



WILD THINGS

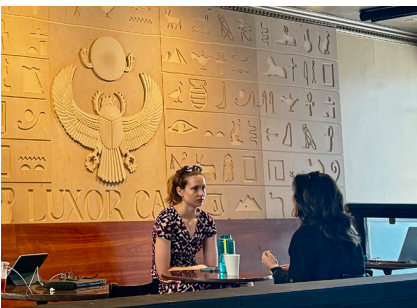
Taking snow baths and doing mountain climbs like they feel nothing, juncos may have handled that freezing winter better than we did.

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THE WEEK

MARCH 6-13, 2025

FREE | by CAMBRIDGE DAY



Tom Meek

Etched hieroglyphics run along a wall at the Luxor.

Luxor invokes spirit of Egypt and late hours for Ramadan

By CHLOE JAD

Luxor Cafe will host guests until 2 a.m. during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, which began Friday and ends March 29. It was during Ramadan last year that Abdelrahman Hassan finalized the deal allowing him to open the Luxor, a place evocative of cafes in Egypt.

The shop at 148 Mount Auburn St. in Cambridge's Harvard Square had been the flagship location for the coffee shop chain Darwin's Ltd. for more than 30 years.

Gone are Darwin's yellow and red walls. They are now the color of sand, the floors a deep stain of brown. On the biggest wall, etched hieroglyphics run in rows, with a scarab beetle in the center. The downstairs seating doubles as a prayer space, where ornate lanterns cast warmth on the mosaic tables and cushions that Hassan's parents stuffed into suitcases from their last trip to Cairo.

See LUXOR, Page 4

Lawsuit, charges of antisemitism follow rejection of a plan by board

By SUE REINERT

A fast-growing Orthodox Jewish movement that has operated a religious, social and educational center on Banks Street in Cambridge since 1999 is suing the city and its Board of Zoning Appeal for denying a permit to expand.

Lubavitch of Cambridge, also known as Harvard Chabad because of ties to Harvard students and activities on campus, accuses the board and neighborhood opponents of antisemitism and says it must sometimes conduct religious activities and feed several hundred guests in a tent even in winter because it doesn't have enough indoor space.

The zoning board on June 20 turned down Lubavitch's request to almost double the total size of its indoor space by moving one building closer to Banks Street in Riverside and expanding it with a connection to a second structure. Besides larger space for religious services, the proposed new building would have a ritual bath in the basement and a roof deck available for religious ceremonies. Although the board voted 3-2 to approve, the application needed four votes.

Near the end of the meeting, with defeat for Lubavitch likely, its leader, rabbi Hirschy Zarchi, said of the opposing neighbors: "They just don't want us here, and they've made it very, very – they told us, 'We don't want you here.'"

The Kerry Corner Neighborhood Association, the group of residents opposing the expansion, denied that its views resulted from "antisemitism or Nimby," a term meaning "not in my backyard." The organization said roughly 25 percent of its members are Jewish "and are concerned that regardless of what the petitioner promises today, should the building be allowed to expand, it will offer significant growth and occupancy well beyond current activities in a residential neighborhood of intimate scale."

See LAWSUIT, Page 5



Ted Eytanbvia via Flickr

A No Kings Day protest in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 17.

The familiar face dismantling the government: a CRLS grad

By MARGOT KELSEY and HANNAH ERICKSON

Cole Killian, who graduated from the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, is taking part in Trump administration work cutting federal programs.

In his year at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Cole Killian was known for starting Aspine, a cleaner and more user-friendly version of Aspen, the online student information system. Now he is known for being a member of

Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency, along with several other 19- to 25-year-old engineers empowered by president Donald Trump to slash its way through federal agencies.

At least two others have ties to the Boston area: Edward Coristine, a Northeastern student, and Ethan Shaotran, a senior at Harvard University. The team has been reported on by Wired.

The small, unelected body pressuring government employees to resign was created by Elon

Musk, the richest man in the world, and Vivek Ramaswamy, a business entrepreneur, politician and longtime Trump supporter reputed to be nearly a billionaire. Its stated goal is to eliminate wasteful spending and modernize government infrastructure; so far, it has been most effective in shutting down the work of the U.S. Agency for International Development, which provides international humanitarian aid.

