because the city’s decision to require the patrol officers and superior officers to wear body-worn cameras implicates its ability to set law enforcement priorities that contribute to the safety and well-being of its staff and the public,” investigator Meghan Ventrella said.

As for Sullivan’s assertions about



Matthew Sage

Police divert traffic from a protest July 3 at the Democracy Center in Cambridge's Harvard Square.

the Care team, Warnick said it wasn’t true that police were involved with most of the Care team’s initial responses to mental health and other calls.

Care responded to six calls in the first four days of expanded operation, two explicitly mental-health related, Warnick said. One of those involved a “mentally distressed” person at a local library. The responders helped the person with their mental health crisis and

found them a shelter, Warnick said. He credited the team’s relationship with First Step, which provides mental health and shelter services. Warnick said two of the six incidents did include police, but the others did not.

He added: “Personally, I’m disappointed to see what appears to be an attempt to generate division amongst two important public-facing departments in the city ... Particularly in

light of a significant milestone for a new department that couldn’t have been possible without the support and collaboration of the various Cambridge public safety agencies, including the police department.”

Warnick said each of the Care team members have undergone 500 hours of training since last September and have been observed for 100 hours by other first responders including firefighters,

Pro EMS, police and First Step.

Sullivan said the patrol officers union “is committed to working collaboratively with the city as Cambridge experiments with alternative means of providing certain emergency services. However, we continue to have concerns about the qualifications and proper training of Care team members.”

He said the union’s worry “is underscored by the challenges the city has encountered in staffing the Care team, including the termination of several team members.” Three of the initial eight team members were fired in January during their probationary period for undisclosed reasons.

The city team of unarmed responders has been in the works since 2020 as a police alternative after the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis officer.

Originally the new Community Safety Department, which houses Care, was part of the city’s emergency call center; City Manager Yi-An Huang made it separate to ensure its independence after a Cambridge police officer shot and killed Arif Sayed Faisal, 20, a Bangladeshi immigrant in a mental crisis who was holding a large knife, in January 2023.

The city had been negotiating with police unions about which 911 calls the unarmed team could answer. Warnick said last week that the city “addressed several of the unions’ concerns” and now “believes it has complied with its bargaining obligations” although there is no agreement.

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

BUSINESS & MONEY

Patriot Wise buys stake in Veggie Galaxy

By MARC LEVY

New England Patriots defensive end Deatrich Wise Jr. is now 10 percent owner of Veggie Galaxy, the Central Square, Cambridge, seller of vegetarian diner and comfort food.

The ownership group also includes Veggie Galaxy founders Adam Penn and Michael Bissanti, founder of Boston's The Paramount Diner and Cambridge's Four Burgers as well as serving as Veggie Galaxy's general manager from 2016 to 2019.

The summer buy-in by the former Super Bowl champion – a vegan – was announced July 25 by a publicist working with the ownership group. Deatrich's investment represents his share of working capital rather than a specific initiative or plan for growth by the group, the publicist said.

The investment will be used as part of the company's minimum working capital balance. Veggie Galaxy was founded in 2011 and sells all-vegetarian food that can be made vegan despite also being traditional fare such as burgers, BLTs and mac and cheese, with nearly every item made in-house.

In 2019, Guy Fieri visited to film a segment for his television series "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives," saying: "People need to have this in their town."

"As a professional athlete, it's hard to ignore the trend toward healthy living in this country, including the explosion of vegetarian and vegan food in the last several years," Wise said, explaining his investment. "To have the opportunity to work with a company with which I share the same core beliefs and values makes



Michael Misetic

Deatrich Wise Jr. at Veggie Galaxy, where he has become an investor and owner, in Cambridge's Central Square.

this more than just a business opportunity for me. I'm also very excited to play a role in helping to make plant-based food more accessible to a wider audience."

Wise's adoption of veganism is lore, beginning in college when he cut red meat and pork from his diet. After his rookie NFL season, he decided he was done with all meat and made a bet with skeptical team nutritionists and teammates: If he showed any deficiencies in muscle mass and lost any strength, he would at least go back to eating eggs.

"He hasn't cracked an egg since," according to the press release. "More than five years later, I'm reaping the benefits of going 100 percent dietary vegan, including improved athletic ability, higher energy levels, quicker recovery times, better sleep and fewer injuries," Wise said.

Penn said Wise had "been a great customer, and will no doubt be a great partner."

Restaurant sitting empty since 2016 gets new promises for development

From Page 1

The LaCourt representative said the company plans to unify and modernize the connected buildings at 13-15 Elm St. (the restaurant and a two-story home with four bedrooms owned by the LaCourt Orphanage Trust as of 2020, according to the city assessor's database) and 2-6 Porter St. (three stories with four bedrooms also owned by the trust as of 2020, according to the database), enlarging the current residential spaces and renovating the restaurant storefront in collaboration with the Somerville Urban Development Commission.

This is not the first time reuse looked within reach. A hearing notice went up in 2017 for a restaurant called Redds on Elm that never came to fruition, neighbors reported online. Rizkallah, after buying the properties for \$5.4 million, went through rounds of revisions on plans at neighborhood meetings in 2021 and finalized another development plan in January 2022, but was unable to get approval.

Denise Taylor, Somerville's director of communications and community engagement, said the property "has been stalled on the applicant's end for an extended period."

The city requested additional information from Rizkallah this year and is waiting for a response, Taylor said, but "due to the time elapsed since [Rizkallah's] last neighborhood meeting to share information on their plans, another neighborhood meeting will be required" once he does provide information.

Rizkallah blames the years of stagnation on the city. Delays in the process are due to "city staff respond[ing] every 60 days or not at all," he said. The result was that LaCourt Realty "kind of stopped trying."

"We may very well just renovate the property with no additions at all," he continued.

The restaurant was known as Tacos Lupita until May 2011 when new management renamed it Aguacate Verde, which suggested people "think green, eat healthy!" though the menu and the experience remained similar to Lupita's street food, diners said at the time.

Wilson Square residents were already eager for the space to be re-occupied six years ago, trading notes and conjectures on Reddit.

"I keep waiting for some little restaurant to pop up there," one neighbor said online. "So sad to see this corner so empty."

Darling plans \$1.1M refresh

Fans of Mary Chung will have Facebook; Mall bar serves 600

By JACOB POSNER

A two-year vacancy left behind by the closing of the Mary Chung restaurant in Central Square will be filled by Darling with dim sum and a full bar starting this fall, according to plans approved in a Cambridge License Commission meeting July 9.

In addition, the commission in June granted an alcohol pouring license for the giant C-Side Bar as part of a food hall at CambridgeSide, an East Cambridge mall built in the 1990s and now undergoing significant redevelopment.

Mary Chung closed Dec. 31, 2022 after four decades serving dumplings and Sichuan dishes and amassing a loyal following.

A Friends of Mary Chung page on Facebook where people share recipes, news articles and memories has grown to 1,400 members.

Darling hopes to open in October or November, attorney Adam Barnosky told commissioners, and "continue portions of the legacy of that long-running business," offering "an intimate location for small plates and cocktails by seasoned professionals."

First, the 2,375-square-foot location at 464 Massachusetts Ave. needs at least \$1.1 million in renovations, Barnosky said. The spot will have 59 seats and will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m.

C-Side goes big

The C-Side bar is expected to be at the center of a ground-floor food hall made up of vendors of more than a dozen cuisines (replacing a food court with cheaper offerings that leaned more toward fast food brands).

Before commissioners approved its licensing June 25, they grilled manager Brahm Callahan on security and crowd management at a 15,004-square-foot bar open until 11 p.m. and serving potentially up to 600 people at a time. There is seating for 500.

"It's really, really porous. It's a large area that goes into the food hall, there's a number of different exits when you get into the food hall, there's a big path, there's a side alley," said Christine Elow, who is also the city's police chief.

