



WILD THINGS

In New England's centuries-old cohabitation with the Canada goose, it's hunters that have been among a big bird's biggest fans.

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THE WEEK

OCT.
24-31,
2024

FREE | by CAMBRIDGE DAY



Marc Levy

MBTA general manager Phillip Eng in his Boston offices on Oct. 15.

MBTA gripes? An app rollout may solve some

By MARC LEVY

The answers to subway and bus rider problems may be literally at hand: The state's transit agency is testing an app called MBTA Go that general manager Phillip Eng wants to be "one-stop shopping" for everything from delay notifications to potential refunds for rides not taken.

The app is in beta – available only for recent iPhone operating systems and not even in the App Store, which means to try it takes extra work on the part of the tester. Only around 2,800 people among the system's nearly 800,000 daily riders are taking part, able to see expected arrival times for trains and buses and get information on individual vehicles as they move along their routes in something like real time. A decision is due within the next couple of months on when to launch the app officially to riders, first for iPhones and then for Android, the MBTA said.

"Now, not everyone has a device," Eng said during an interview Oct. 15 in his Boston offices. "Improved communications has got to be a multipronged approach." He said that means better-informed drivers, clearer audio announcements and more useful information on video screens – largely missing from T vehicles despite a need for the hearing-impaired and certainly since the invention of the Sony Walkman in 1979.

See MBTA, Page 3

Gilman Square asks councilors to clear the way

By GAIA DE CARO

With Gilman Square's stubborn lack of development passing the decade mark, residents have asked the Somerville City Council to help keep it from taking another 10 years.

The council was asked for support in removing the city-owned Homans site from more disposition studies – it "has been continuously studied for 10 years," said Matt Carlino, of the Gilman Square Neighborhood Council – and to help start a formal urban renewal process for the area's Mobil gas station.

"That is an item that could delay this another 10 years," Carlino said.

The request of city councilors heard at a Sept. 26 presentation was for them to join with yet another body, the Gilman Square Civic Advisory Committee, in urging the city's Redevelopment Authority to initiate the urban renewal process. "We know the Mobil owner wants to develop," Carlino said.

Any vision for the square includes the Mobil station combining with the neighboring empty Homans site to create a parcel of significant developable size, councilor Jesse Clingan said.

The site is along Medford Street below the Central Hill complex, overlooked by Somerville High School and City Hall.

See GILMAN SQUARE, Page 5

Grand opportunity

Report sees a new rail line with stops in Cambridge

By SEAN FLANNELLY

With two light rail lines, one commuter rail line and more than a dozen bus routes, Cambridge is far from a transit desert. But the historic Grand Junction rail line running through one of its densest business corridors could offer an attractive opportunity to run a fourth stream of trains through the city – and connect two of the MBTA's most ambitious long-term projects.

See GRAND JUNCTION, Page 4



Battery-EMU trains like the kind adopted this year in Chicago could serve Grand Junction passenger rail through Cambridge.

Metra

INSIDE

News: In the debate over MCAS testing, city councils in Cambridge and Somerville take votes in different directions.

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Business: A perks program named for a pooch comes to All She Wrote Books.

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Attend: Herons, Hotties and Halloween are all around town for the senior bohemian chic, club crowd and tender punks.

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FILM AHEAD

The GlobeDocs festival delivers some harsh realities (some in sci-fi form) while Halloween brings the scares (some in comedy form).

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EVENTS AHEAD

So, so much Halloween, from "Rocky Horror" to raves and queer puppetry, with radio plays, a Poetry Brothel and wrestling.



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MEETINGS OCT. 24-31

CAMBRIDGE

Economic headwinds, tougher energy laws

By MARC LEVY

Testing a four-day workweek

Neighborhood & Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts & Celebration Committee, 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday. This committee run by city councillors Catherine Zusy and Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler looks at research on four-day workweek pilot programs that could affect businesses, government agencies and nonprofits, including models for a four-day workweek that have been tried locally. The committee meets at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Cambridge’s economic issues

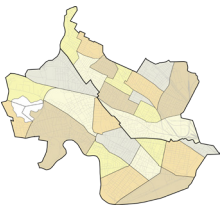
City Council and School Committee roundtable, 5:30 p.m. Monday. The bodies meet to go in-depth on economic trends in Cambridge and how it affects the city’s budget. At City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Toughening energy-use laws

Building Energy Use and Disclosure Ordinance regulations, noon to 1 p.m. Thursday. A chance to learn more about the development of language for the next round of changes to laws intended to move nonresidential property owners toward environmentally friendly (but often expensive) energy use. A 30-day public comment period has been underway since Wednesday. The committee meets at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Economic impact of zoning

Economic Development & University Relations Committee, noon to 2 p.m. Oct. 31. This committee run by city councillor Paul Toner talks about the economics of real estate – “housing, zoning and the economic impact of zoning proposals,” as the meeting notice puts it. The committee meets at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.



◀ **Cambridge’s City Council** meets at 5:30 p.m. Mondays from January through June and from the second Monday in September through December 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

A pricey court ruling, cleaner Davis Square

By MATTHEW SAGE

Council tackles lawsuit, bomb threat

City Council, 7 p.m. Thursday. Councilors will probably go into a closed-door session during the meeting to hear from the city’s legal department on a Massachusetts appeals court finding – that the city underpaid property owners during a land taking by nearly \$30 million. The Somerville Housing Authority paid \$8.7 million for the 4-acre property that was once the Cobble Hill Plaza mall at 90 Washington St. During litigation, a lawyer for Cobble Hill Center LLC argued that the property’s true value was higher based on theoretical lab development, and the court ruled that Somerville must pay the difference.

The council will ask the director of libraries and other administrators about safety measures for potentially controversial public events. A drag queen story hour hosted Oct. 5 by the Somerville Public Library drew protests and counterprotests outside its doors. The event was canceled because of a bomb threat called in shortly beforehand; the threat was determined to be false.

The meeting will be held at City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill, and is watchable online.

Last day for voter registration

Election Commission, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Register to vote ahead of the Nov. 5 presidential election. Early voting takes place from Thursday to Nov. 1 at City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill.

City Internet and cleaning Davis

Public Utilities and Public Works Committee, 6 p.m. Wednesday. Per an August request from the City Council, the committee meets to consider dedicating additional resources to removing used needles and other hazardous items from Davis Square, which has seen an uptick in the items and in homelessness in the past year. Seventy-six residents have also requested via petition a hearing on the possibility of implementing citywide broadband Internet access, similar to an exploration in Cambridge. The idea was also before the committee in 2022. In a meeting the following May, committee chair Jesse Clingan said that a request for a feasibility study might come through the participatory budget process or from the mayor, and “that the mayor needs to hear from the community on this matter.” Watchable via videoconferencing.

THE WEEK

by CAMBRIDGE DAY

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WILDFIRE

MBTA app could boost customer service

From Page 1

The MTA TrainTime app Eng helped put in place while working in New York is a model, he said.

While the T has tested transit apps in the past, it just moved to include payment by phones in August. The TrainTime app, meanwhile, sells New Yorkers tickets, connects riders with live customer service representatives, plans trips, tracks estimated arrivals and departures and gives hints as to which cars on a train are full and which have room for more people. MBTA Go is expected to also offer guidance on which cars are accessible to people using a mobility device such as a wheelchair.

“We are working on how we want to communicate with our riders not only in planned situations, but in real-time situations – when a train is held, how do we communicate that?” Eng said. “People need to know, because then they may make the decision ‘I’m not going to wait 15 minutes, or a half-

“We need to build the public trust back, and we need them to know that we can deliver.”

Phillip Eng, MBTA

to improve. The GPS technology in some of the fleet is older and doesn’t update as fast as the new ones, but as we get newer cars we’ll have better GPS and be able to have even better real-time information. You’ll be able to go in and see: If I’m at Airport Station, where’s the next train going to Bowdoin? You could see how many minutes away, and you can see it approaching. And our team knows that what’s on the station signs is important, and they’re working on that piece too.

right? The next alert should be that we have maintenance crews en route with an anticipated ETA of 10 minutes. Again, if you’re in a station and you’re getting that update, you might opt to go a different way. If you’re on the train, you’re a captive audience. But, you know, we want riders to at least know we’re responding.

During the slowdowns, we knew how slow trains might move – 12 mph, 5 mph. The MBTA does not promote how fast in general trains are supposed to run.

The max speeds are 40 mph on light and heavy rail. There may be talk about 50 mph like on the reopening of the orange line between Braintree and JFK. We did sufficient work where the tracks are capable of running trains faster – you need the length and the geometry to be able to run faster, because what we don’t want to do is have where trains are accelerating to 40 and then you’re braking instantly. You need to have it where it’s a good, smooth ride for riders, and that’s where you need the distances between stations. Obviously you can’t do anything that fast on the green line, but we anticipate being able to go in certain locations up to 50 miles an hour, which would give people back even more minutes of their day. We have to take a look at building the tracks to a certain level, the signal systems and does the location make sense? We want to be able to have a reliable schedule so the public knows when they get on at Point A and they’re getting off of Point B five days a week, that trip is going to be the same length of time every day.

With a lack of information, a rider may enter a station, paying for a ride, but wait so long for a train to come that they leave without getting the ride they paid for – maybe during a disruption such as a snowstorm. Isn’t that rider due a refund? There have been situations where a rider has reached out and we’ve reviewed it and and we have offered refunds. I don’t know about a wholesale situation – but as we move into contactless payment, creating an account helps us better see where you entered and what time you entered. I think we’ll be able to say, “Yes, you entered here, and we didn’t run a train. Then how could you have taken the ride?” We would have to do it case by case.

Winning public trust

The MBTA says the app might be able to handle refunds – either through automated recognition that a ride was skipped, or by users requesting a review – but it is a technological puzzle likely to come first to commuter rail, which has rides that cost more and run fewer times a day.

The app has been in the work for around a year, since support for a third-party app was rescinded in 2022. Beta testing of the app, which is being built in-house by a team of eight people, began only in July through invitations to research participants and through community partners, the MBTA said. The public beta began in September.

“We need to build the public trust back, and we need them to know that we can deliver,” Eng said, contemplating the transit system’s future funding needs: another \$700 million needed to fill a gap in a coming \$3 billion budget. “That doesn’t mean every day is going to go perfect. We know we can always get better. But I’m confident about the work we’re doing.”