See DOGE, Page 3

INSIDE

News: The Somerville Media Center cuts the ribbon after its relocation; three kids are charged after a Cambridge gun incident.

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Business: Housing and a commercial space is approved to go up next to Redbones.

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Attend: Artists hate labels and they're not bashful about telling you. Sometimes they're also the reason for the labels.

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FILM AHEAD

Real-life stories of women; celebrations of Albert Serra and Edgar Wright; and the gleefully profane rom-com "Dinner in America."

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EVENTS AHEAD

A joke contest, community iftar, readings about Joan Didion and by Peter Wolf, chiptune music, Lego night and MIT dome projection.



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MEETINGS MARCH 6-13

CAMBRIDGE

Empty storefronts and K-Lo’s future

By MARC LEVY

Update on advance learning

School Committee Curriculum & Achievement Subcommittee, 5:30 p.m. Thursday. This hearing co-chaired by David Weinstein and Richard Harding Jr. brings an update on the district’s work on advanced learning and how to meet student needs. Televised and watchable online and by Zoom videoconferencing.

K-Lo building; UPK choice

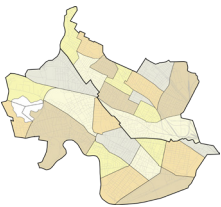
School Committee Building & Grounds Subcommittee, 5 p.m. Monday. This hearing chaired by José Luis Rojas Villarreal looks at what will be done with the Kennedy-Longfellow School at 158 Spring St., East Cambridge, when it closes at the end of this academic year; and starts discussion on policy changes around preschool and kindergarten assignments. Televised and watchable online and by Zoom videoconferencing.

Filling empty storefronts

Economic Development & University Relations Committee, 3 to 5 p.m. Tuesday. This committee run by city councillor Paul Toner brings in the city solicitor and Community Development Department’s Economic Opportunity Division to talk about vacant storefronts and commercial properties in Cambridge, assess past efforts to fill them and possible new policy options such as taxes and fines for owners who leave spaces empty for years. The committee meets at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Envisioning Mass. Ave. of 2040

Massachusetts Avenue Planning Study working group, 6 to 8 p.m. March 13. This group is considering what the avenue will look like in 2040 from Cambridge Common to Alewife Brook Parkway. At this session it hears from the Community Development Department’s Zoning & Development Division about recommendations on such things as building height, use, density and dimensional and design standards. 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

More snow removal and a plan for schools

By MATTHEW SAGE

Lab and apartment developments

Planning Board, 6 p.m. Thursday. Consideration for a 1.3 million-square-foot lab, office, hospitality and park development at 20-23 Cummings St., Assembly Square and to allow taller buildings on Horace, Ward and South streets, Ward 2, near the Cambridge line. Watchable via videoconferencing.

Winter and Brown school plans

School Construction Advisory Group, 6 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday. The advisory group continues discussion on replacement or renovation for the Winter Hill and Brown schools, which have failing facilities; members were angered when the Mayor’s Office released a survey some considered slanted in favor of building one large new school. Though the project is moving through a state funding process, in December the working group learned a building likely wouldn’t be completed for another six years. Held at Somerville High School, 81 Highland Ave., Central Hill.

Snow removal and water issues

City Council Public Utilities and Public Works Committee, 6 p.m. Monday. This committee run by city councillor Jesse Clingan asks about city snow removal and how it might be improved, as well as whether there’s another in a series of issues with recently installed water meters – that they are falsely registering air pockets in residential cold water lines as leaks, leading to significantly inaccurate bills. There’s information requested on a plan to put a stormwater retention tank onto the Homan’s site in Gilman Square and on free, 24-hour outdoor toilets in Union Square, Davis Square and East Somerville. Watchable via videoconferencing.