Callahan pointed out renovations include altering the elevation and layout, which will clearly "delineate"

NAMES

■ The Friendly Toast restaurant, with an outpost in Harvard Square, said Tuesday that it has named Staci Pinard as chief executive after 10 years with the chain. She began as as general manager of the Cambridge location in 2014.

■ Cambridge attorney Ellen C. Miller has joined the board of directors of Newton's Mainstay Supportive Housing and Homecare, the non-profit said July 22.

■ Cambridge Savings Bank has promoted Kevin McGuire to chief operating officer from chief information officer and brought on Christopher Johnson to fill the gap. The bank, with nearly \$7 billion in assets, announced the changes July 15, when they became effective.



Natalie S. via Yelp

Mary Chung Restaurant, now closed in Cambridge's Central Square, seen Sept. 17, 2018.

where patrons may and may not consume alcohol.

Those of drinking age will be issued a bracelet or stamp, with clearly marked cups allowing staff members to identify the underage easily, he added.

Those drinking within the bar will have glassware; a distinctive plastic cup with a logo will be used for outside its boundaries in the food hall, which proponents said would be monitored by at least one worker at all times.

While drinks can be ordered through kiosks with QR codes anywhere in the food hall, presenters said that any purchase that doesn't check out as legal upon pickup will be refunded.

WANT LIST RECORDS

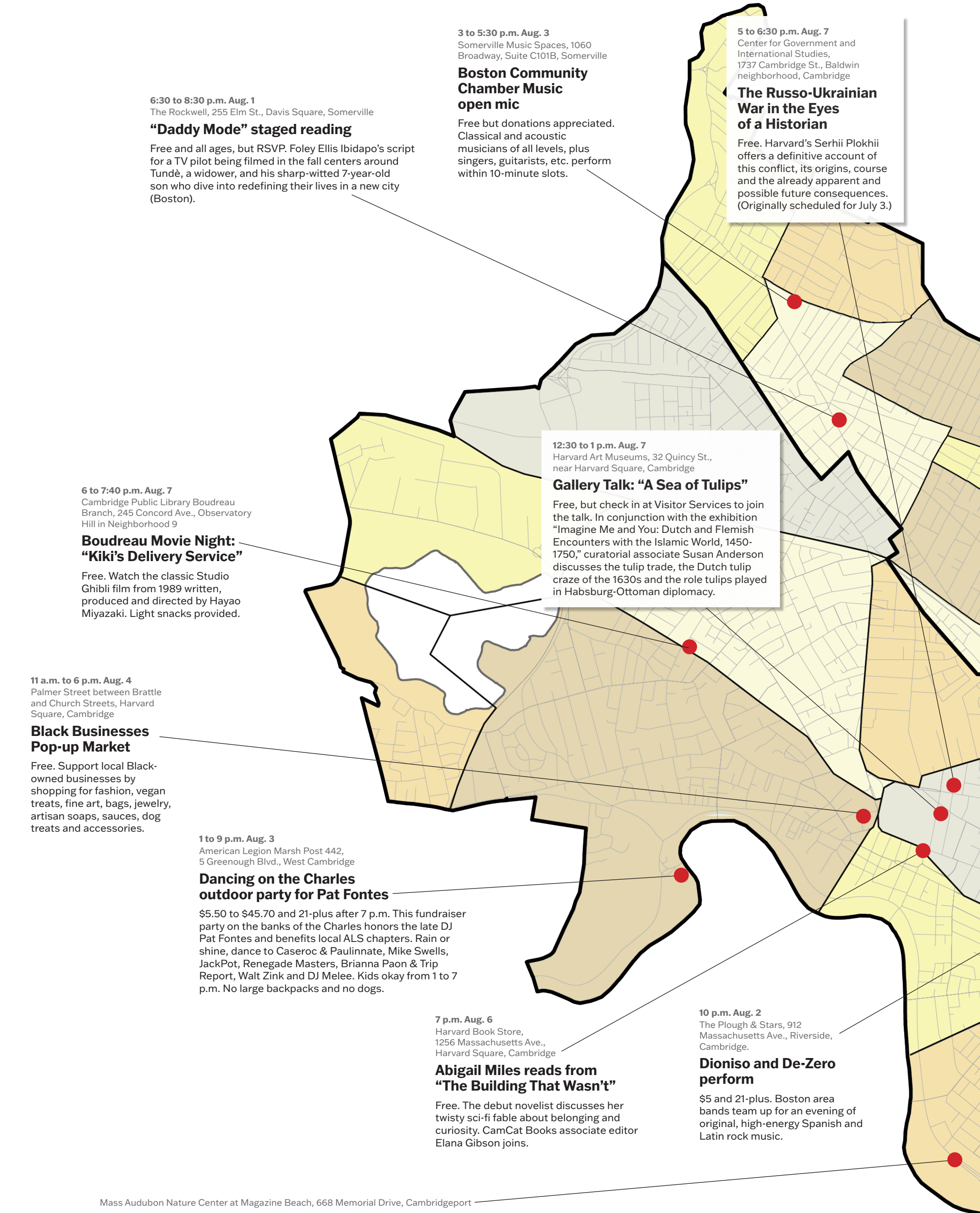


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EVENTS AHEAD AUG. 1-8



6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Aug. 1
The Rockwell, 255 Elm St., Davis Square, Somerville

“Daddy Mode” staged reading
Free and all ages, but RSVP. Foley Ellis Ibadapo’s script for a TV pilot being filmed in the fall centers around Tundè, a widower, and his sharp-witted 7-year-old son who dive into redefining their lives in a new city (Boston).

3 to 5:30 p.m. Aug. 3
Somerville Music Spaces, 1060 Broadway, Suite C101B, Somerville

Boston Community Chamber Music open mic
Free but donations appreciated. Classical and acoustic musicians of all levels, plus singers, guitarists, etc. perform within 10-minute slots.

5 to 6:30 p.m. Aug. 7
Center for Government and International Studies, 1737 Cambridge St., Baldwin neighborhood, Cambridge

The Russo-Ukrainian War in the Eyes of a Historian
Free. Harvard’s Serhii Plokhii offers a definitive account of this conflict, its origins, course and the already apparent and possible future consequences. (Originally scheduled for July 3.)

6 to 7:40 p.m. Aug. 7
Cambridge Public Library Boudreau Branch, 245 Concord Ave., Observatory Hill in Neighborhood 9

Boudreau Movie Night: “Kiki’s Delivery Service”
Free. Watch the classic Studio Ghibli film from 1989 written, produced and directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Light snacks provided.

12:30 to 1 p.m. Aug. 7
Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy St., near Harvard Square, Cambridge

Gallery Talk: “A Sea of Tulips”
Free, but check in at Visitor Services to join the talk. In conjunction with the exhibition “Imagine Me and You: Dutch and Flemish Encounters with the Islamic World, 1450-1750,” curatorial associate Susan Anderson discusses the tulip trade, the Dutch tulip craze of the 1630s and the role tulips played in Habsburg-Ottoman diplomacy.

11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Aug. 4
Palmer Street between Brattle and Church Streets, Harvard Square, Cambridge

Black Businesses Pop-up Market
Free. Support local Black-owned businesses by shopping for fashion, vegan treats, fine art, bags, jewelry, artisan soaps, sauces, dog treats and accessories.

1 to 9 p.m. Aug. 3
American Legion Marsh Post 442, 5 Greenough Blvd., West Cambridge

Dancing on the Charles outdoor party for Pat Fontes
\$5.50 to \$45.70 and 21-plus after 7 p.m. This fundraiser party on the banks of the Charles honors the late DJ Pat Fontes and benefits local ALS chapters. Rain or shine, dance to Caseroc & Paulinnate, Mike Swells, JackPot, Renegade Masters, Brianna Paon & Trip Report, Walt Zink and DJ Melee. Kids okay from 1 to 7 p.m. No large backpacks and no dogs.