A rider uses their phone while awaiting a T at Central Square in Cambridge. The MBTA Go app, below, is in a beta testing phase.

hour. It’s better for me to get off and find another way.”

That answer came in response to a series of questions mainly about how the MBTA manages customer service situations when things aren’t running right – something Eng has familiarity with, as he was brought on April 10, 2023, to fix a system struggling with safety concerns and slowdowns.

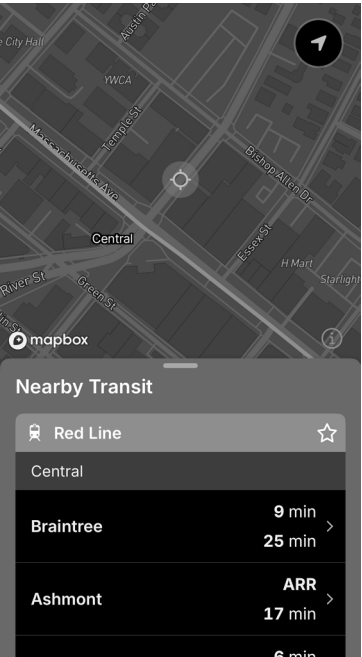
While Eng has been easing the slowdowns caused by tunnel and trolley rails badly in need of replacements, realignments and upgrades – on Oct. 15 the system was down to 33 speed restrictions – some T practices that pre-date him persist, at least for now. We came in eager to ask questions built up over years of ridership. We also handed off a couple of dozen reader comments and questions Eng wasn’t able to get to in the half-hour allotted to talk in his offices in Boston.

Those offices are large but not extravagant, messy with the air of someone too busy to think of using an office to impress. Similarly, his answers were forthright but could be a little messy as we struggled to fit a lot of complexity into a short time.

The ETA issue, refunds and more

The peeves we addressed (with the exchanges condensed and edited):

Arrival-time announcements tell riders a train will arrive in, say, four minutes – yet it might take 10 minutes for the board to tick down to say the train will arrive in three minutes. Is this getting fixed? The predictions are fairly accurate, I would say, but we’re going to continue



When you’re on one of those trains, you might be stopped for several minutes before the engineer comes on and says, “This train is going to be standing by.” We know! Can more information get to engineers when a train is stuck, so they can give riders something useful? We’ve been working on how to shift from that perspective where the operator is focused just on operating a train and how do we give them the script of what to say when a train is being held. We’re also working on technology to make announcements remotely from our operations center to a station and not put it on the operator, who may have other things that they’re taking care of. The first alert should be we have a disabled vehicle,



Massachusetts Teachers Association via social media

Cambridge educators and supporters canvass Oct. 10 for ballot Question 2.

MCAS grad requirement gets debate in two cities, drawing different results

By DANIELLE HOWE

In the same week the Cambridge City Council essentially deadlocked over the value of the MCAS test as a high school graduation requirement, failing an order opposing it by a 4-4-1 vote, the Somerville City Council united over the same question, passing its motion against the standardized test requirement unanimously.

At stake: Question 2, a ballot measure that if approved would remove the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System standardized test as a passing requirement to graduate high school. School districts would be allowed to set graduation standards individually. The measure was introduced by the Massachusetts Teachers Association and is supported by U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren and U.S. Rep. Ayanna S. Pressley, as well as by members of the local legislative delegation.

The measure would not remove the MCAS altogether, only eliminate it as a graduation requirement.

That was brought up Oct. 7 in Cambridge with discussion of a policy order sponsored by councillors Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler, Sumbul Siddiqui and Ayesha M. Wilson. They voted for the order with vice mayor Marc McGovern. But there were four councillors opposed: Burhan Azeem, Patty Nolan, Paul Toner and Catherine Zusy. Mayor E. Denise Simmons would have been the deciding factor, but only voted “present.”

Wilson argued in favor of eliminating the requirement because it would allow teachers to not just “teach to test,” instead spending time instilling skills in students for the real world, but Toner and Nolan argued the test played an important role. “We shouldn’t be letting kids graduate from our high schools without being able to demonstrate that they can meet these basic requirements,” Toner said.

Councillors from the committee

On the issue of students being left behind, there was a clear divide.

Nolan, who was on the Cambridge School Committee before jumping to City Council, said she “saw firsthand how having the MCAS meant that students who are often overlooked – low-income students, students with disabilities, students of color – would

no longer be overlooked because they couldn’t be, there was a reason to support them.”

McGovern, another former School Committee member, rejected a claim that the MCAS was needed to hold teachers accountable. “That doesn’t show a whole lot of confidence in our teaching staff,” McGovern said, arguing that if the test were no longer required, “our teachers are still going to teach our kids, but we’re not going to punish them for something that I don’t necessarily see as their fault.”

Some members took issue with even taking time to discuss the ballot measure. “If anybody should be discussing this, it’s our School Committee,” Toner said.

The committee did weigh in on the issue in April 2023, and unlike the council, agreed unanimously they opposed a graduation requirement.

Councillors agreed there was a need for a replacement graduation standard if Question 2 passes. Without one, Massachusetts would be among the “lowest-performing states in the entire country who don’t have any statewide requirements,” Nolan said.

Somerville unanimity

The Cambridge City Council appears to be an outlier, as more city councils across Massachusetts affirm their support for Yes on 2 – including in neighboring Somerville, where the council voted Oct. 10 with unanimous support against MCAS that aligned with the Somerville School Committee’s unanimity Sept. 9.

The Somerville council heard from Michelle Anzalone, a special education paraeducator for the city. “Let them enjoy the fruits of their 12-year labor and take the high-stakes burden off of their plate,” she said in reference to students who have to take the MCAS alternate test – which, if passed, rewards them with a certificate of achievement rather than a diploma.

Somerville councilors have gone beyond voting in support of the resolution and taken to the streets canvassing for Yes on 2. Councilors Willie Burnley Jr., Will Mbah, Jake Wilson and Kristen Strezo said they planned to canvass Oct. 19 with the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

The issue will be on the Nov. 5 ballot.

METRO

Bypassers shield woman from ax attack

ByJULIA WEEKS

A Somerville man is accused of wielding an ax against a woman in Statue Park.

Officers were dispatched to the Davis Square park shortly before noon Oct. 10 for a call that a man was “chasing people with an ax.”

When officers arrived, they saw Mohamed Benaksas, 42, holding a “hatchet-type ax” over his head while yelling at onlookers, according to a police arrest log. Police said they asked Benaksas to drop the ax multiple times before he threw it into the street, when he was restrained by officers.

Benaksas had been earlier arguing with bystanders and had “slapped a

cigarette out of someone’s mouth,” police said from witness statements. When told by a woman to stop yelling, Benaksas said he “had something for her,” took out the ax and began swinging it at her, police said. She retreated while others tried to stop the attack, and swung the ax at them while pursuing her, police said.

When she tried to turn and run, Benaksas planted the ax in the ground and tackled her from behind, witnesses told police. He retrieved the ax and was standing over her when bystanders created a human shield and forced him toward the street. That’s when police arrived.

Benaksas is a homeless man who was known to the Somerville Homeless Coalition, which has offices in

Davis Square across from the park. Several members of the coalition saw the assault and tried to intervene and disarm Benaksas before police arrived, according to the log.

Benaksas was arrested, then arraigned in Somerville District Court the same day. After first being denied bail in a dangerousness hearing, he was granted a \$5,000 bonded bail on Oct. 15 but could not post it. He remains committed to Middlesex County Jail. If he posts bail and is released, Benaksas is ordered to not contact victims or witnesses, according to court documents.

Benaksas’ lawyers filed a petition Oct. 17 for the Middlesex County Superior Court to review the bail order.



Marc Levy

Statue Park in Somerville's Davis Square was the scene of an attempted ax attack Oct. 10.

Bomb threat forces high school search

A bomb threat was called into Somerville High School shortly after the start of the school day at 9:30 a.m. Friday.

The school was put under a “secure and hold” that lifted at 10:45 a.m. after police searched and found no threat.

A secure-and-hold means students and staff continue work inside classrooms, but no one except people participating in a safety assessment are allowed in hallways or common spaces, according to school officials.

The threat came less than two weeks after a bomb threat was called into the Somerville Public Library and shut down a drag story hour event. The school is next to the library on Central Hill. The events do not appear to be related.

DANIELLE HOWE

Grand Junction service would connect North and future Allston stations through Cambridge

From Page 1

The Grand Junction railway, which is used by the MBTA to transfer trains from its northern and southern commuter rail lines, runs from the Worcester-Framingham commuter rail line, crosses the river under the Boston University bridge and continues through Kendall Square before meeting up with the Fitchburg commuter rail and continuing north.

The railway has been studied directly and indirectly more than a dozen times in the past two decades, but a new comprehensive study from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and consultants WSP estimates high potential ridership for the line, along with a low cost of implementation – at least compared with other large MBTA projects: in the range of \$300 million to \$400 million.

CRA’s study proposes connecting the Grand Junction Line to North Station over the Draw One Bridge, which the MBTA is actively working to replace after receiving a \$472 million federal grant.



Transport Kendall

An MBTA commuter rail train moving on tracks along the Grand Junction railway in Cambridge.

At the other end, the line could connect to the MBTA’s massive multi-modal interchange redesign in Allston, which will create a West Station along the Worcester line in the former Beacon Park Yard separating Allston in two.

Trains could run between the two as little as every 15 minutes, with as many as four stops imagined between them: Cambridgeport, MIT/Massachusetts Avenue, Kendall Square and East Cambridge. It could shave as much as 40 minutes off the travel time of workers coming to Kendall Square from the North Shore and the areas of Worcester and Framingham or Allston-Brighton, according to the report.

The study, by the WSP engineering consulting firm of New York, was presented at an Oct. 16 meeting of the authority.

“A doable project”

Cambridge city councillors Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler and Burhan Azeem, who serve on the council’s Transportation & Public Utilities committee, expressed optimism about a future rail service through Kendall Square.

Azeem said this project should be a priority, as it’s comparatively inexpensive and part of it is already built. “This is a doable project,” Azeem said. “I have concerns if we don’t act on it, this is such a low-hanging fruit.”

“It’s really exciting to see it sketched out,” Sobrinho-Wheeler said. “There’s not an easy way to get from Allston-Brighton to Kendall Square to North Station right now.”