Elm-Beacon connector meeting

City of Somerville, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday. Porter Square neighbors are invited to learn about a project to build out nearby streets for pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Stretches of Elm Street and Somerville Avenue will be retrofitted with “quick-build” safety measures such as new bike lanes, signs and pavement markings. Held at the John F. Kennedy School, 5 Cherry St., near Porter Square in Spring Hill.

THE WEEK

by CAMBRIDGE DAY

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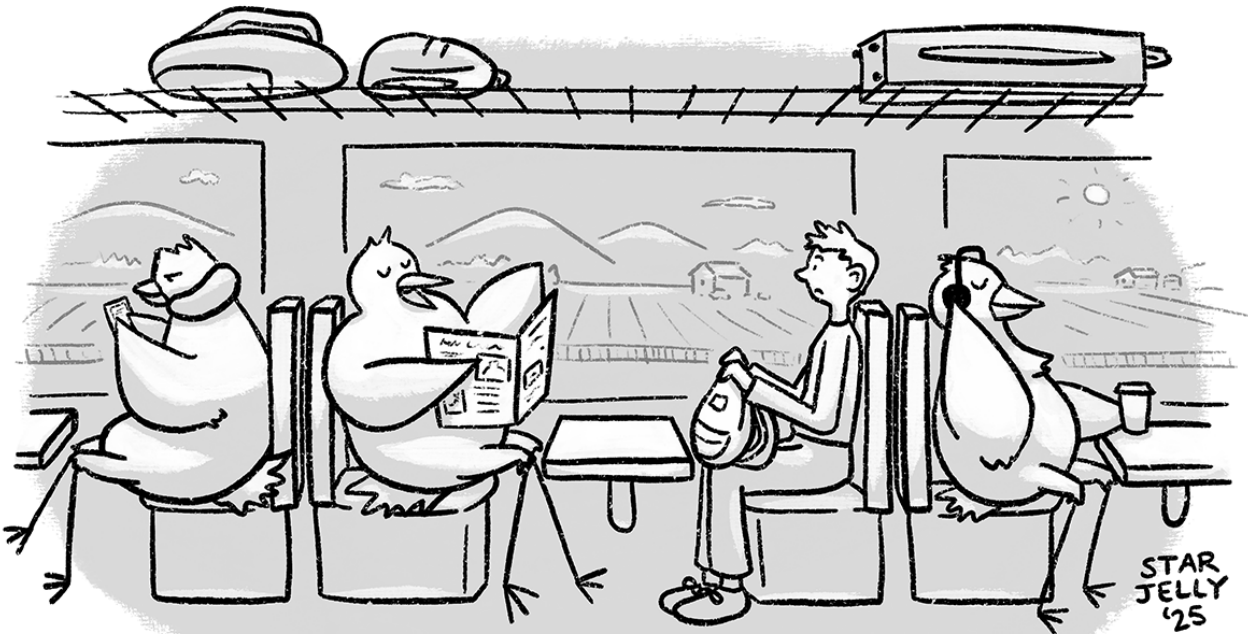
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Star Jelly Comics

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“YEAH, WE FLY SOUTH FOR WINTER, BUT WE AMTRAK NORTH FOR SUMMER.”

Somerville Media Center hosts grand opening after relocation

By MERRITT HUGHES

The Somerville Media Center opened its doors to the community Feb. 26 in a new location in Ward 2 in an event filled with officials, residents and members of the SMC who use its television, video and podcast equipment.

Before a formal ribbon cutting and remarks at the evening’s grand opening came a social hour, in which members mingled, peeked at the 4,800 square feet of amenities and enjoyed hors d’oeuvres and an open bar.

The more than 100 guests were in good spirits about the new center, but it was not a quick road to get here. The previous center in Union Square closed its doors in August 2023, leaving a city-owned property that was declared unsafe. The center worked out of temporary space on the Somernova business campus until December, when the new location within Somernova at 29 Properzi Way opened to members.

The grand opening speeches began with thanks – to board members and elected officials at the event, including four mayors, a state senator, two state representatives and six city councilors – by Joe Lynch, president of the center’s board of directors.