7 p.m. Aug. 6
Harvard Book Store, 1256 Massachusetts Ave., Harvard Square, Cambridge

Abigail Miles reads from “The Building That Wasn’t”
Free. The debut novelist discusses her twisty sci-fi fable about belonging and curiosity. CamCat Books associate editor Elana Gibson joins.

10 p.m. Aug. 2
The Plough & Stars, 912 Massachusetts Ave., Riverside, Cambridge.

Dioniso and De-Zero perform
\$5 and 21-plus. Boston area bands team up for an evening of original, high-energy Spanish and Latin rock music.

Mass Audubon Nature Center at Magazine Beach, 668 Memorial Drive, Cambridgeport

6 to 7:30 p.m. Aug. 1
Animal and Ice Cream Social
Free. Meet a live “animal ambassador,” learn about the adaptations that help them survive and grab some ice cream before an evening stroll in the park to discover local wildlife.

4 to 6 p.m. Aug. 3
Meet the beekeeper
Free, but register. Mel Gadd shows bees in an active hive and explains the importance of honeybees and other pollinators and some honeybee-keeping basics.

7 to 8:30 a.m. Aug. 7
Charles River eco run
Free, but register. An easy-paced jog by the Charles River with frequent stops to observe the beauty, learn about the river’s history and do stretches.

4:45 to 8 p.m. Aug. 6
Summer nights paddling
Free and 12-plus, but register. This guided ecotour by kayak welcomes paddlers of all abilities. Gear is provided, and the program begins with beginner paddler instruction.

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



Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Ave., Somerville
8 to 10:30 p.m. Aug. 2 (and continuing Aug. 4)

Feet Keep the Beat Festival

\$35. The second annual festival of multicultural percussive dance held over four days wraps up this weekend with a premiere of a commissioned work created by eight local dance artists and a musical director plus workshops and an Aug. 4 dance-off.

7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Aug. 6 (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 sexy swag from Good Vibrations. Kat Sistare hosts.

2 to 6 p.m. Aug. 4
Highland Avenue between Central and Lowell streets, Somerville

SomerStreets: Strike up the Bands

Free. This themed take on the international Open Streets concept, which closes busy city streets to cars for other activities, includes parkour demos, the Esh Circus, a bouncy house, arts and crafts vendors, food, games and music from Grand Choice Records, Bethel Adekogbe, Laura Suárez, FM Collective, Trio Let's Vamos and The New Grown-Ups.

Aeronaut Brewing, 14 Tyler St., near Union Square, Somerville
12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 4

Puzzle Day

\$30 per team (six-people maximum) and 21-plus. Teams compete to finish a 500-piece puzzle with a \$100 Aeronaut gift card as the prize. Also includes a puzzle swap.

7 to 8 p.m. Aug. 5

Picture + Panel: Seriously Funny with Emma Hunsinger and Caitlin Cass

Free to \$15 and 21-plus. The monthly confab of graphic-novel creators sponsored by Aeronaut, Porter Square Books and the Boston Comic Arts Foundation this time explores the role humor plays in reflection and understanding with two artists whose works have appeared in The New Yorker. Boston Globe columnist Meredith Goldstein moderates.

6:30 p.m. Aug. 2 (and 2:30 p.m. Aug. 3-4)
Prospect Hill Park, 68 Munroe St., Somerville

Openair Circus' "Wild Discoveries"

Free, but donations are welcome. Circus arts students show off skills such as stilting, juggling and yoga-acrobatics learned in summer classes. Bringing blankets and folding chairs is encouraged.

7 to 11 p.m. Aug. 6
Warehouse XI, 11 Sanborn Court, Union Square, Somerville

Super Party Bros.' Pop-up Arcade

\$5. Retro game lounge with arcade cabinets and console gaming, plus special cosplay guest Candycolorcorpse. Cosplay is welcomed!

7 to 8:30 p.m. Aug. 5
Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway, Mid-Cambridge

"Be Seriously Scared": A Hiroshima Day commemoration

Free. A nuclear disarmament presentation with director Michael Dwyer screening his 20-minute film about Hiroshima survivor Tomiko Morimoto West; co-writer and producer Larry Jay Tish discussing his upcoming film about the crew of the Japanese fishing boat Lucky Dragon #5 who experienced direct fallout from U.S. nuclear tests in 1954 at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands; and reflections from nuclear abolitionist Ira Helfand.

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Aug. 8
ManRay, 40 Prospect St., Central Square, Cambridge (and every second Thursday)

Houseboi – Leo season dancing and drag

\$13 and 19-plus (Leos get in free before 11 p.m.). A genderqueer dance party featuring drag shows with Wilhelmina LaDessé and Pristine Christine. Hosted by Sham Payne.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 3
The Foundry, 101 Rogers St., East Cambridge

Adults with Hobbies: Cooking local and actually using the vegetables you buy

\$15 to \$35. Try out a different hobby each week in a series with educator and activist Nicole Hicks and friends.

5 and 8 p.m. Aug. 3

OnStage 360° dance

\$15 to \$20. This year, 14 dancers or dance companies participate in OnStage Dance Company's fourth annual performance in the round, which allows for a unique audience viewing experience and exciting experimentation by the various choreographers and artists.

5 to 7 p.m. Aug. 6
Urban Park Roof Garden atop the Kendall Center Green Garage at 90 Broadway, Kendall Square

Summer in the City Concert Series: Luana Brazzán

The drummer and percussionist from Peru "fuses great melodies and interesting harmonies with spoken word and dissonant vocals." Co-sponsored with the Berklee School of Music.

Kendall/MIT Open Space at 292 Main St., Kendall Square, Cambridge

6 to 8 p.m. Aug. 2

Movie night: "My Neighbor Totoro"

Free, but register. Free popcorn under the stars at this family-friendly outdoor screening of the 1988 film from legendary Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 7

Midday Music: Plant Biodata

Free. Cambridge sound designer and artist Skooby Laposky plays the plants and trees in the space, reading their biodata and turning the measurements into a composition of dreamy, ambient music.

6:30 p.m. Aug. 1
Sonia, 10 Brookline St., Central Square, Cambridge

Black Flag's "The First Four Years" Tour

\$35 and all ages. Formed in 1976, the punk band plays songs from "The First Four Years" album and a greatest hits set, too.

The MIT Museum, 314 Main St., Kendall Square, Cambridge.

7 to 9 p.m. Aug. 3

The Story Collider

\$5 to \$15. Hear personal stories that connect science learning to life from microrobotics researcher Elio Challita, science journalist Cara Giaimo, musical improv coach Jared Todd Littlejohn, computer engineer Beatriz Perez and software developer Don Picard. Hosted by Collider co-producers Ari Daniel and Katherine Wu.

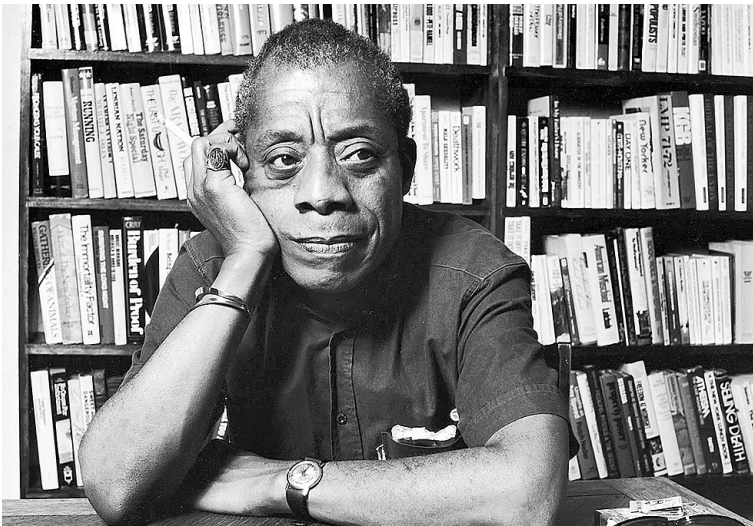
6 to 9 p.m. Aug. 8

After Dark: Color

\$20 and 21-plus. Investigate the dazzling effects of structural color in animals and plants, check out polarized light mosaics and make your own stained-glass window (minus the glass) to take home. Dumplings from Mei Mei and local brews from Aeronaut are available for purchase.