The council will likely look at the report, Sobrinho-Wheeler said, but it’s a long-term project. While he said this line should be a high priority, the timing may be more complicated, given that it could rely on the completion of West Station, which has yet to even begin construction.

Cambridge itself is already working to develop a sliver of the rail line’s right-of-way for the new Grand Junction Multi-Use path through Kendall Square. A small portion of that path has been built, between Main and Broadway, and the section before Binney Street is under construction. The path, which switches back and forth across the rail, has been designed to accommodate future double-tracking of the rail line, according to the study.

Advocacy group TransitMatters discussed the Grand Junction line in its January analysis of the Framingham-Worcester line, which argues that the MBTA should modernize the Worcester and Framingham lines to provide frequent all-day service.

The TransitMatters report says it does not recommend connecting the Grand Junction line directly into the Worcester line, as it would require taking some service away from South Station and Back Bay.

Still, TransitMatters noted in its report that the line “may have transit potential under another model”; it suggests that service along Grand Junction

should be operated separately, rather than merging with the Worcester line. The CRA report comes to a similar conclusion, and recommends separate service along the “core route” between the future West Station and North Station.

“It offers some exciting possibilities,” said TransitMatters executive director Jarred Johnson of the new report. “Some big questions remain around how this intersects with dramatically increased commuter rail frequencies as we transition to regional rail, so we’re looking forward to learning more.”

Up to 9,800 riders

As for what kind of train could actually coast down the urban tracks, the CRA report suggests “urban rail” cars that have yet to be introduced in the region. The cars might look somewhat similar to green line trains – smaller and shorter than commuter rail.

To reduce fossil fuel emissions, the report also suggests that the cars be electrically powered via an aerial cable, or even partially battery-powered for portions of the track, which would reduce infrastructure costs but increase the cost of the vehicles.

The line could garner between 5,800 to 9,800 daily boardings along its core route, the new report estimates. For most of the track, the right-of-way is large enough for double-tracking, but some slivers of land may be required in a few locations.

Stops could go in Cambridgeport, MIT/Massachusetts Avenue, Kendall Square and East Cambridge.

Depending on the scenario, the report estimates the cost of the track renovation at \$187 million to \$282 million. When the cost of procuring electric-powered train cars is included, the price tag estimate runs from \$331 million to \$427 million. If the MBTA wanted to pursue four-car trains, costs would rise considerably again, to around \$600 million or more.

“This is a service that could be delivered, they estimated, in the hundreds of millions of dollars as opposed to several billion dollars,” said Kyle Vangel, director of projects and planning at CRA.

Aside from the cost, one of the most significant obstacles to fast and reliable train service along the Grand Junction line is the number of times the tracks cross streets and pedestrian paths as they meander through Cambridge. Several key arterial streets, including Massachusetts Avenue, Main Street, Broadway and Cambridge Street intersect directly with the tracks.

On most of these streets, only flashing lights indicate an oncoming train – a result of how little the tracks are used. If frequent service were to run along the line, the report suggests adding safety gates and timing street signals to allow for safe crossings.

“The number of grade crossings is the most significant obstacle or hurdle to this service,” Vangel said.

TransitMatters also took issue with the street crossings, which its report said would present serious problems with regard to pedestrian and street traffic while slowing trains.

While Azeem agrees the number of street crossings presents complications – “there’s a lot of things we’d have to solve here,” he said – in his math the transit line would ideally take cars off the road, reducing traffic even as signal timings may rise.

The study also explored the possibility of an extended service toward Everett, Revere and Lynn and providing service for them into North Station and Kendall Square.

The report ultimately concludes that a commuter rail expansion, as suggested in the MBTA’s Rail Vision plan, would be more beneficial to those communities than the Grand Junction line.

The consultants suggest that the core route, between the future West Station and North Station, should be the focus.

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

BUSINESS & MONEY



Marc Levy

Roof work and other repairs are needed at the Neville Center and Neville Place senior facilities in Cambridge.

Money pressures ease at Neville, the Cambridge senior facilities

By SUE REINERT

A nursing home and an assisted-living center affiliated with Cambridge government and in need of financial support won't need city money for a necessary mortgage refinancing, a reversal of statements made four months ago. Neville Center, the nursing home, and Neville Place, the assisted-living facility, hope to close refinancing "in the coming few weeks," the head of the nonprofit that operates the two entities said last week.

"Support from the city is not a condition to refinancing the Rockland loans," said Andrew Fuqua, general counsel to the Cambridge Health Alliance, referring to mortgages from Rockland Trust Co. to the two facilities. Fuqua is president of the nonprofit Neville Communities, which was established to run the nursing home and assisted-living center and includes representatives from the Cambridge Housing Authority and the city as well as the Alliance.

Rockland Trust loaned \$19.7 million to the nursing home and to the assisted-living center in 2013; about \$14 million is still owed. The loans are due Oct. 31, but Fuqua said extensions have been discussed; the bank has already delayed the due date from July 2023 to the end of this month.

In May, Fuqua had told city councillors that Neville Communities couldn't refinance the mortgages without city help and that the nursing home faced a long-term risk of closing unless it could refinance. Both facilities also need new roofs, other repairs and upgrades, councillors were told.

Council members balked at using city money to help repay a private bank, and in June the council voted to ask Rockland Trust to forgive part of the loans so they could be refinanced. Councillor Patty Nolan said then that the bank had a financial interest in accommodating the request because it would get nothing if Neville Communities defaulted, since the city, not Neville Communities, owns the buildings and land on which the two facilities operate.

Fuqua hinted last week that the city might be asked to provide financial help to the nursing home that doesn't involve refinancing the Rockland Trust loan. "We look forward to working further with the city on ways to preserve Neville Center as a valuable resource to the Cambridge community," he said.

Fuqua also said: "Neville Center's finances are stabilizing, and although the building has capital needs that should be addressed sooner rather than later, it remains in good condition. Most importantly, though, as the state has recognized by awarding it a five-star rating last month, Neville Center continues to provide top-quality care to its patients."

The logjam over loans has lasted more than a year. In 2023 the city's Affordable Housing Trust approved a \$2.5 million loan to Neville Place assisted living and increased it to \$5.7 million in April this year for a new roof and upgraded facilities. That loan hasn't closed because it depends on refinancing the Rockland Trust mortgages.

The trust can help Neville Place because assisted living is considered housing, but it can't lend money to a medical facility such as Neville Center. Both the nursing home and the assisted-living center are required to fill most of their rooms with lower-income residents because city, state and federal money helped create the facilities.

Neville Center and Neville Place opened in 2001 on city land that formerly housed the city's Neville Manor nursing home. Neville Manor was more than 70 years old, in disrepair and losing money. A 1999 state law authorized the redevelopment of the property.

At the time, the Cambridge Health Alliance owned Neville Manor, and the Alliance, the Cambridge Housing Authority, the city and the city's Affordable Housing Trust collaborated to create the new development with financial help from the state and other affordable-housing organizations. The nursing home and assisted-living center sit on city-owned land next to Fresh Pond.

Bookstore promotes member perks

All She Wrote's offer is a standout among several indie sellers

By MADELEINE AITKEN

All She Wrote Books, Somerville's queer, woman-owned bookstore, is launching a membership program called Friends of Ruby that will provide perks to members with the goal of increasing community.

For \$45 a year, members will get 10 percent off all purchases, 20 percent off during an annual member sale and discounts on renting out the bookstore for private events, plus the ability to sign up for private in-store or online shopping with All She Wrote Books' owner Christina Pascucci-Ciampa and the opportunity to share a "staff pick" during their birthday month. Members will also get a Friends of Ruby pin by Crafty Queer Studio and can sign up early for events. Other ideas are being considered.

The name comes from the phrase "friends of Dorothy," which has historically been used by LGBTQIA+ people to identify each other, and the shop's unofficial corgi mascot, Ruby – the store's "chief barking officer," Pascucci-Ciampa said.

"We've been very fortunate that we've had so many amazing customers over the years that are still with us today, including people who don't even necessarily live in the area anymore but remain loyal to us, and I thought this would be a cool way to continuously build our community," Pascucci-Ciampa said.

Other bookstores in Cambridge and Somerville haven't gone as far in organizing their perks.

While the Harvard Coop has a \$1 annual membership with members-only sale events and 10 percent discounts on in-store purchases, it's limited to the Harvard and MIT communities; Harvard Book Store and Porter Square Books have only free frequent-buyer programs, and the latter's program is limited to giving a \$7.50 in-store coupon for every \$150 spent. The Harvard Book Store's is more elaborate, with 20-percent-off deals on bestsellers, featured titles and at the twice-annual frequent-buyer sales as well as a \$5 in-store coupon for every \$100 spent.

Events have become an all-but standard feature at independent bookstores. All She Wrote Books has held Scholastic-style book fair for kids and adults, book clubs and children's story hours; Ciampa-Pascucci said the Friends of Ruby program was an addition based on feedback from customers who wanted some kind of loyalty program – but instead of a purely transactional one, Friends of Ruby was designed to reward customers for more than just purchases.

"If you support and love a local



All She Wrote Books

All She Wrote Books owner Christina Pascucci-Ciampa with her dog – and store mascot – Ruby.

"If you support and love a local business like ours, we want to show you that same love back."

Christina Pascucci-Ciampa

business like ours, we want to show you that same love back, and so it was really important for me to choose perks that would honor that," Pascucci-Ciampa said.

Pascucci-Ciampa said the largest challenge of being an independent bookseller is the constant fight against Amazon and big-box stores.

"Many businesses have experienced some serious ebbs and flows this year, and we're no different," she said.

But overall, she said, this past year has been positive. After rising rent prices pushed All She Wrote Books out of the Assembly Row storefront it had inhabited for three years, a fundraising campaign brought in more than \$60,000 over two months and enabled Pascucci-Ciampa to open a new store in East Somerville in November. In the past year, she has settled into the new space, made connections in the neighborhood and hosted some of the bookstore's most successful events to date.

The idea of one-on-one shopping with Pascucci-Ciampa was inspired by All She Wrote Books' early days during the height of the pandemic. "At the time, because of Covid, we opened the store to customers by ap-

pointment only, both to keep them safe and to offer a curated, fun experience during a lonely, tough time," Pascucci-Ciampa said.

Pascucci-Ciampa brought back a form of this personal shopping during December in advance of holiday shopping (dates for this year's "Booksmas" will be announced soon), but now it will be on offer year-round for members.