“I’m so happy all of you could join us tonight as we celebrate this milestone,” Lynch said. “The Somerville Media Center: Where we are all equal, but definitely not the same.”

Lynch noted the political changes coming out of the Trump administration and how the center’s mission to support the community will continue. “I’ll make this pledge to all of you and to Somerville tonight,” he said. “No matter who you are, whether you’re a member of the persons with disabilities community, the LGBTQ+ community, the immigrant community, the Bipoc community, we will protect you.”



Merritt Hughes

The new Somerville Media Center is packed with people at a Wednesday grand opening.



Merritt Hughes

Ballantyne cuts the ribbon Wednesday on the new Somerville Media Center.

Following applause from the audience, Lynch introduced SMC’s executive director, Sean Effel. He started as

a projects manager in March, just after executive director Kat Powers left. It was announced in July that Effel was the new executive director and would begin official work in the role in September.

“My job is to introduce our mayor, who comes from a long line of mayors who’ve been supportive of our organization and our work here,” Effel said.

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne took the stage to say a few words and lead a ribbon cutting that “marks not just a change in address, but a continuation of SMC’s [work] in our city,” she said. “A legacy of storytelling, community building and ensuring that everyone in Somerville has a platform to be heard.”

“We know that independent media is an essential part of vibrant democracy, and that local storytelling connects us, informs us and brings us together in ways that no other platform can,” Ballantyne said.

The board, members of SMC and children lined up to take pictures with the mayor and cut the ribbon. Official tours of the building took place after until the event wrapped up around 9 p.m.

The new center is “everything we wanted: a new studio, new production equipment,” said Mike McAuley, an SMC member, in an interview.

But McAuley said he and other members have been unhappy about

the 16 months between permanent locations, the time it took to fill the executive director position and how the board managed bylaws and its own vacancies.

They wanted to do something about the decline of the center over the past two years and expressed their discontent to the board in an April letter about member voting rights, he said.

Since then, the board proposed substantial changes to bylaws, prompting objections by McAuley to the board and City of Somerville in September. He received no response for either.

“I’m not getting anywhere with elected representatives or the Mayor’s Office,” he said. “I think they’re in violation of their contract with the city. I don’t think they’re following their bylaws. I don’t feel like any of that has been resolved. They just moved forward and had some leadership changes.”

The interim space, meanwhile, felt unwelcoming. “It was really tough for membership, because it was a temporary space,” McAuley said. “It was half the space that we had before, there were no recording studios. There was a lot of loss of membership and revenue.”

Moving forward

With the additional space and equipment of the new headquarters, McAuley expressed a willingness to move forward.

Lynch said after the grand opening that the time it took to relocate and fill the executive director position, while not ideal, was normal for organization of the SMC’s size and complexity.

Though the opening was not a fundraiser, he noted, many attendees wrote checks for the new media center.

“When you get unsolicited donations, it makes you feel pretty good,” Lynch said. “The opening was vibrant.”

Doge has a familiar face in a graduate of CRLS

From Page 1

Many Democrats are also concerned that the Department of Education and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are next.

While most Americans agree government could be more efficient, many have taken issue with the strategies being applied by Musk’s group.

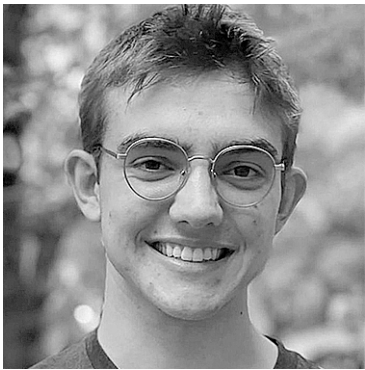
Linda Bilmes, a senior lecturer in public policy for the Harvard Kennedy School, said she had hoped Musk would bring the innovation and risk-taking of the tech industry to the government.

Instead, “Musk is bringing the worst of the tech culture, the ‘Let’s blow it all up and start over.’ That just doesn’t work in government without a huge number of people getting hurt.” Bilmes described the effort as “cutting off an arm to lose weight.”