FILM AHEAD AUG. 1-8

LOCAL FOCUS



James Baldwin gets a Brattle minifestival Friday through Sunday.

Baldwin at The Brattle, Metallica goes for hours and it’s ‘Matrix’ time

By OSCAR GOFF

While many titans of 20th century literature have listed into irrelevance (or, perhaps worse, read-it-in-high-school ubiquity), the legend of James Baldwin has only grown in stature. Black, gay and scorchingly articulate, James Baldwin’s words have only become more resonant into the 21st century. To celebrate the author’s centennial on Friday, **The Brattle Theatre** has lined up a weekend’s worth of cinematic tributes. The centerpiece of the program, which runs Friday through Sunday, is a brand-new 4k restoration of Dick Fontaine and Pat Hartley’s 1982 documentary “I Heard It Through the Grapevine,” in which the filmmakers follow Baldwin on a tour of the American South, revisiting landmarks of the civil rights movement. Screening Friday and Sunday is Barry Jenkins’ “If Beale Street Could Talk” (2018), adapted from Baldwin’s 1974 novel of the same name. Rounding out the series is Raoul Peck’s documentary “I Am Not Your Negro” (2017), which augments one of Baldwin’s unfinished manuscripts (here read by Samuel L. Jackson) with archival footage of Baldwin himself. While it is perhaps dispiriting that so many of Baldwin’s protests against American institutions remain so damningly relevant, we are fortunate to still have his words to help make sense of it all.

Though too willfully offbeat and strange to be a proper household name, Don Hertzfeldt is perhaps our most beloved and influential living animator not named Hayao. Hertzfeldt’s breakout film, the Oscar-nominated 2000 short “Rejected,” was one of the Internet’s very first videos, and set the tone for much of the absurdist “Internet humor” of the following two decades. His masterpiece, however, might just be “World of Tomorrow,” which screens at The Brattle this weekend. Released in three installments (so far) between 2015 and 2020, “World of Tomorrow” retains the irreverent humor and distinctive stick-figure style of “Rejected,” but maps them onto an aching sad (and all too recognizable) vision of an oppressively technology-centric future. The result is at once funny, surprising and undeniably poignant, and one of the most wildly original works of science fiction in recent memory. The Brattle will be screening all installments as a single feature Fri-

day through Sunday, along with a new Hertzfeldt short titled simply “ME.”

Bust out your battle vest and channel your inner Beavis: Saturday, the **Somerville Theatre** presents The Metallica Film Festival, an all-day triple feature of the influential thrash band’s greatest concert videos. The festivities begin at noon with “Cliff ’Em All” (1987), which compiles nearly all known footage of original bassist Cliff Burton, who died at 24 the previous year in a tour bus accident. The party continues with “Cunning Stunts” (1998), the band’s first hi-def concert video, shot in Fort Worth during the “Load”/“Re-Load” tour. The program ends with a true rarity: 2009’s “Orgullo, Pasión y Gloria: Tres Noches En La Ciudad de Mexico,” a double-DVD released exclusively in Latin American markets and almost never seen in the states. At more than six and a half hours (with intermissions), this requires an all-day commitment to headbanging.

There are great movie years and then there was 1999, a year that gave us a bumper crop of critically acclaimed indies and popularly beloved blockbusters alike. This month, the **Landmark Kendall Square Cinema** kicks off a weekly tribute series to the innumerable classics that this year celebrate their 25th anniversary. The Kendall’s series begins Tuesday with Lana and Lily Wachowski’s modern sci-fi classic “The Matrix,” one of the most monumental films from a year full of them. So much has been written about “The Matrix” in the past quarter-century – about its aesthetic influence, its groundbreaking special effects, its queer and sociopolitical subtext – that there’s scarcely more I can add. I will just confirm that its tale of cyber-dystopia and not-really-reality can officially be ranked among the greatest and most elemental fantasies Hollywood has given us, right up there with “King Kong” and “It’s a Wonderful Life.” It is also, quite simply, cool as all hell, and as eye-popping as the day it was released. After all these years, “The Matrix” still has what it takes to make you say, “Whoa.”

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 35 mm 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



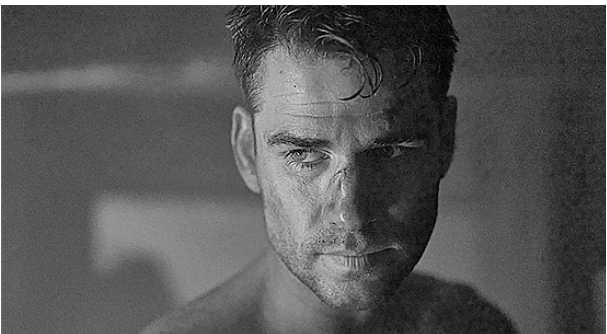
Ivan Beerkus and Angela Nikolai are doc daredevils.

‘Skywalkers: A Love Story’

By TOM MEEK

One part promotion piece and one part jaw-dropping der-ring-do, this doc by Jeff Zimbalist follows Angela Nikolai and Ivan Beerkus, Russian rooftoppers (people who climb skyscrapers illicitly for thrills) who during the last World Cup finals seek to climb the near-completed Merdeka tower in Malaysia – a 2,227-foot structure, the second-tallest in the world. It’s not quite “Man on Wire,” the fantastic 2008 Academy Award-winner that showcased Philippe Petit’s wire walk between the the World Trade Towers in 1974 (neither uses nets or wires, so what’s the difference between 1,368 and 2,227 feet if you fall?), but it grips in its own right. The staging and planning aspects provide intrigue, with World Cup mania leveraged as a distraction, and there’s the added challenge of Covid that shuts off the pair’s sponsorship funding; the couple are undaunted. Zimbalist delves into their strained relationship and backstories to add depth, but it’s not deep enough or blended in seamlessly enough and, if anything, detracts. Much of the stunt footage was shot by the couple, as it’s their bread and butter to garner likes and dollars on social media. It would have been interesting had Zimbalist peeled back more on how social media translate into dollars and how some of the amazing footage is captured. There are accusations that much of what the pair do is staged and manufactured digitally, and while it doesn’t seem so, it’s another thing the film glosses over. Nikolai and Beerkus are bona fide artists and know how to strike a pose atop the universe (Nikolai will often bring a dress), and the shots looking down are viscerally dizzying – if you have acrophobia, this is your content warning. Everyone else should hang on all the way through: Some of the most impressive stunt footage is at the end as the credits roll.

On Netflix.



Liam Hemsworth is a stranded soldier in “Land of Bad.”

‘Land of Bad’: Kind of okay

By TOM MEEK

In this military actioner from director William Eubank in which U.S. Army Special Forces get dropped into a Philippine jungle to extract a CIA package, underpowered plot devices go off throughout: Turns out the simple in-and-out extraction isn’t so simple, as the camp the small strike force is sent into is a hive of international terrorists, largely unbeknownst to the smug higher-ups in intelligence. Shit goes south real fast, which leaves one soldier by the call name of Playboy (Liam Hemsworth) on the run from an endless horde of well-armed baddies. Getting to the extraction checkpoint is an endless task that keeps shifting as each possibility erupts into a new hot zone. The whole harrowing ordeal’s not far off from Marc Wahlberg-Peter Berg collaborations “Mile 22” (2020) and “Lone Survivor” (2013). Added to the mix is Russell Crowe as Reaper, a drone pilot back in Nevada keeping eyes on Playboy and occasionally firing off a Hellcat missile or two. Eubank, known for his lo-fi 2014 sci-fi thriller “The Signal,” delved into action with Kristen Stewart in the disappointingly unimpressive “Underwater” (2020) but improves here in his orchestration of race-against-time pow-bangs. Crowe and Hemsworth make the fairly pat watchable, but Liam’s big bro, Chris (“Thor”) did it a tad better in “Extraction” (2020), and “Guy Ritchie’s the Covenant” (2023) remains the best of the lot.