"We've heard from people that they just really enjoyed that experience of being able to connect with someone one-on-one, for recommendations and ideas and just to talk about books," Pascucci-Ciampa said.

Members can email the store with at least two weeks' notice to find a time to shop virtually or in person.

The Friends of Ruby pin evolved from a sticker of Ruby with a Pride flag that studio owner Alex Mancini made for Pride 2023. "People just went crazy for it," Pascucci-Ciampa said. (A full selection of stickers of the famous Ruby is another perk on the way, Pascucci-Ciampa said.)

Friends of Ruby members will get exclusive access starting next year to early bird tickets for book clubs and large events that historically have sold out, Pascucci-Ciampa said.

The membership program can be joined online, and can be gifted. All She Wrote Books is able to ship purchases domestically and internationally, so the membership is open to all.

"This is not just for our community here in Boston; we also want to support people who may be living in other areas where there might not be as much independence or access to queer books," Pascucci-Ciampa said.

Gilman Square residents see a path to development by ending Homans studies and locking in Mobil station

From Page 1

There have been discussions around the square since 2012, but it was in 2014 that the city released a "Gilman Square Station Area Plan" and around 2017-2018 that the neighborhood council got involved in partnership with the city.

The December 2022 opening of the Gilman Square Station as part of the long-delayed MBTA green line train extension has only added to residents'

interest in seeing development, but with a new cause for frustration: the lack of a direct connection between the square and the T stop.

The Gilman Square council members want to make the T stop accessible by adding a bridge from the square to the station; to build affordable housing aided through two resident upzoning requests for transit-oriented, six-story housing; and to activate the streets with centralized greenery and retail.

A renewal plan crafted could be cru-

cial in adding the gas station acreage to "something that is substantial and has the money behind it to be able to put in a walkway to the train," Clingan said.

"We need to ensure that the person who buys [the station] is not going to just keep it as a gas station." With an urban renewal plan in place, "maybe we don't have to take the Mobil – maybe it just sparks the activity that we need," Clingan said.

There's a more imminent question around the other request by the Gil-

man group: removing the Homans site from a disposition study.

"I want to learn more about whether the City Council has the power," president Ben Ewen-Campen said. "That's not something that I'm aware of, but I would certainly like to know more."

The issues were referred to the Housing and Community Development Committee, which next meets Nov. 21.

The goal of the Gilman Square group is to "create a vibrant, sustain-

able and equitable neighborhood," said Stani Iordanova, a speaker at the September meeting that, with Carlino, was sponsored by councilor Willie Burnley Jr.

"We were on a pretty good process with the city, and then Covid hit, and it sort of stopped everything. And then there was a mayoral change and some staff changes, and then the Civic Advisory Committee was formed," Iordanova said. "A bunch of these things have delayed and delayed and delayed."

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

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

Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Ave., Somerville
8 p.m. Oct. 24 (and continuing Oct. 25, 26 and 31)

Cirque of the Dead

\$43 to \$65 and 18-plus. Boston Circus Guild’s show blends aerials, acrobatics, contortion and more with creepy camp and humorous horror; this year’s story involves the “Cirque of the Dead Historical Society” as it brings to life the eerie and captivating world of the 1920s spiritualist movement with its psychic mediums and seances.

7 to 10 p.m. Oct. 27

Boston League of Wicked Wrestlers presents “I, Blowwbot: Gays Against the Machine!”

\$25 to \$45. For Blowwloween 7, an evening of queer existential wrestling.

7 to 11 p.m. Oct. 31
Aeronaut Brewing, 14 Tyler St., near Union Square, Somerville

Aeronaut Brewing presents Halloween Bonanza

Free entry and 21-plus. Costume contest with winners chosen every hour, screenings of favorite creepy classics (“The Little Shop of Horrors,” “House on Haunted Hill” and more), DJ Javes turning up the tunes to “Monster Mash” levels as well as specialty seasonal beers on tap.

3 to 6 p.m. Oct. 26 (rain date: Oct. 27)
Chuckie Harris Park at Cross Street East between Broadway and Blakeley Avenue, East Somerville

Halloween Party and Pet Spooktacular

Free. Watch cute pets and their owners in a costume contest and enjoy live music, games, photo ops and tasty food. Plus, storytelling with All She Wrote Books and martial arts.

6:30 p.m. Oct. 31
Meeting outside the gates of the Somerville Community Growing Center, 22 Vinal Ave., near Union Square, Somerville

Paper Bag Mummies Souling Tour

Free. Join this mumming-and-mayhem walking tour toward Oxford Street that uses traditional folkplay texts to create improvisational performance and street theatre, led by “North America’s only known skull hobbyhorse.” “Don a hat, grab a script, play a part and you’re a Paper Bag Mummer!”

7:30 to 11 p.m. Oct. 29
Bow Market Upstairs, 1 Bow Market Way, Union Square, Somerville

The Poetry Brothel Boston presents “Scream, Queen!”

\$40 to \$80 and 21-plus. An immersive literary cabaret fusing poetry, activism, vaudeville, burlesque and magic with one-on-one poetry readings. A portion of proceeds go to the Boston Sex Worker and Ally Coalition.

Noon to 4 p.m. Oct. 27
Warehouse XI, 11 Sanborn Court, Union Square, Somerville

Spooky Swap XI

Free. A clothing swap, vintage and arts vendors, live local bands (Aysha Luiza, Call From Earth, Bug Wife), tooth gems, temporary tattoos, onsite alterations and more.

7:30 p.m. Oct. 24
Museum of Science, 1 Science Park, Boston, on the Cambridge border

Walter Sickert and the Army of Broken Toys Halloween Happening

\$20 to \$25 and 18-plus. The eight-member rock-goth-and-punk band from Boston has designed “an apocalyptic party” through “surrealist multiverses into rabbit black holes straight through the psychedelic Planetarium maw.” Cash bar with complimentary light snacks opens at 6:30 p.m.

6:30 to 11 p.m. Oct. 25
The Foundry, 101 Rogers St., East Cambridge

Halloween Night Market

Free and all ages. Live art, tacos, cocktails and mocktails and more than 35 local vendors sell crafts, clothes and creations. DJ Coleslaw keeps the energy high all night. Prizes for best costume (with a runway at 10 p.m.).

9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Oct. 31
ManRay, 40 Prospect St., Central Square, Cambridge

ManRay Halloween

\$20 to \$25 and 19-plus. Dancing all night with DJ John O’Leary and DJ James 808, plus ghostly go-go dancers, a terrifying tarot card reader and a costume contest with a \$1,000 first prize! Dress to impress in costumes or creative attire.

5 to 6:30 p.m. Oct. 29
Hayden Library Building at 160 Memorial Drive at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

MIT conversation on “How Universities are Plundering Our Cities”

Free, but register. With “In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower,” Trinity College historian and cultural critic Davarian L. Baldwin describes those who benefit from unchecked university power within our cities and those made vulnerable. MIT historian Craig Steven Wilder joins.

5 to 11 p.m. Oct. 31
Roxy’s Arcade, 292 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square, Cambridge

“The Gang does Halloween”

Free entry. This year, the arcade transforms into Paddy’s Pub with an “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” Halloween party. Themed food and cocktail specials, DJ Frank White (8 p.m.) and an “Always Sunny” costume contest.

5 to 9 p.m. Oct. 31
Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy St., near Harvard Square, Cambridge

Harvard Art Museums at Night

Free. During this recurring event wander exhibits, catch spotlight tours, browse the shop, enjoy sounds from DJ C-Zone and buy brews from Night Shift and phyllo rolls and couscous stew from Olive World. For Halloween, there’s mask decorating in the Materials Lab and a themed scavenger hunt.

Pandemonium Books & Games, 4 Pleasant St., Central Square, Cambridge

Pandemonium’s 35th Anniversary Party

Free. Board games, game demos and refreshments, plus a 6:30 p.m. screening of the H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society’s film “The Whisperer in Darkness.”

Noon to 6 p.m. Oct. 27

Geek Faire

Free. A Halloween artisan market in celebration of the store anniversary.

FILM AHEAD OCT. 24-31

LOCAL FOCUS



Samantha Morton in the dystopian documentary “2073.”

When Globedocs truths are too much, Halloween flicks scare the fun way

By OSCAR GOFF

There is an argument to be made that documentary is cinema in its most vital and pressing form; no other genre is able to create change or save lives as immediately or directly. The Globedocs Film Festival, which kicked off at the Coolidge Corner Theatre this week and moves to **The Brattle Theatre** for the weekend, is the Boston area’s only festival devoted exclusively to the form – and given the state of the world in 2024, we’ve rarely needed it so badly. The party moves to The Brattle on Friday with the festival’s centerpiece selection, Asif Kapadia’s “**2073**,” a rare documentary-science fiction that places actor Samantha Morton in a hypothetical dystopian vision of our nation’s future, visualized through actual footage of our dystopian present. Saturday brings together a wide range of subjects, from drug rehabilitation efforts in Worcester (Lisa Olivieri’s “**Recovery City**”) to a bizarre online phishing scandal (“**Whatever It Takes**”) to the wild life of homemaking icon Martha Stewart (“**Martha**”). Sunday closes out the festival with a pair of self-evidently relevant features: closing night selection “**Zurawski v Texas**,” about the post-Roe chaos that has enveloped that state, and “**Separation**,” from legendary filmmaker (and Cambridge native) Errol Morris. “**Separation**,” about the horrific human rights abuses under the Donald Trump presidential administration, made headlines this month when NBC announced it would hold on airing it until after the election.

Of course, this being Halloween week, there is no shortage of options for those who prefer their frights more fantastical. In anticipation of an upcoming remake from horror maestro Robert Eggers, moviegoers have a choice of screenings of F.W. Murnau’s silent vampire classic “**Nosferatu**” (1922) with radically different soundtracks. On Saturday, the **Somerville Theatre** presents a midnight screening of the film synced to selections from rock band Radiohead’s “Kid A” and “Amnesiac.” On Wednesday, Count Orlok and his minions grace the screen of The Brattle with a live musical accompaniment by the Andrew Alden Ensemble. (If you’ve seen “Nosferatu” a million times, you may want to check out the new restoration of Roland West’s 1920

silent comic mystery “**The Bat**,” with live musical accompaniment by the inimitable Jeff Rapsis!)