Another senior lecturer at HKS, John Donahue, compared Musk’s group to “doing brain surgery with a sledgehammer.”

Since Trump’s inauguration in January, Musk’s group has been given unprecedented access to private financial records of U.S. residents. Wired reported Feb. 4 that members of the team had direct access to the Treasury Department systems responsible for all payments made by the federal government, including veterans payments and Social Services.

Trump has condoned the actions of Musk and his group, despite protests that they are unconstitutional and compromise Americans’ privacy.



Cole Killian via social media

CRLS graduate Cole Killian.

The group and its young members lack sufficient experience or expertise in government, many say. They have fired teams guarding U.S. nuclear weapons and coping with a growing outbreak of avian flu, and they have forced out air traffic controllers and park rangers. They have caused scrambles each time to get employees back after realizing they were needed.

“I don’t deny their talent,” Donahue said of a team that includes recruits from Musk technology businesses such as Tesla, SpaceX and Neuralink. “I don’t even deny their good intentions. But they do not know what they’re doing.”

Killian moved to Cambridge in 2019, from Bethesda, Maryland, for his senior year in high school. He joined the Robotics Club and took part in the year’s talent show, singing and playing guitar in a band called The Tie Guys covering The Eagles’ “Hotel California.”

Still, CRLS teachers from the time said either that they didn’t remember him well enough to comment or were uncomfortable giving their opinions.

Questions were also sent to Max Katz-Christy, who co-founded Aspine with Killian. After initial contact through social media, an email was sent Friday but got no response.

After graduating, Killian went to McGill University. A now-deleted online resume listed him as becoming an engineer at a firm called Jump Trading, which specializes in high-frequency investment strategies. Killian is listed in the staff directory for the Environmental Protection Agency, Wired magazine reported.

The environmental agency is another that Musk’s group has vowed to downsize, in line with the Trump administration’s opposition to deregulation of industries such as cryptocurrencies and hostility to clean energy and electric vehicles. The EPA was created by a Republican president, Richard Nixon.

Rachel Williams-Giordano, a CRLS history teacher, said Cantabrigians should not be surprised to have local connections to individuals such as Trump and Musk.

“We assume that everyone has the same political ideology, when in reality, some of the most ambitious and competitive people I’ve ever met are students, residents of this particular community,” Williams-Giordano said. “And many of those kinds of people see Trump as a winner.”

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CAMBRIDGE DAY
& THE
WEEK

METRO

Three suspects in The Port gun incident are charged, all under 18

By MARC LEVY

Three kids have been charged with firearm offenses after what authorities are calling a “brazen daytime shooting” on Feb. 24 in The Port neighborhood of Cambridge. The charges were filed against a 14-year-old Bostonian; 15-year-old from Framingham; and a 17-year-old Cantabrigian.

“Gun violence, particularly violence involving youth, has been an ongoing concern and a top priority for the

Cambridge Police Department,” said the city’s police commissioner, Christine Elow, on Friday. She said she was glad officials “were able to quickly identify and bring charges against those believed to have been responsible for this troubling act of violence.”

At around 2:15 p.m. Feb. 24, an argument between two people led to one shooting at the other multiple times, hitting no one, police said. The suspects fled. Within moments of the incident, a police officer overheard talking on a

police scanner said he had “one at gun-point” at the Central Square CVS.

Investigators spoke with witnesses and collected surveillance video from around where the shooting took place at Bishop Allen Drive and School Street. That helped detectives identify the three kids, according to a Friday press release from the office of Middlesex district attorney Marian Ryan.

A search warrant was obtained and served at the Cambridge kid’s home. It yielded “additional evidence, includ-

ing a 30-round capacity magazine and ammunition” that linked the suspects to the shooting, Ryan said.

Court proceedings against people below the age of 18 are generally closed to the public, but Ryan’s office released the charges heard during arraignment:

The 14-year-old Bostonian Assault with a dangerous weapon

The 15-year-old from Framingham Accessory after the fact and assault and battery on a police officer – because he threw an object at an officer, officials said. The kid also damaged items in the interview room at the Cambridge Police Department, they said.