On Netflix.



MUSIC

ATTEND

Nice, A Fest rocked

By MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

The big local music news this week is the return of Great Scott, a cherished venue in Allston that never reopened its doors after the heights of the pandemic. A performance space casualty, like the beloved Once on Highland Avenue in Somerville, unable to weather the health catastrophe. A venue mourned by a generation of club rats who cut their teeth on indie music in the Aughties.

Where's the relocated venue headed? Right next to O'Brien's Pub at Cambridge Street and Harvard Avenue in Allston. That's right, it's a one-two combo with the 75-person capacity O'Brien's Pub complementing an expanded vision of Great Scott that will accommodate up to 300 people. There will even be a real green room so artists can change into their sequined jumpsuits in privacy and comfort.

Okay, okay, okay. This is all good and well, but is it news fit for Cambridge Day to print? First, the music scene is an ecosystem that does not respect the same geographical boundaries mandated by parochial journalistic mandates. Second, the long-awaited rebirth of Great Scott is a grand opportunity to remind the Cambridge and Somerville communities of their own music venues riding along the razor's edge of oblivion.

Will Once in Somerville ever ride again as a bricks-and-mortar location? Toad in Porter Square just got a paint job, but the timeline for its announced reopening has come and gone. Ownership of The Middle East in Central Square has been angling to turn the block into a six-story hotel (albeit with some sort of music venue at the base) since at least 2022.

Does it feel like we're sinking in the sand on this side of the river? Where's our "feel good" story for music venues in Cambridge and Somerville? Whose palms do we have to grease to revive and rescue some of our beloved stages? And will they accept an IOU?

Hit this

Friday *Yoko Miwa Trio* (*The Mad Monkfish, Cambridge*)

Stop by the Central Square jazz spot for some sparkling key work from the eponymous leader of the Yoko Miwa Trio, wowing audiences on both sides of the Pacific since the turn of the millennium.

Saturday *Whitney Morgan & the 78s* (*The Sinclair, Cambridge*)

Flint's Whitney Morgan writes bangers about getting paid, getting drunk, getting high and getting off your high horse. He hasn't released an album since the 2018's "Hard Times and White Lines," but his brand of outlaw country is evergreen. Morgan is joined by the 78s for a night of hootin' and a little bit of hollerin'.

Sunday *Bars Over Bars* (*The Jungle, Somerville*)

Bars Over Bars is keeping the hip-hop dream alive in Boston and beyond. More than 629 shows thrown, featuring more than 800 artists, this week a showcase featuring nine artists. Eleven, if you count the two turntables.

Live: Nice, A Fest

Nice, A Fest landed in Somerville for its fourth year this past weekend. The 2024 edition stayed true to its

roots as a local's local indie fest, leveraging organizer Get To The Gig's prodigious familiarity with the local music scene to cram four days of music into a schedule that always felt full and only occasionally bloated. The bookers know which stones and logs and DIY venues to turn over to find talent ready for a bigger spotlight. All the more important for a festival that, historically, runs a little light on headliners.

Who needs expensive headliners when local bands come cheaper by the dozen? Eighty indie music acts found their way to the stage, with dives into subgenres you can't even put a name to. Highlights included:

■ A farewell gig from bluesy rawkers Rusty Mullet, whose fronter is moving to Berlin ... forever?

■ The return of Nice veteran Olivia Sisay, fronting a new band called Bus Crush. Which was playing its first live gig at the festival? Let it not be said that Get To The Gig doesn't have faith in the artists they book.

■ A high-energy Nurse Joy set in a packed-room at The Rockwell, which, judging from early returns, might end up being the most talked-about "shoulda been there" performances on the schedule.

■ Ovlov's surprise appearance at Crystal Ballroom, filling in when the regularly scheduled Grass Is Green outfit came down with Covid. It was a reunion gig that never quite reunited, but the night didn't miss a beat with Ovlov.

■ The shoegazey art punk of Slow Quit, which sounds as good live as it does on record.

■ And the crowd work antics of Model/Actriz, electro thrash club lords who put the proper exclamation point on the final set of the fest.

Don't forget the venues. Crystal Ballroom and The Rockwell were once again the principal locations, serving since 2022. They've been the air-conditioned oases you need and deserve midsummer. If you've attended any type of summer festival at Boynton Yards in Union Square, where the festival premiered in 2021, you won't forget the radiating hell that an endless sea of pavement manifests in hot weather. Good times, but yeesh.

Not that weather was an issue. The gods smiled on Nice, A Fest with a weeklong break from the heat and humidity that had owned the forecast. The cooler temperatures were a lucky turn because the organizer just can't quit hot pavement, debuting a brand-new outdoor stage at a Grove Street parking lot Saturday. Three stages in a single day?

Nice, A Fest pitches itself as a homespun production. Sure enough, the bookers and artists cut their teeth locally. But tap your toes on the accelerator – this kitten purrs more like a premium SUV than a beat-up jalopy. In other words, not a music festival that takes its commitment to local music as an excuse to cut corners.

In a summer that already has one notable absence on the festival calendar – Quincy's In Between Days is bowing out for 2024 – it's a relief to see that Nice, A Fest hasn't lost steam and is finding new ways to bring new music to new audiences.

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

■ Do you know of a restaurant opening or closing in Cambridge or Somerville, or do you have other food news tips? Send them to business@cambridgeday.com.

FOOD

WHAT WE'RE HAVING



Tom Meek

Monkfish with dill at Saigon Babylon in Cambridge's Central Square.

Monkfish and squab at Saigon Babylon

By TOM MEEK

The folks behind cozy Vietnamese-themed nooks Cicada and The Eaves have recently opened Saigon Babylon in the Sonder 907 Main hotel in Central Square, which also houses Day fave Althea. I'm not sure there's a cooler pair of hotel eateries – especially ones that don't feel like hotel eateries – in the Boston area.

Saigon Babylon, which took over the top-floor space that was formerly the Blue Owl, has the same Southeast Asian decor as The Eaves but is bigger and has an outdoor perch that gives a unique view of the goings-on in Lafayette Square below.

The cocktails, food and menu echo the menu of The Eaves over in Bow Market in Somerville (which, at the time of this writing, is closed temporarily), meaning you can get the delectable shrimp appetizers and pho and duck entrees that would bring diners in droves if only they could score one of the roughly 20 seats without a weeks-in-advance reservation. Unfortunately, the same is a problem at Saigon Babylon even during these city-clearing summer months, when one thinks they can stroll through a doorway and sit right down. Don't try it. You can't.

I'm curious to go back in the fall or some late night and try the deck. It has little to no shading, so if you're dining before sunset and we're back into another heat wave, the appeal dims.

The cocktail list features Japanese whiskey, tamarind and lemongrass seasonings and, natch, there are sakes for sipping and a short list of wines that is well curated. Want something that's both aperitif and dessert in a glass? Try the Good Dealer, a gin-infused egg cream with "pho spices."

There's a slim but focused eats menu peppered with diverse flavors and textures, including old friendlies reminiscent of The Eaves. I decided to go for the new and different, trying the squab appetizer and monkfish entree – I

■ **Saigon Babylon, 907 Main St., Central Square, Cambridge**

mean, the Mad Monkfish is across the way. In Central Square, monkfish is the thing, right?