It wouldn’t be Halloween at the Somerville without an installment of its annual Halloween Hullabaloo program, and this year brings four ace double features from the great genre curator Julia Marchese. Sunday brings Frank Henenlotter’s grindhouse classic “**Basket Case**” (1982) – a must for anyone who dug the grotesque finale of this year’s “The Substance” – paired with the wild kiddie-horror favorite “**The Gate**” (1987). Monday brings together two all-timer ’80s zom-coms, the fractured frat house comedy “**Night of the Creeps**” (1986) and the post-apocalyptic valley girl epic “**Night of the Comet**” (1984). Those who prefer “spoopy” to scary might want to swing by on Tuesday for the ever-beloved “**Beetlejuice**” (1988) and Frank Oz’s musical version of “**Little Shop of Horrors**” (1986). The series closes Tuesday with the twin big bangs of the slasher flick boom: John Carpenter’s original “**Halloween**” (1978) and the franchise-launching “**Friday the 13th**” (1980).

The Brattle celebrates with its own traditional screenings. On Monday, catch Masaki Kobayashi’s classic folk-horror anthology film “**Kwaidan**” (1964), bringing together four lavishly shot adaptations of traditional Japanese ghost stories. On Monday and Tuesday, be sure to catch the annual screenings of Sam Raimi’s deathless splatter-comedy classic “**Evil Dead II**” (1987). Essentially a stand-alone film rather than a sequel (Raimi was unable to include footage from the original, so he instead shot an abridged 10-minute remake as a prologue), “Evil Dead II” is perhaps the perfect party movie for Halloween. It is, in a word, groovy.

If you’re looking for an excuse to dress up on Halloween proper, head to the Somerville for its yearly screening of “**The Rocky Horror Picture Show**” (1975) with a live shadowcast performance by the Teseracte Players. Simply a deliriously fun work of 1970s excess.

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



Jeremy Strong and Sebastian Stan in “The Apprentice.”

‘The Apprentice’: Doing Donald

By TOM MEEK

Not so much a takedown of Donald Trump as a look at the early years of the man who would be president as he morphs from socially awkward entrepreneur to megalomaniac, viewing capitalism and New York City as his oyster to shuck – all under the tutelage of Roy Cohn (thus the film’s title). The film chronicles Trump (Sebastian Stan) in a very public fight with Mayor Ed Koch over getting Trump Tower built, his tumultuous first marriage to Ivana (Maria Bakalova, so good at taking down one of Koch’s mayoral successors in “Borat Subsequent Moviefilm”) and his courting of Cohn (Jeremy Strong of “Succession”), who served as chief counsel to U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy during his 1950s Red Scare and prosecuted the Rosenbergs, who were executed for espionage. Trump then disavows of Cohn, a closeted gay man who used homosexual slurs constantly, when he comes down with AIDS. Stan, often under prosthetic makeup, looks the part (the hair!) but doesn’t quite sound it, yet still holds the film together, while Strong is a captivating, conflicted pit bull as Cohn and steals scenes with every razor-barbed line he fires off. It’s directed by Ali Abbasi, who has done equally dark tales in other lands: “Border” (2018) in Denmark and “Holy Spider” (2022) in Iran. That said, this doesn’t really tarnish the man or give him an out. It paints a picture that somehow makes the aspirational DJT somewhat sympathetic and allows us to connect the dots.

At Kendall Square.



Mark Wahlberg is down to spy with Halle Berry.

‘The Union’: Spy class reunion

By TOM MEEK

With a star-studded cast featuring Oscar winners Halle Berry (“Monster’s Ball”) and J.K. Simmons (“Whiplash”), the reliable box office draw of Mark Wahlberg and a world-hopping budget, on paper “The Union” has everything for a mission win. Yet, like other recent Netflix-produced actioners (“Spenser Confidential,” “The Gray Man” and “Red Notice”), it falters in execution. Our can-do heroine Roxanne Hall (Berry) works for The Union, a CIA-like organization. The opener has Roxanne, looking like Irma Vep as she darts through the alleyways of Trieste, Italy, arriving at the critical checkpoint too late, losing the assigned package and her entire team. To get that package – a hard drive bearing a coveted secret – the mission requires an “ordinary Joe” to go to “the auction.” Roxanne suggests her high school ex, Mike McKenna (Wahlberg), who still lives with his mom in Bruce Springsteen-worshipping New Jersey and hooks up with his seventh-grade math teacher (a very wry Dana Delany, who scores one of the film’s high points). Directed by Julian Farino, “The Union” boasts a smattering of fine shootouts and car chases through the streets of London, but the rest is generic spy mash with a lazy lading of rom-com. The leads have chemistry but are hobbled by the thin construct and mushy dialogue that often explains unnecessarily. If you do make it to the end, stick around for the credits, when pics of Roxanne and Mike from high school roll. Someone had a good time digging up teenage snaps of Berry and Wahlberg and fusing them. Besides Delany and a neat “Good Will Hunting” zinger, it’s one of the rare, well-earned grins in the film.

On Netflix.



MUSIC

ATTEND

Hérons and Hotties

By MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

The Blue Heron Renaissance Choir celebrated its 25th birthday Saturday at the First Church of Cambridge – with a concert. How else?

If you wanted a sneak peek, the ensemble opened the doors a day early to invite the public to a free practice session on Friday afternoon. Same transcendent polyphony beneath the yawning arches of the holy sanctum, at zero cost and much more casually attired. You know, instead of the ties, dresses and patent leather footwear, the choir members kept it comfortable with sneakers, jeans and T-shirts that looked like they had painted a few garages.

About a dozen grayhairs scattered themselves among the pews, cocking their heads at odd moments to indicate a passage here or there that they especially appreciated. Who were these people: well-heeled Cantabrigian retirees enjoying their golden years, or hard-luck cases who just wanted a safe place off the streets for a few hours?

There's a certain local style of senior bohemian chic that can make it difficult to tell the two groups apart until you get close enough to catch the subliminal indicators of wealth. A watch with a leather strap. An heirloom pendant. A piece of equipment that overly complexifies the task of self-hydration. All of the above can be a sign of a million or more in home equity.

Rich or poor, the audience was in for a treat. Blue Heron was preparing a world premiere performance of Mehmet Ali Sanlikol's "The Triumph." Renaissance choirs are rare enough, but one that presents new works rather than shuffling the playlists through the classics? Rarer than

Producers can be strange and exacting birds when it comes to recording their own music.

a blue lobster. The composer was doing double duty as flutist during practice. As the conductor conducted, he conducted on top of him, producing a surfeit of musical direction. Composer's prerogative, after all.

If you missed Blue Heron on Saturday, catch them Dec. 20-21 for a concert titled "Christmas in 15th-Century France & Burgundy." And who knows? Maybe they'll offer another freebie practice the day before ...

Hit this

Thursday *Seba* (*The Phoenix Landing, Cambridge*)

This column underreports the steady stream of DJ and club music flowing out of fun spots such as ManRay and Phoenix Landing. Buy me a camera that shoots photos in the pitch dark and I'll cover those types of gigs with glee. In the meantime, at least be aware, if you're not already, that Phoenix Landing has resident DJs spinning seven nights a week playing everything from reggae to techno, jungle and more. You can also catch touring acts such as "drum and bass king" Seba, who's joining us on

our side of the Atlantic to play a few dates ahead of his latest LP, "Smoke."

Sunday *Global Arts Live Presents: Debashish Bhattacharya Trio* (*Crystal Ballroom, Somerville*)

Global Arts Live strikes again. The world music event series offers a real plum with Hindustani slide guitar master Pandit Debashish Bhattacharya. What do they say makes a master? Ten thousand hours of practice? That means he must have played his 22-minute "Raga Des" a little over 27,000 times before earning the distinction. That's a lot of ragas. He'll form a trio with his daughter Anandi (Sukanya) Bhattacharya on small harp and his brother Subhasis Bhattacharya on percussion. Expect classical chops mixed with virtuoso improv.

Oct. 31 *Skalloween* (*The Rockwell, Somerville*)

Skappy Skalloween! I wrote about this event in September, and since then different cover set shows have popped up like mushrooms after rainfall on both sides of the Charles. Like waking up in the strange bed of a one-night stand, nobody plans to end up at a ska show. Life just happens. But you might need to plan for this one, because the previous editions of Skalloween, presented by Once, have sold out. This year's bill includes cover sets by The New Limits, Pink Slip, Battlemode and more.

Live: Illuminati Hotties at The Sinclair

Illuminati Hotties, brainchild of producer and performer Sarah Tudzin, toured through Harvard Square last hump day on the wings of her album "Power." Make no mistake, the night was a celebration of the new release. A barn door-sized neon light hung above the stage, gently burning the title "Power" into the room's collective retina.

What kind of power? Soft power? Girl power? Mighty Morphin power? Maybe more like the power of "tender punk," which is a musical premise that Illuminati Hotties have been plugging for at least half a decade. Kind of punk, but with feeling this time? Less "I Wanna Be Your Dog," more "I Wanna Keep Yr Dog." Less pit stomping, more pit loving.

You buy that? You don't have to. Tudzin paints with a broad palette, which is just what you'd expect from a pro who doubles as a producer on diverse and delightful projects such as boygenius, Weyes Blood, Speedy Ortiz, Cloud Nothings and more. Even better than inventing your own genre is not being bound by any genre at all.

The music felt bright, poppy, searching. Producers can be strange and exacting birds when it comes to recording their own music, as if all the time spent helping others find their sound needed to be won back in a single record. Illuminati Hotties mostly avoid programmatic statements and stick to the real bread and butter. Riffs, refrains, fills, hooks, like the especially sticky sweet hook on standout "The L."

Daffo opened the evening, joined onstage by "a marionette without strings," which, by most estimates, is just an ordinary puppet.

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

FOOD

WHAT WE'RE HAVING



Tom Meek

The chicken kofta skewers are the clear menu champ at Locke Bar in Cambridge's Kendall Square.

Chicken kofta at Locke Bar

By TOM MEEK

There are solid victuals and a crackle of festivity in the air at the Locke Bar in Kendall Square, where during warmer temperatures the long, spare space opens onto a patio on sleepy Broad Canal Way. It's nearly a row-up bar, with its view of the waters where Community Rowing offers kayak and canoe rentals. Just dock and head on over to the Locke.