Experts advise against drones for police until policy is clear

By MARC LEVY

Adoption of drones for use by Cambridge police wasn’t an option Monday, but a surprise dispute over how the city’s surveillance law functions added work before the topic does return to city councillors for a vote: pinning down whether they can shut a program down if they think police have run amok.

“Once the council votes on a matter, they cannot revisit that matter or revote on substantially the same question. So once the Stir is approved, then the Stir is approved,” said Kate Kleimola, first assistant city solicitor, referring to a surveillance technology impact report. “We looked at the surveillance ordinance, and it did not explicitly give the council the authority to revoke its approval.”

A Stir is the form the city uses to request tech that might invade residents’ privacy, and its need was established in Cambridge’s 2018 antisurveillance law. A Stir for police drones was the topic of the Public Safety Committee meeting because the council hesitated on them even as it

veillance technologies that were approved that events later demonstrated to the council was a mistake,” Crockford said.

Regardless of that dispute, neither Crockford nor fellow adviser Alex Marthews, of the Boston civil liberties organization Digital Fourth, supported adoption of drone technology in Cambridge before there was an actual policy for the council to examine. “What we have before us today is not a policy. We have a set of suggestions and recommended uses,” Marthews said. “I am not seeing in the materials presented or the discussion that we’ve had an emergency need that requires the policy to be brought only in draft form.”

Can’t wait for completion

It was a question by councillor Ayesha Wilson that surfaced the dispute over whether the council could undo use of drones, while committee chair Paul Toner offered direction several times throughout the meeting meant to move a decision forward.

Considering police unions need to sign off before tech is used, and those negotiations can be long, it makes sense for the council to work off a draft, he said. “We would not have voted for police body cameras if we were waiting for them to finish the negotiations with the union,” Toner said. “We voted on that two years ago and they’re finally moving forward.”

Crockford and Marthews were invited experts at the committee meeting with Kleimola and a panel of police officials led by commissioner Christine Elow; some of the same group met Friday to talk through issues around drone use. Police presented on the need for the drone and the limits that would be set to respect residents’ privacy – especially at a time many at the meeting expressed more fear and mistrust of the federal government than local police. The technology would likely be paid for by federal grant, officials have said.



Derek Kouyoumjian

Kade Crockford of the ACLU of Massachusetts speaks in January 2020 to the Cambridge City Council.

approved use of license-plate readers and phone-hacking devices Feb. 3.

The Law Department’s opinion was news to Cambridge’s partner in writing the antisurveillance law, Kade Crockford of the technology and civil rights program at the ACLU of Massachusetts.

“The ACLU was deeply involved with the formulation of this ordinance,” Crockford said. “I’m very interested in the city’s legal analysis here, because it definitely was not the intention when we were formulating the ordinance that the council would not have the power to claw back authority.”

“It was, in fact, the explicit intention that the council would have the authority to claw back any sur-

A longer version of this story is at bit.ly/41oltXa.



Marc Levy

Abdelrahman Hassan is the owner of Luxor Cafe in Cambridge’s Harvard Square.

Luxor Cafe is ready for Ramadan with late hours

From Page 1

Luxor’s menu is halal, foods allowed by Islamic dietary laws – a mix of Darwin’s signature sandwiches and Egyptian classics added by Hassan such as kibda, a fried liver dish, and hawawshi, a pita stuffed with minced, spiced meat. Many items are named after a loved one, such as the Baba sandwich (turkey and avocado) and the Sahra (turkey with hot honey).

The cafe hosts soccer watch parties, poetry slams and comedy, “Jeopardy” and trivia nights. Hassan’s favorite part is the community that blossoms daily in the cafe.

Places to gather, watch sports and meet people in the United States tend to be bars, Hassan said; his goal was to cultivate a community space detached from alcohol, like the cafes he recalls from Egypt. “I wanted something to bring people together,” he said. “You finish work and you come here, you play board games, you vibe, eat, whatever it is.”