The squab was a bit of a mind blow, rich, dark ground meat with shiitake mushrooms that was surprisingly beefy – you never think of fowl as you eat this dish, though it has good, gamy inflections. It was a healthy serving atop pickled veggies and a crispy rice base, and there was a spicy fish sauce to add. Think of a light beef Bolognese done South Asian-style and you're not far off. Each layered texture and flavor shines on their own and as a collective, and you don't want it to end.

The monkfish came as tender cheeks and filets, lightly browned atop a bed of succulent vermicelli with dill and shrimp paste to accent. Monkfish is such underappreciated pescatarian fare, but the crew here seem to treat it with sacred regard on a dish that is nuanced and subtly satiating. Entrees also include a vegan pho stir fry and, for the carnivore, an oxtail and rice noodle dish with a red wine reduction.

Saigon Babylon has no website, just an Instagram account, which is cool and great and a trending thing, it seems, in the restaurant biz – but without a traditional website, it's hard to gather critical logistical details a customer might want. The same is true of places sharing their menus only through a third-party order-out system such as Toast. But I'll stop now before I babble on.

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



Amba spinach and feta boreka

Price: \$6

How many times can a pastry filled with spinach and feta thrill? It's easy to think that after a few variations the combination will get old, and no amount of clever messing about with the carbs around it will be able to overcome the essential sameness of the flavors. Amba, the Will Gilson and Brian Mercury restaurant in East Cambridge's new First Street Market, clears that sour taste out of your mouth with its boreka – yet another example of an onrush of Israeli offerings in the area. The seeded, croissantlike pastry was butter-rich and addictively salted. The filling was substantive. The combination, unexpectedly refreshing: Though just sitting behind glass before bagging, on a wooden slab next to goat cheese and za'atar brioches, the bites felt mysteriously chilled under the summer sun. I did not expect to get this cool boreka, and then I didn't expect to finish it. But I did.

MARC LEVY

■ **Amba, 55 First St., East Cambridge**

ARTS

Tomashi Jackson layers in the history

Rich midcareer retrospective show opens at Tufts

By CLAIRE OGDEN

Cambridge artist Tomashi Jackson dazzles in her first midcareer retrospective at Tufts University Art Galleries in “Across the Universe,” on view through Dec. 8.

The exhibition highlights Jackson’s ability to pack complex ideas into a variety of materials and media. She creates prints, paintings, videos, textiles and sculptures, infusing ideas of justice and equity into everything she touches, such as by incorporating archival images of moments in civil rights history into works.

Plenty of other artists take similar themes and create work that feels stale

or overdone. Jackson’s work is powerful. She excels at bringing complex semi-abstract artworks to life inspired by American history and having them feel truly original, lively and captivating, and more than the sum of their various media.

A key piece in the exhibition, “Here at the Western World” (2023), pops with texture and color, a mix of neon pink and yellow. Likewise, in “I see Fields of Green (Put the Ball Through the Hoop),” canvas and textile with PVC marine vinyl cover the wooden canvas in stunning purple and blue. A black-and-white image of a person is somewhat obfuscated by the materials’ pattern, vaguely ominous but memorable.

As part of the museums’ ongoing

“Artist Selects” exhibition, Jackson has chosen an array of pieces from the Tufts Permanent Collection that complement the works in her own show. In one piece, “Formulation: Articulation” (1972) by influential Bauhaus artist and educator Josef Albers, the color palette evokes “Here at the Western World.”

“The yellow and the violet pieces are really a nod to how to see ‘Here at the Western World,’” Jackson said. “With close looking, it allows for eyes to start to discern that there are no whites in that painting, that there are just various levels of violet, which is what Albers does here.”

■ “Across the Universe” is on view through Dec. 8 at Tufts University Art Galleries, 40 Talbot Ave., near Powder House Square, Somerville.



Tufts University Art Galleries

Tomashi Jackson’s “I see Fields of Green (Put the Ball Through the Hoop),” with vinyl strips showing archival images layered over a canvas.

Cambridge rejects a cargo e-bike delivery model expanding in Boston

From Page 1

“It has the potential to directly benefit local businesses and aligns with our climate and transportation goals and initiatives,” Rasmussen said.

Though CDD has settled on e-bike subsidies as its chosen strategy, Cambridge considered a different option first in the battle against delivery fees.

In August 2022, the City Council passed a policy order directing the city manager to “develop a pilot program in which the city would purchase e-bikes and hire city residents to create a city-based delivery service.” These city-employed riders would have shuttled goods from businesses to consumers like private third-party services but, presumably, for free or at low cost.

The order expired at the turnover of the council after elections, without CDD developing the test. According to Rasmussen, the department thought a lot about the order but ultimately decided a pilot didn’t make sense.

“We spent time researching and thinking through what type of program would result from it but didn’t proceed beyond that for a couple of reasons,” Rasmussen said. “It is not a function of our city to be the operator of a delivery service.”

Even before the policy order, Saffari added, CDD had been thinking about a subsidy program, which, unlike a city-run delivery service, “gives businesses more control over how they manage deliveries.”

Similarly, by helping businesses build up their own in-house delivery service, the city could help strengthen those businesses, Saffari said.

Councillor Sumbul Siddiqui, who sponsored the policy order with former vice mayor Alanna Mallon, said that the council hasn’t received a report back, but that she trusts city staff to make the right call, even if the final program deviates from the council’s order.

“I trust the CDD to figure out what they think is logistically easier,” Siddiqui said. “It would probably be challenging to do our own city-based delivery service.”

Boston is doing it

Implementing a city-run delivery service might not be as difficult as the department thinks: In September, Boston launched Boston Delivers, a program similar to the one proposed by Cambridge’s council, but with a tweak.

According to Harper Mills, the



Marc Levy

Third-party commercial delivery services use e-bikes at lower costs than cars, though fees stay high.

program manager for Boston Delivers, instead of employing drivers directly, Boston partnered with Net Zero Logistics, a final-mile delivery company, to test a cargo e-bike delivery service in Allston. Net Zero handles the day-to-day logistics, while the city subsidizes the deliveries and recruits businesses to use the service. Net Zero tailors the program to each local business, often integrating their service with existing delivery platforms.

Boston’s reasoning went the opposite of Cambridge’s. At the start of its planning process, Boston Delivers considered subsidizing cargo e-bikes and loaning or giving them to businesses, then decided against it. Rather than giving businesses bikes and letting them figure out the rest, she said, Boston Delivers thought an end-to-end service would be more useful. They couldn’t be sure every business would have an employee willing to ride the bike in an era of significant labor shortages.

“There’s just too much of a barrier,” Mills said of subsidizing bikes, though she did say that e-bike subsidies likely offer more flexibility to businesses.

The test seems to be a success: Boston Delivers expanded in March to surrounding neighborhoods, and to serve more businesses.

About partnering with a third-party delivery service like Net Zero Logistics, Rasmussen said, “Partnering with a third-party service would effectively make the city the operator, so that was not a viable option for us.”

Pandemic experiment

The model can be complex. A non-profit version called Cambridge Bike Delivery was tried in 2020 by members of the Cambridge Bike Safety Group to make home deliveries of medicine and groceries during the extended Covid pandemic lockdown.

Connecting seniors with stores lacking delivery services such as Skenderian Apothecary, Inman Pharmacy and Pemberton Farms “proved to be tougher than anticipated,” organizer Rebecca Neuman said. “We had over 300 cyclists, but it was hard to line people up on dates and times.” Outreach to the elderly became something of a challenge as well, and the effort waned.

A second iteration of food pantry deliveries from the Agassiz Baldwin Community Center and Margaret Fuller House in The Port neighborhood went better. For a time during the pandemic, Neuman said she was looking for other ways to use the volunteer army of riders.