The folks behind the bar are no newbies: They've been running the popular Irish gastropub PJ Ryan's in Somerville's Teele Square for nearly 25 years. Their selections for this all-day menu are well balanced with mains, sandwiches and – the part of the menu offering the most fun – appetizers.

Given PJ Ryan's origins, it's no surprise fish and chips are on the big-plate slate here, along with the essential steak tips and more refined chicken Milanese. For filling up two hands there's a double burger, salmon BLT and turkey club (though is not a turkey club essentially a turkey BLT?).

Salads abound too – a grain bowl and an iceberg wedge with blue cheese and bacon, which seems to be the trending rage these days – but then there's that smaller fare that allows you to partake in many flavors without filling up. The wings are large and respectable, though I like my parts less caveman-sized and more fingertip manageable (if you get 'em, get 'em salt-and-pepper style); the chowder is creamy and rich, with smoky accents and homestyle comfort; and the crab wontons are superior, if you're into fried crab and cream cheese. The latter are delicate, crispy and well-prepared. The duck sauce is a nice, sweet offset that works, but for me, the mixing of cheese and seafood, chowder excepted, is cause for culinary pause no matter how well done.

The big wins on the appetizer spread are the meze plate with whipped feta and red pepper hummus and most especially the chicken kofta, skewers of

■ **Locke Bar, 6 Broad Canal Way, Kendall Square, Cambridge**

minced and spiced Middle Eastern chicken sausage served with curry basmati rice and chimichurri yogurt for the dipping. It's a fantastic array of flavors and textures, and the clear menu champ. Every time I finish such a satisfying nosh, I seriously contemplate a second order. The finely ground meat is lean, moist and well spiced, and works well off the skewer. You can mix it in



Tom Meek

Wontons at Locke Bar in Cambridge.

with the rice, where raisins abound, or dip it into the creamy yogurt, which is spicy and sweet.

Other things on the starters list that grab the eyes are the fried pickles and peppers with housemade dill chips, spicy shrimp skewers with couscous and a culinary peculiarity: lobster poutine. (A reason to return, though it's hard to move on from the allure of those kofta skewers.) I can see the Locke Bar making for a good weekend outpost for sports, when things tend to be more quiet in Kendall, as well as a good early week spot to grab a glass of wine and an order of kofta as you work your way through that day's final round of emails.

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



The Coast Cafe mac and cheese

Price: \$6.60

I have a soft spot for hole-in-the-wall restaurants, especially ones tucked away deep in Cambridge's mazelike streets. My excellent experience with samosas at Surya last week inspired me to try another tiny spot: The Coast Cafe. It's a family business that's been serving soul food for more than 20 years, and considering I could smell the fried chicken from down the street, I knew I was in for a treat. That chicken was very good, but the mac and cheese was the standout. The noodles were perfectly cooked, in a sauce that was cheesy but not overly goopy. It was salty and well-seasoned, with a slight kick that added a nice depth of flavor. (No bland mac here.) It's also a great deal. I ordered the small, which was \$6.60 for an 8-ounce container and a sizable snack, but even the 16-ounce large size comes in under \$10.

MADELEINE AITKEN

■ **The Coast Cafe, 233 River St., Riverside, Cambridge**

ARTS

A night with the Somerville Public Library Supper Club

By MADELEINE AITKEN

The Somerville Public Library Supper Club is a group devoted to books and food, two things I love dearly. Each month, the group selects a cookbook; everyone makes a different dish, then gathers at Remnant Brewing to enjoy a (large) meal together.

I had the opportunity to join Supper Club for its Oct.15 gathering, which included dishes from “50 Pies, 50 States: An Immigrant’s Love Letter to the United States Through Pie” by Stacey Mei Yan Fong. She developed a pie recipe for each state based on its fruit, food, pastry or something else she felt spoke to its culture. With about 30 people in attendance, there were 19 pies to go around, representing states from Arkansas (Heirloom Tomato and Cheese Pie) to Indiana (Sugar Cream Pie). The number of participants was standard – usually the dishes fall in the 10-to-15 range.

The group, which is organized by Somerville West Branch librarians Kelly Gates and Gregory Xavier, started in 2019 before going on hiatus during the Covid pandemic. Gates and Xavier revived it in May 2023 with recipes from “The Weekday Vegetarians: 100 Recipes and a Real-Life Plan for Eating Less Meat” by Jenny Rosenstrach, and have hosted it monthly since.

“People kept coming in and asking us, ‘Are you going to restart Supper Club? Can you restart Supper Club?’” Gates said.

Under Gates and Xavier, the group’s popularity has grown. “We open registration for the following month’s Supper Club the morning after that month’s meeting, and we’re usually full within a week,” Xavier said. (There are 25 spots for people who want to sign up to make a dish and an additional 10 for people who just want to come and eat.)

At each month’s meeting, the cookbook for the next gathering is chosen. Gates and Xavier select a few options, which they bring to the meeting for attendees to peruse before taking a vote. Some recent favorites have included “Let’s Eat: 101 Recipes to Fill Your Heart & Home” by Dan Pelosi, “Smitten Kitchen Keepers” by Deb Perelman and “Korean American: Food That Tastes Like Home” by Eric Kim.



The October meeting of the Somerville Public Library Supper Club at Remnant Brewing in Union Square was devoted to pies.

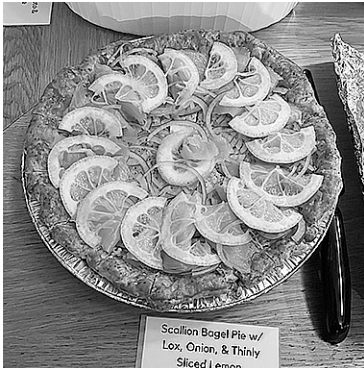
Sometimes the cookbook choices are themed to a month: In June, Supper Club cooked from “Jubilee: Recipes from Two Centuries of African American Cooking” by Toni Tipton-Martin, in honor of Juneteenth. November’s cookbook, voted on at the end of the gathering I attended, will be “The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen” by Beth Dooley and Sean Sherman in celebration of National Native American Heritage Month.

Great food in a great space

We at Cambridge Day know that one of the best parts of living in Cambridge is being part of a strong, proud community. With that community comes a host of community events, including some that I’ve been lucky enough to cover, such as Somerville’s ArtBeat and Cambridge’s Taste of Cambridge. I came away from Supper Club feeling largely the same as I did

after those events, with a full heart and a full stomach.

Walking into Remnant Brewing, where Supper Club meets the third Tuesday of each month, I was struck immediately by the cozy ambiance. Several tables in a compact area near the bar had been reserved, already full of people talking and laughing. The pies were spread across the bar, each dish labeled with its name and its baker. Those pies, which were wildly creative and deliciously executed, included North Dakota’s Tater Tot – Hotdish Pie, California’s Artichoke Pie with Savory Almond Crumble and Red Wine Reduction and North Carolina’s Pulled Pork Pie with Cheerwine Barbecue Sauce, Carolina Red Slaw and Hush Puppies. The sweet pies included a Florida Key Lime Pie, Maine Wild Blueberry and Moxie Pie and a sweet-salty combination, Vermont’s Apple Pie with Cabot Cheddar Cheese Crust.



One of the 19 pies brought to the Oct. 15 club meeting.

Gates and Xavier contribute dishes, too: Gates made New York’s Scallion Bagel Pie with Lox, Onion and Thinly Sliced Lemon, chosen for her New York roots and her love of bagels (for a previous Supper Club, she made an everything-bagel galette); Xavier tackled Alaska’s Wild Alaskan Salmon & Halibut Pie with Mashed Potato Topping, inspired by the two years he spent living in Alaska.

Opportunities to experiment

Hannah Duhaime, who started coming to Supper Club around January, brought two pies: A New Hampshire Maple Pumpkin variety and Alabama Blackberry and Peach Pie with Pecan Crumble.

“It’s fall, I couldn’t not do pumpkin,” she said.

Supper Club has become her way of experimenting in the kitchen.

“So much of the cooking I do is practical, like meal prep,” Duhaime said. “I like getting to be creative and try something new out.”

Diane Coles, who started attending Supper Club after seeing an advertisement at the West Branch, said she also uses it as a way to push herself to be ambitious in the kitchen. She made an Idaho pie – Mashed Potato Pie with Hash Brown Crust and Scalloped Potato Topping – that she called a three-parter and “a great project.”

Likewise, Nancy Kalajian, a Supper Club attendee since before the pandemic, keeps coming back because it exposes her to different kinds of cookbooks and recipes.

“There’s always something new, and there’s so many different cultures being represented in the cookbooks we

choose,” she said. “It gives us an opportunity to try new foods, both the ones we make and the ones others bring.”

Intergenerational community

The food is undeniably very good. Getting to try each dish alone would make the trip to Supper Club worth it. (Dave Rubinow, who made the Mississippi Mud Pie, called October’s Supper Club “the best meal I’ve had in Boston.”) But the group is really about community: sharing a meal with friends new and old and learning something along the way.

Almost everyone I spoke with at Supper Club referred to the community aspect in one way or another. One of the group’s hallmarks is that it draws a wide range of ages. There were children attending with their parents, young adults and older folks alike.

Kalajian was sitting with newcomers Aidan Doherty, who made Wyoming’s Elk Chili Pie with Huckleberry Sauce, and Lexie Wheeler, who made Delaware’s Peach Custard Pie. They’re recent graduates of the University of Vermont who were attending for the first time.

“I love libraries and I love cooking, so I thought it would be cool to be in this space with so many people who share those interests,” Doherty said.

Kalajian and Brian Lawson, also a veteran attendee, couldn’t imagine a space like this existing 20 or 30 years ago.

“People are so much more into cooking now, and they look for things like this,” Lawson said, noting the intergenerational aspect of the group.

That’s rare, Doherty said: “There are so few spaces like this, where people who are different ages and from different groups are represented.”

Much of that community is attributable to Gates and Xavier, who brought the group back and have kept it running. Marissa Fried, a repeat attendee who made Ohio’s Buckeye Pie as an ode to her time at the University of Cincinnati, had to miss a cookie swap last December because she had Covid. But Gates brought the cookie swap to her.

“Kelly put together a plate of cookies for me from the swap, and she brought it to my house,” Fried said. “That meant so much to me.”

In ‘Steina: Playback,’ video is a lively experiment amid an age of surveillance

By CLAIRE OGDEN

It’s hard to separate digital video from the hold that social media and emerging technologies have on it, and

BEHOLD

visuality’s ties to corporate surveillance. But “Steina: Playback,” an exhibit coming to MIT’s List Visual Arts Center, is perhaps an antidote.

In a world where Meta’s Smart Glasses could be hijacked to dox anyone in public view and where deepfake revenge porn is proliferating, it’s refreshing to be reminded of digital media’s potential for sublimity, collaboration and raw, experimental creativity.

“Playback” is the first solo exhibition in more than a decade of work by the Icelandic musician and video artist Steina. The exhibition is lighthearted and playful, and holds a curiosity about the moving image that’s refreshing.

Other recent video art surveys have foregrounded surveillance, citizen journalism and protest movements –

all apt explorations for the medium – but Steina’s work feels unique in its preoccupation with concerns beyond the human.

Video is sublime, she shows us. It’s a material with its own idiosyncrasies, something that will always have an air of mystery to it.

Steina’s husband, Woody Vasulka, was a longtime creative partner. In early collaborations, they used and created DIY signal-processing tools to manipulate audio and video, leading to some visuals that are truly bonkers.

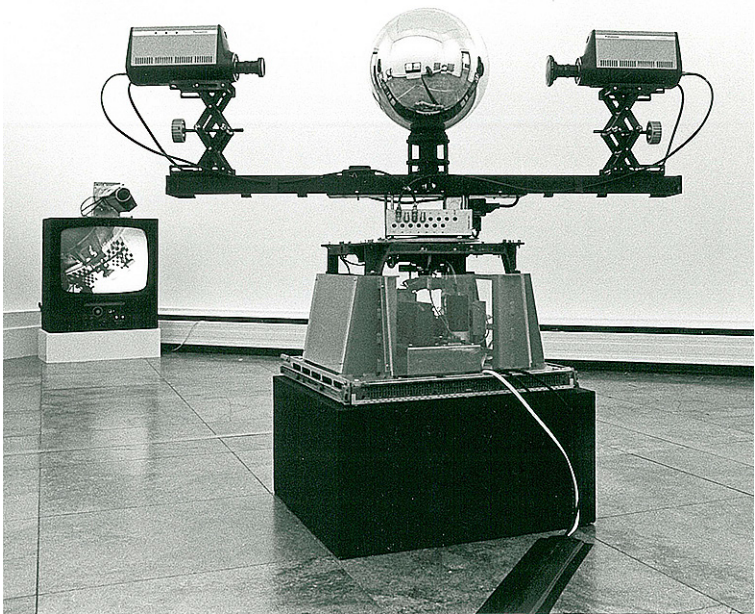
In later works, Steina added movement to her pieces. With the installation “Allvision” (1976), two cameras on a turntable slowly orbit a central reflective orb. Steina had said, “When people look at ‘Allvision,’ they see themselves and, therefore, assume it is about them. But then they leave and Allvision keeps going.” This is where she started to explore what she called “machine vision,” or a machine-centered approach to image generation. It was essentially the idea that hu-

man-centric perception was not the be-all and end-all.

Steina’s musical background inspired the video “Violin Power” (1970-1978), or what she called her “demo tape on how to play video on the violin.” In the piece, she uses the instrument’s audio frequencies to disrupt the video footage, employing the violin as a creative and a destructive force – the analog chipping away at the digital.

What is most inspiring about the exhibition is its undertone of optimism. That comes through particularly in the Vasulkas’ decadeslong ethos of cooperation. The couple used technology as a tool for collaborative thinking and experimentation, and they shared the image- and signal-processing tools they created with others. Their archive of public media broadcasts, writings and artworks lives on at vasulka.org.

■ “Steina: Playback” is at the List Visual Arts Center, 20 Ames St., Kendall Square, Cambridge, from Saturday through Jan. 12.



Steina’s “Allvision” is part of the “Steina: Playback” show at MIT’s List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge’s Kendall Square.

LETTER

Annual Winter Warmth Drive aims for \$20,000 to help unhoused

By MARC MCGOVERN

I have launched the 12th annual Winter Warmth Drive.

Twelve years ago, in December, while serving dinner at the Tuesday Night Meal Program at the First Parish UU church in Harvard Square, I was speaking with an unhoused woman about what Cambridge could be doing to better support our unhoused community. I was asking about job training, housing, raising the minimum wage.

She turned to me and said, “Yes, that’s all good, but tonight I just want some warm blankets.” That night the Winter Warmth Drive was born.

Over the past 11 years, I have led an effort, along with First Parish, to raise \$20,000 per season to buy sleeping bags for Cambridge’s homeless population. Over those years, we have raised more than \$200,000 and provided more than 1,000 sleeping bags and wool blankets to those in need. Although we know that sleeping bags will not solve homelessness – it’s much more complicated than that – these bags have been called “lifesaving” and people have come to rely on them.

Our goal is to raise \$20,000 before the end of October so we can order these bags before the weather starts to get really cold. Our community has been so great over the years, and I can’t thank you enough. If you would like to contribute online, please visit 2024 Winter Warmth Drive, or you can mail a check made out to First Parish, 3 Church St. Cambridge, MA 02138 and write “Winter Warmth Drive” on the memo line.

Thanks so much for reading my appeal!

The writer is a Cambridge city councillor.

NAMES

Food for Free honors Harvard for support

Food for Free, a Cambridge and Somerville food distribution nonprofit, honored Harvard University with its first Community Partner award at the annual Party Under the Harvest Moon, held Oct. 18.

Ten years ago, Harvard University Dining Services began working with Food For Free to donate bulk prepared food to local food programs, what evolved into a frozen meal program called Heat-n-Eats, Food for Free said in an Oct. 7 press release.

Harvard has contributed an estimated \$1.5 million in food donations, coupled with ongoing financial support totaling \$230,000 since 2005, which has been instrumental in expanding the Heat-n-Eats program, Food for Free said. The program shifted recently to focus solely on supporting students facing food insecurity in Greater Boston through schools, colleges and community-based student-serving programs.

“Working with Food for Free over the past decade has been an incredible opportunity for Harvard,” said Crista Martin, director for strategic initiatives and communications at HUDS.

■ 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.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Planning Board of the City of Cambridge will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.** held remotely (see below for instructions to participate) on two Zoning Petitions by the Cambridge City Council.

The first Petition (Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition Part One) would amend the Cambridge Zoning Map and Ordinance in Articles 2.000, 3.000, 4.000, 5.000, 6.000, 7.000, 8.000, 10.000, 11.000, 13.000, 14.000, 16.000, 17.000, 20.000, and 21.000 with the intent of:

(1) removing zoning districts that are intended to permit single-family or two-family but not multifamily residences;

(2) permitting multifamily and townhouse residences as-of-right in all zoning districts except Open Space and removing special requirements applicable to multifamily and townhouse residences;

(3) removing dimensional requirements including minimum lot width and area and minimum lot area per dwelling unit, removing floor area ratio (FAR) limitations for residences, reducing minimum yard requirements for residences, and increasing height limitations for residences to permit at least six stories above grade in all districts except Open Space to allow for additional housing units beyond what is permitted under current zoning;

(4) removing remaining references to minimum parking requirements; and

(5) revising other parts of the Zoning Ordinance for internal consistency.

The second petition (Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition Part Two) would amend the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in Articles 5.000, 11.000, 15.000, 17.000, 19.000, and 20.000 with the intent of:

(1) revising open space standards to provide greater flexibility by allowing all types of open space to contribute to meeting requirements;

(2) revising certain standards of the Affordable Housing Overlay so they are not more restrictive than comparable standards for residences in base zoning;

(3) making project review special permit requirements applicable in all zoning districts and applicable to residential development of 75,000 square feet or more;

(4) updating advisory development review procedures and introducing a new Planning Board Advisory Consultation for some larger development not subject to a special permit, similar to what is currently required in the Affordable Housing Overlay; and

(5) revising other parts of the Zoning Ordinance for internal consistency.

This hearing will be on Zoom Webinar. Go to www.cambridgema.gov/planningboard to view petition documents, send written comments before the hearing, or learn how to join the hearing online or by phone. Contact the Community Development Department at cddzoning@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-4600 with questions. Written comments received by 12:00

P.M. on the Friday before the meeting will be considered by Board Members in advance of the meeting. Comments received later will be entered into the record.

The Week, 10/24/24 & 10/31/24

City of Cambridge Massachusetts BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL

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

The Board of Zoning Appeal will hold a Virtual Public Meeting, **THURSDAY – NOVEMBER 7, 2024**. Members of the public can participate or view the meeting remotely using the Zoom Webinar link: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/85299551558> Or join by phone: Dial +1 929 436 2866 or +1 301 715 8592 - Webinar ID: 852 9955 1558

6:30 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-769560: 125 BRATTLE STREET Residence A-2 Zone ELLEN WILLIAMS & LAWRENCE MILLER – C/O KATHLEEN FLYNN, AIA

Special Permit: Adding windows within rear yard setbacks.

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

6:45 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-1138407: 44 RUSSELL STREET Residence B Zone 44 RUSSELL STREET LLC – C/O GUEVE ATAIE

Special Permit: To add windows on nonconforming walls and extend 2” into nonconforming setbacks and further extend height nonconformity. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Sec. 5.24.2.b (Exterior Insulation).

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

7:00 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-290238: 10 BLANCHARD ROAD

Residence A-2 Zone KERRY & PRITHVIRAJ TANWAR – C/O MAGGIE BOOZ, ARCHITECT

Special Permit: Petitioner requests to reduce the single 20’ wide curb cut to 10’ and add a second 10’ curb cut to access Blanchard Road. The property is 84’ wide instead of the +100’ that Article 6.43 (c) requires for more than one curb cut.

Art. 6.000, Sec. 6.43.3.c & Sec. 6.43.5.c (Access for Off Street Parking Facilities). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

7:15 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-785300: 6 ACACIA STREET

Residence A-2 Zone WILLIAM & TERESA HELLER – C/O MAGGIE BOOZ, ARCHITECT

Special Permit: Alteration to windows at the rear facade of the house within non-conforming rear yard setback. Art. 5.000,

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

7:30 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-289791: 64 RICE STREET

Residence B Zone ROBERT & HARRIET GARSKOVAS – C/O JOHN LODGE, ARCHITECT

Special Permit: Expansion and rebuilding of the existing accessory building at the rear of the lot to create a new, two-bedroom Accessory Dwelling Unit. Art. 4.000. Sec. 4.21 & Sec. 4.22 (Accessory Apartment). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).