The experience from a local businesses that did bike delivery challenges both the Cambridge and Boston models. Robert Gregory, who owns Redbones Barbecue a couple of blocks from the North Cambridge line in Somerville’s Davis Square, tried delivering by bike in the 1990s, but phased it out because cars can carry many more orders and, therefore, yield drivers more money. He ended his in-house service – which was before the age of readily available e-cargo bikes – and now delivers exclusively through third-party apps.

“It’s economic. They couldn’t make enough money. They couldn’t get to enough places,” Gregory said of bike-riding deliverers.

The third-party delivery apps have huge reaches, with drivers who will

travel farther than any in-house delivery service could, Gregory said, and when Redbones delivered on its own, it serviced only Somerville.

Expenses to consider

Because CDD has only started to hash out what an e-bike subsidy program would look like, a lot is still unknown, such as how much the program would cost, how much the city would discount each bike and if demand exists. Because other cities are pioneering e-bike subsidy programs, there is some data to consider.

While cheaper than cars, cargo e-bikes are still expensive, ranging in price from \$2,000 to \$9,000. The average costs \$5,000, according to a white paper from Cameron Bennett and John MacArthur of Portland State University; Christopher Cherry of University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and Luke Jones of Valdosta State University. Yearly maintenance costs add up, on average, to \$400.

The Somerville shop Bicycle Belle has 10 cargo e-bike options from \$2,500 to \$9,300.

Vermont leads the way in e-bike incentive programs. It plans to offer up to \$2,500 for businesses to buy cargo e-bikes, according to the Transportation Research and Education Center at Portland State University, where Bennett and MacArthur research. The state earmarked a total of \$150,000 for the program, in which individual consumers can participate. Vermont’s Burlington offers its own \$200 voucher to any resident buying an e-bike, including on behalf of a business.

Washington, D.C., has a similar program in the works. The Council of the District of Columbia, the district’s legislative body, is considering subsidizing \$700 of a business’ cargo e-bike purchase.

In Canada, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island have subsidy programs, awarding from \$400 to \$1,365. Most incentive programs offer businesses between a few hundred and a few thousand dollars. None pays for the bikes outright.

Cambridge has experience buying cargo e-bikes in a different context. As a part of a 2022 participatory budgeting process, an e-bike tree watering program won \$25,000; the city bought four cargo e-bikes. Starting last summer, the city hired college students to ride around on the bikes and water the city’s trees.

■ Send letters to forpublication@cambridgeday.com with the name, address, phone number and relevant affiliations of the writer or writers

OPINIONS

When studying business gentrification, of course size matters

By **ANDREW WARD**
and **CARLOS CAMPOS JR.**

Our recent study measured business closings and openings in Central Square between 2013 and 2023 as a way to understand commercial gentrification – the replacement of lower-value businesses with higher-value ones. In the study, we categorized businesses by their size: independent businesses or local, regional, national and international chains. The reasoning behind this is simple. As land values rise, the capital investment needed to open a business increases, meaning larger and more corporate businesses are likely to replace independent businesses that have more local capital.

But online discussion of and reactions to our original study – as well as a recent American Independent Business Alliance celebration of independent businesses week – led us to think: What makes a business “small” or “independent,” and how much can we generalize about the value of each type of business to the local community? “Small business” often refers to one with fewer than 500 employees, which make up the majority of the U.S. economy. Most are much smaller, with 89 percent of small businesses having fewer than 20 employees and a majority having fewer than five. Cambridge Local First, a local independent business network, uses a measure of 50 employees, but emphasizes the importance of locally and independently owned businesses (and with fewer than 10 local locations).

Size is generally a good indicator of a business’ relationship to the local community; but interview responses went beyond size, emphasizing the “small, independent local businesses,” or the “neighborhood business.” They are easy to spot, though unfortunately in decline – family-run by residents of the area and with strong relationships with their customers. Nonchain businesses such as these are more likely to hire locally, use local suppliers and spend their profits locally: Each dollar spent at them has an economic “multiplier” effect more than three times stronger than at a chain, and hundreds more than online purchases. To local businesses, the economic, social and



The Central Barber Shop is towered over by surrounding structures March 29, 2020, in Cambridge.

cultural roles of independents were evident from comments we received: “I find it very diverse, very inclusive ... Central still has ... a lot of independent, unusual things around.” Another: “There were a lot of small stores in the area, I think it fit in with the neighborhood. We’re quirky.”

“That neighborhood spot” with “community connection” was a key theme shared by those we interviewed; such relationships can be central to the social, cultural and economic health of neighborhoods. Independent businesses provide a sense of continuity and cultural identity and are more likely to serve long-standing residents’ social and economic needs. For example, the social (and economic) value of independent bookstores has led to chain stores copying their approach to bookselling, or even masquerading as independents entirely.

The loss of social and cultural institutions can threaten a neighborhood’s identity (and so its residents). Yet sympathies for Central’s closed businesses were not restricted to small local businesses,

with Pearl Arts (a national chain based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida) remembered fondly: “That was a huge staple in the square, and people would come from all over to go to that big art store.” As a symbol of Central Square’s past glory as a retail hub, this also reflects concerns over the future of retail in the Square and beyond, and Central’s changing identity.

The complete absence of chains can be seen as an indicator of disinvestment, as can the closing of any store, particularly if the premises are left vacant. Starbucks, a business linked statistically to rising house prices and gentrification, was missed by some when it closed in Central Square in November 2022. While a nearby business owner complained that its replacement could be only a “big box store like Dunkin’ Donuts or Target or someone that can afford that rent,” another suggested a Dunkin’ (which opened in the same space this year) would be good for neighboring foot traffic. Central’s proposed Gap clothing store opening was remembered: “Gap was always like the gentrification red flag. But it was mostly white people saying that. I remember talking to my neighbor, an African American woman, and she said, why can’t we have a Gap too?”

Larger stores are a double-edged sword: Their larger supply chains, which bring down their prices, cut out local suppliers and with it, local economic benefits. Their popularity can bring new customers to the area, but some businesses will be better positioned to attract them than others. Of course, they can coexist. One interviewee said Central “still feels funky and vibrant, and full of life, even with the chains that moved in.”

Food and general consumption are highly connected to gentrification – the term often evoking the “trendy coffee shop” – but the logic can be reversed: New restaurants, gentrifying or not, are often locally and independently owned, and fast food chains are rarely associated with gentrifying areas. So what differentiates one from the other?

Price is one factor, of course. While independently owned restaurants are more likely to employ locally and spend locally – the economic multiplier here is double that of chains – their customers will be more likely to be higher-income

residents, and they may be less likely to live nearby. Others simply point to total restaurant numbers as a general indicator of the neighborhood’s disposable income (and so of gentrification).

So what can be done? In 2017, the Cambridge City Council restricted formula businesses and incentivized small business in developments through the zoning code. The City of Somerville’s recent strategic study on commercial gentrification recommended the city identify gentrification hot spots for small-business zoning incentives, support small businesses to better adapt to a gentrifying neighborhood and support relocation nearby as a last resort.

Cambridge and Somerville are also considering “master lease” options to stabilize units, including a community-land-trust style model, a bold action that has been taken in East Los Angeles with an organization called Community Owned Real Estate using grant money to buy 23 retail units to lease out to local businesses, ensuring rents can be kept lower as the market spirals out of reach. A similar program is being considered in East Cambridge. Palm Beach, Florida, has a 2,000-square-foot limit on stores with exemptions granted to large businesses if they can prove that a majority of its business is local. Innovative solutions are emerging, but more action is needed fast.

Measuring commercial gentrification, like measuring the social value of any given store, is not an exact science. But it is appropriate to generalize about – as more and more money is invested in Central Square’s businesses, property prices (commercial and residential) will increase, and yet more local businesses and residents will be priced out. If we want to protect services for all residents, ensure that Central Square retains its cultural identity and keep money spent in the area circulating in the area, we must protect our small, local independent businesses.