7:45 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-1139118: 26 BELLIS CIRCLE

Residence B Zone THOMAS A. CULOTTA & MARY CUSTIC

Variance: Alterations to the window configuration on the south wall of a non-conforming structure that was previously approved by the BZA Case No. 218034. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements).

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

TO VIEW BZA CASE APPLICATIONS, PLANS & SUBMISSIONS, GO TO: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/inspection/zoning.aspx> at top of page, click “Calendar” > Click hearing date > Click “Board of Zoning Appeal Agenda.” Any information filed after the agenda has been posted can be viewed at the Inspectional Services Department located at 831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge by appointment only. Copies of this petition are also on file in the office of the City Clerk, City Hall, Cambridge, MA. Interested persons may provide comments to the Board of Zoning Appeal by participating during the hearing and/or may provide written comments for the Board’s consideration by mailing or delivering them to the attention of the Secretary, Board of Zoning Appeal, 831 Mass Avenue, 02139 or by emailing them to mpacheco@cambridgema.gov. Comments must be submitted prior to the Hearing and include the Case Number. Continued cases are not re-advertised but are posted on the office board at the City Clerk’s Office in City Hall & on the same BZA Web Page 48 hours prior to hearing.

The Week, 10/24/24 & 10/31/24

LEGAL NOTICE CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that a public meeting will be held on Thursday, **November 7, 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>)

us/) from a phone, tablet, or computer. To join the meeting, register at: <https://tinyurl.com/CHCnov7-2024> or call (301)715-8592. Webinar ID#: 867 5068 4631. 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 5198: 3 Phillips Pl., by Nexus Legacy Development LLC. Continuance of hearing: Renovate. Add elevator. Demolish portion of addition on east side. Enlarge basement and construct ramp to garage. Construct residential decks and patio.

Case 5218: 6 Willard St., by Plympton Collective LLC c/o Jeffrey Lee. Install solar panels.

Case 5219: 4 Brattle St., by Sowing Seeds LLC c/o Steve Shabet, Tr. Widen driveway and construct stone path.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Case D-1709: 24 Newell St., by 24 Newell Street LLC c/o Mike Tokatlyan. Demolish house (1931).

Chandra Harrington, Chair
Cambridge Week, 10/24/24, 10/31/24

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, November 4, 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/MCNov2024> or call (301)715-8592 Webinar ID: 845 8251 0951.

MC-7161: 14 Greenough Avenue, by Maria da Costa & Daniel Shirai. Replace siding with composite.

Tony Hsiao, Chair
Cambridge Day, The Week, 10/24/24, 10/31/24

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.

Many Canada geese live here year-round, and hunters have long been fans

Permanent residents

By JEANINE FARLEY

Although Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) seem ubiquitous around here, this has not always been the case. Today, many resident, nonmigratory geese live here year-round. But the numbers of Canada geese, migratory or not, have increased and decreased dramatically over the years.

When Europeans first settled these shores, Canada geese were abundant. Thomas Morton described what he saw in the early 1600s in what is today Quincy:

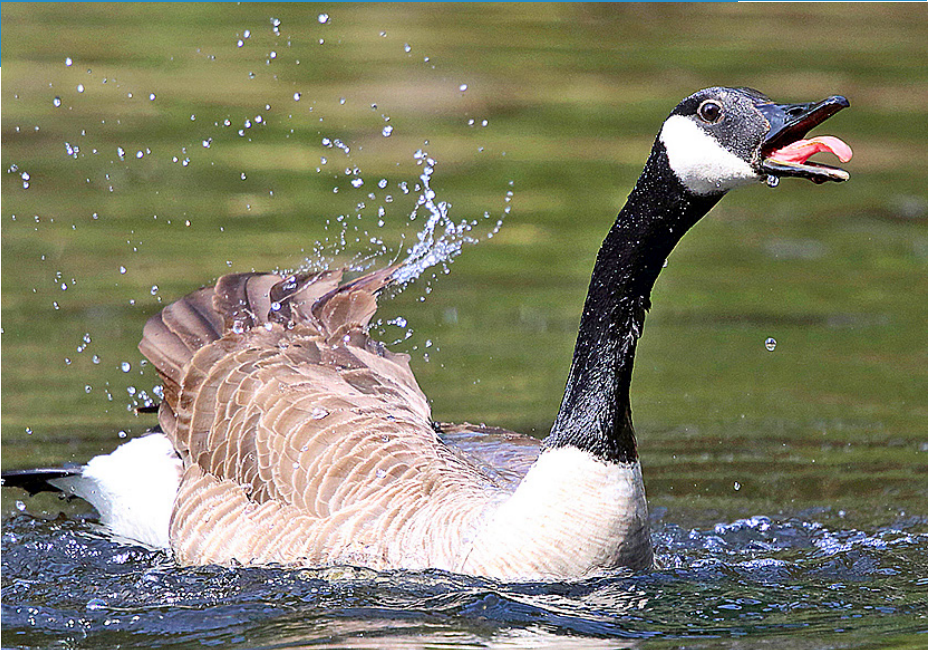
There are Geese ... which are as big and bigger than the tame Geese of England; the flesh far more excellent, than the Geese of England, wild or tame. There is of them great abundance. I have had often 1000 before the mouth of my gun, I never saw any in England for my part so fat, as I have killed there in those parts, the fethers of them makes a bed, softer than any down bed that I have lyen on: ... the fethers of the Geese that I have killed in a short time, have paid for all the powther and shot, I have spent in a year, and I have fed my dogs with as fat Geese there, as I have ever fed upon myself in England.

William Wood in the travelogue *New Englands Prospect*, 1634, describes migratory Canada geese that overwintered in the Lynn area:

With a black neck, and a black and white head, strong of flight; these be a great deal bigger than the ordinary Geese of England, some very fat, and in the Spring so full of Feathers, that the shot can scarce pierce them; most of these Geese remain with us from Michelmas [Sept. 29] to April; ... they feed on the sea of Fish ... the accurate marksmen kill of these both flying and sitting.

But hunters in the 1700s and 1800s pursued these geese so doggedly that their numbers declined. By the 1800s, Canada geese no longer overwintered in our area and were only transient visitors as they migrated overhead in the spring and fall. According to William Brewster in *The Birds of the Cambridge Region of Massachusetts* (1906):

Canada Geese may still be seen or heard nearly every spring and autumn, passing high in air over the Cambridge Region on their northward and



Tom Murray

A Canada goose chases off a rival that got too close to its mate in Pepperell, above, while a flock of geese fly over North Cambridge at top and to the left.

southward migrations. Although observed much less often than formerly, they continue to appear in considerable numbers, attracting general attention by their imposing flight and wild, musical clamor ...

Since my earliest recollection no large flocks of Geese have been known to visit our ponds, but small flocks and single birds used to alight rather frequently, and still do so occasionally, in Fresh, Spy and the Mystic Ponds ...

I remember ... forty years ago ... a large flock of Geese alighted, during a snowstorm, on Strawberry Hill near the southern shores of Fresh Pond. These birds, it was said, had become so exhausted and so loaded with damp snow that numbers of them were killed with clubs.

And, in case you thought warm winters occurred only recently, according to the *Cambridge Chronicle*, in one unusual year, 1889, Canada geese migrated south much later than normal (in late January):

Those aerial prophets, the wild geese, have commenced, weeks later than usual, their flight southward. This indicates the approach at last of seasonable weather. Thus far we have enjoyed a truly remarkable season. In the neighboring town of Melrose, and doubtless in other places in this vicinity, the narcissus and kindred Spring flowers have started into untimely and brief life in this abnormal mid-Winter.

Today, there are two populations of Canada geese in the Northeast, including migratory Canada geese who leave their breeding grounds in Labrador and Newfoundland when the weather becomes harsh and fly south along the coast to overwinter from New Hampshire to New Jersey. In the winter, migratory and nonmigratory geese live in Massachusetts.

Unlike most other bird species, Canada geese can digest grass. So they congregate on large expanses of grass in parks, golf courses and ball fields. (They especially like bluegrass.)

Some of the nonmigratory geese who live here all yearlong descend from geese that hunters used as live decoys to lure the migrators. Hunters imported these live geese from other areas. Many of the imported geese were a large, hardy subspecies of the Canada goose — the giant

Canada goose. Because these geese are so large, they withstand colder temperatures better than smaller geese and don't have to go anywhere to stay warm.

Hunters shackled the feet of a decoy goose and put a harness on the bird. They attached the harness to a wooden stake in the ground. The live decoy geese were extremely effective, as M. Coffey wrote in 1934:

That first call of the decoy was the beginning of Bedlam ... Running his head along the ground like a snake, he talked low and enticing. Then he would shoot that long neck up into the air and tell those approaching geese just how good that green rye tasted. The flock answered him as it began to look things over. First one goose honked a time or two and then it sounded as though each one was doing its best to drown out the others.

Just a year later, the federal government banned hunters from using live decoy geese and more than 15,000 were released into the wild. Because these geese did not migrate, they began nesting in the area instead. Goose populations increased until there were too many in the Eastern part of the state, but few in the Central and Western parts. To combat this, beginning in the 1960s and ending in 1976, MassWildlife moved geese from coastal areas into Central and Western Massachusetts. This made goose hunters very happy, while the transplanted geese found abundant grasses to eat and had few predators. A population explosion occurred. Today the population of breeding, nonmigratory Canada geese on the Atlantic coast is more than 1 million, according to Rutgers experts Joseph Paulin and, of all names, David Drake.

Canada geese in Eastern Massachusetts tend not to migrate, but they move to places where the water is not frozen. Canada geese in Western Massachusetts are more likely to migrate, joining flocks traveling south from Canada. These commonly overwinter in Long Island Sound or Chesapeake Bay.

You can't really tell migratory from nonmigratory geese apart just by looking at them (although migratory geese tend to be smaller). You can tell by behavior, though: The geese that breed here in the spring and summer are resident geese who will not go far in the winter.

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.



Some of the nonmigratory geese who live here yearlong descend from geese used by hunters as live decoys to lure the migrators.

Richard George



A gosling in New York state.

Tom Murray