Andrew Ward is pursuing a doctorate looking into gentrification and its resistance; Carlos Campos Jr. is a sociology doctoral student at Boston University. This research was undertaken in partnership with Cambridge Local First via the MetroBridge program at the Boston University Initiative on Cities.

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 CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that a public meeting will be held on **Thursday, August 8, 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/CHCaug8-2024> or call (301)715-8592. **Webinar ID#: 825 1232 1672.** Confirm meeting details and materials at <https://tinyurl.com/CHistComm>. Submit written comment to histcomm@cambridgema.gov prior to 24 hours before the meeting.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties
Case 3335: 41 Winthrop St., by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Request to extend the temporary certificate for the east construction office

trailer and shed. Remove the west trailer and restore lawn.

Case 5162: 91-101 Brattle St., by Lesley University. Install freestanding building identification signs.

Case 5163: 165 Brattle St., by Sophie Higgs. Exterior renovations including new windows and siding at rear wing, construct addition, alter fences, gates, walkway and patio.

Bruce A. Irving, Chair
Cambridge Week, 7/25/24, 8/1/24

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.

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, August 5, 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/MCAug2024> or call (301)715-8592 Webinar ID: 845 2260 1957.

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

MC-7076: 23 Myrtle Avenue, Martin Wartak and Michelle Matz. Alter fenestration and siding; new dormer, 2nd story addition, and window well.

Tony Hsiao, Chair
Cambridge Day, The Week, 07/25/24, 08/01/24

CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

DEPARTMENT INVITATION TO BID Repair of Façade at LBJ Project #2210-LBJ-Envelope/Façade Repair Re-Bid #2

Cambridge Housing Authority, in its capacity as managing member, the Owner and Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids for **Project #2210-LBJ-Envelope/Façade Repair Re-Bid #2, at 150 Erie St in Cambridge, Massachusetts,** in accordance with the documents prepared by BWA Architecture 132 Lincoln St Boston, MA 02111.

The project consists of Repairing the Façade on the south of the building.

THE SCOPE OF ENCLOSURE RENEWALS PROPOSED AT LBJ APARTMENTS INCLUDES THE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING DAMAGED EIFS CLADDING SYSTEM AND RELATED SEALANT JOINTS, AND REPAIR METAL COPING SYSTEM. AND REMOVAL OF THE EXISTING RAILING SYSTEM, REPAIR, AND REINSTALL RAILINGS.

The work is estimated to cost \$743,000.00.

General bids will be received until Friday, August 16, 2024, at

2:00 PM and publicly opened online, forthwith.

All bids are subject to federal minimum wage rates as required by the Secretary of Labor pursuant to the Davis-Bacon Act and are included in the project specifications.

General bids shall be accompanied by a 5% Bid Bond. A 100% Payment Bond, and 100% Performance Bond will be required for the awarded contract.

A site visit for all interested general bidders will begin at **150 Erie St Cambridge MA 02139 on Wednesday August 7, 2024, at 10:00 AM.** All bidders are invited and encouraged to attend. Attendees of the site visit should RSVP to lbjfacaderepair@cambridge-housing.org

Bid forms and contract documents will be available at www.biddocs.com on **Wednesday, July 31, 2024, at 10:00 AM** (may be downloaded and viewed electronically).

THIS PROJECT IS BEING ELECTRONICALLY BID AND HARD COPY BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Please review the instructions in the bid documents on how to register as an electronic bidder. All Bids shall be submitted online at biddocs.com and received no later than the date and time specified.

Cambridge Week, 08/01/24

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 tropical milkweed we plant appears bad for this butterfly’s growth and migration

Parasite takes on monarch

By JEANINE FARLEY

There is good news and bad news about monarch butterflies.

In late summer or early fall, monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) from our region migrate south thousands of miles to Mexico, where they cluster together in large groups to overwinter. In March, the monarchs migrate back north to breed and lay eggs. The first generation reaches Texas or Oklahoma, where they stop to lay eggs. The caterpillars that develop from these eggs eat milkweed, which contains cardenolides, steroids that can stop the heart.

For this reason, monarch caterpillars and adult butterflies are toxic and nasty-tasting to predators.

The caterpillars spin cocoons, and adult butterflies emerge. These butterflies continue the northern migration as temperatures in the south become too hot for their survival. The second or third generation of butterflies reaches New England in the summer.

The final generation in late summer or fall does not lay eggs. Instead, it enters a nonreproductive phase called diapause, and flies 3,000 miles south to overwinter in the forests of central Mexico, beginning the cycle all over again. The northern limit of milkweed plants dictates how far monarch butterflies can travel.

The good news

Scientists have used DNA to understand the size of the monarch population. By looking at monarchs’ genetic diversity, scientists can tell the size of the population. The more genetically diverse a population, the larger its size. As a population declines, its genetic diversity also declines. Using this method, scientists can tell the number of individuals within a population.

Scientists found that the monarch population over the past 25,000 years has expanded and contracted corresponding to increases and decreases in the number of milkweed plants.

Populations grew after the last ice age, when North America became lush and green again and milkweed proliferated. There was a second increase 200 years ago, when people cleared much of the eastern forests for agriculture and common milkweed flourished.

Researchers did not find evidence of declines in either milkweed or monarchs in the past 75 years – the DNA of current monarchs shows no decline in genetic diversity. In fact, the monarch population now is larger than it was before people began large-scale farming 200 years ago.

The bad news

Despite the fact monarch populations overall do not seem to be declining, the size of overwintering colonies in Mexico definitely is. Recent data indicates that overwintering monarchs in the forests of central Mexico occupied only 2.2 acres during the winter of 2023-2024. This is 59 percent less than the 5.5 acres from the previous year!

In 1996-1997, monarchs occupied 44 acres in central Mexico. They reached their lowest numbers – 1.7 acres – in 2013-2014.

In the past 30 years, there has been another change: Some monarchs do not migrate. In southern Florida non-



A monarch and a banded longhorn beetle visit echinacea on July 18, 2019.

migratory monarchs live year-round. Nonmigratory monarchs are also in Southern California, southern Texas, along the Gulf coast, the Atlantic Coast and even northern Mexico.

Scientists are not sure why the non-migratory population is increasing, but have some ideas: People, especially in the South, plant tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) in butterfly gardens. But tropical milkweed is an aggressive invasive species in Florida and, unlike other types, does not die back in the winter.

Migrating monarchs are attracted to tropical milkweed, which stimulates the growth of reproductive tissue. Instead of continuing their migration, monarchs stop and begin breeding. It is believed that many of these monarchs never again migrate.

Another problem with tropical milkweed is that it harbors a one-celled parasite, *Opbryocystis elektroscirrha*, called OE for short. Because tropical milkweed does not die out in winter, the parasite does not die back either. Monarchs with large numbers of this parasite – which coevolved with monarchs and does not infect other species – are born with crumpled wings and cannot fly; the less infected are smaller, have shorter lifespans, fly poorly or are unsuccessful at mating.

Only the healthiest butterflies reach overwintering areas in Mexico; butterflies with this parasite do not survive long migrations. Few overwintering butterflies harbor the OE parasite.

But in Florida, almost all monarchs harbor the OE parasite. As they feed on or lay eggs on tropical milkweed, they become infected. And they spread the infection to migrating butterflies.

It used to be that about 1 percent of migrating monarchs harbored OE; now about 10 percent do, resulting in the loss of millions of monarchs during their long-distance fall migration.

Summer temperatures are increasing. Monarch eggs and caterpillars develop more quickly when the weather is not too hot. The perfect tempera-



Norm Levey

Tom Murray

A female monarch on goldenrod in Groton on Sept. 18, 2017; a monarch egg attached to a leaf in Groton on July 28, 2021; and below, a monarch caterpillar munching in Carlisle on June 17, 2022.



Robert Gessing

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.