The month of 2 a.m. closings were requested because during Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food, drink and other things from dawn to sunset – and though a meal called iftar follows, first comes a recommended prayer. “That prayer starts around like eightish and ends at 9:30, 10, maybe later,” Hassan said.

“If you go to Arab countries or Muslim countries, that’s the time that people go out,” he said, which is why a 2 a.m. closing might not be late enough for some. “We could definitely go longer, but at the end of the day, people need to sleep,” Hassan said.

The Luxor began with Hassan saving \$80,000 and setting aside four years for dental school. Realizing dentistry wasn’t for him, he told himself instead, “I have four years to build something.”



Chloe Jad

The Luxor is designed to evoke cafes in Egypt.

Real estate was his next idea. A family friend and mentor, Ibrahim Ibrahim, owner of the Black Seed Halal Grill and Cafe 26 in Boston, recommended he begin with a cafe rather than flipping houses. A cafe could be Hassan’s “bread and butter,” something he could grow.

After looking at more than a dozen potential locations – where the storage spaces were too small or the headspace too low – he found the Mount Auburn location.

Ibrahim’s business advice, and the handful of shifts Hassan worked at Cafe 26 to learn the business, saved Hassan from his original vision of a sterile, all-white interior for his eatery. The look would be reminiscent of the Crumbl cookie stores – an aesthetic Hassan likes. “This is not a hospital. This is a cafe,” Ibrahim told him.

During renovation Hassan would work until 4 a.m., sleep in the cafe, go into the city at 8 a.m. for anything Luxor needed, then start on remodeling again at 6 p.m. — “rinse and repeat,” he said.

“It was tough,” he said. “It was really

“I wanted something to bring people together.”

Abdelrahman Hassan

tough. When I look back at it, I don’t even know how I was able to do that.”

Every day since, Hassan is in the cafe. Some days, he’s there for 20 hours, he said, overseeing the installation of new fixtures or testing out new menu items with friends.

Mount Auburn Street is a quiet, residential stretch of Cambridge.

In May, neighbors worried about noise were upset that Luxor petitioned for 10 p.m. closing times and 11 p.m. closings on Fridays and Saturdays. Granted, Roust – Darwin’s fleeting successor – used to close at 3 p.m.

Hassan’s bid was approved by the License Commission in May in a 2-1 vote. He was “really worried” about coming back to ask for Ramadan hours. “If we’re applying till 2 a.m., what are they going to think?” he asked.

“Hamdillah, we’re on really good terms with the city,” Hassan said, using a phrase of praise for god. “Like, the city loves us, and there’s a lot of people in the city that are Muslims too, like the old mayor.” City councillor Sumbul Siddiqui, the first Muslim mayor in Massachusetts, offered via Instagram to help after hearing about Luxor’s permit application for Ramadan hours, he said.

While waiting for an email from the commission to set a date for the hearing, Hassan instead got an email that his request had been approved 3-0.

“Ramadan just has barakah,” Hassan said, using a phrase meaning “blessing.”

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

BUSINESS & MONEY

Lawsuit claims a board decision was rigged

From Page 1

The rabbi gave veiled warnings of a lawsuit, saying that “millions of dollars of taxpayer funds built Chabad centers in America” after religious organizations were denied “by citizens who don’t care about the other minority communities, or what’s good for the city or what’s morally correct. So there is a liability here.”

Lubavitch filed suit in U.S. Federal court in Boston on Sept. 20. All parties requested mediation on Nov. 21, before Cambridge and the zoning board had even filed an answer. Last month the mediator, magistrate judge M. Page Kelley, reported that mediation is continuing. Zarchi declined to comment for this story because of the “confidential nature” of the mediation, he said in an email Wednesday.

Strong feelings

Strong feelings were expressed during two hearings by the zoning board May 9 and June 20. Though the Kerry Corner Neighborhood Association said it welcomes the presence of Harvard Chabad and cited its Jewish members, Zarchi said: “Somehow, we’re fair game and somehow if you call yourself a Jew, that gives you a license to fight a project and attack it.”

At the first zoning board meeting May 9, the rabbi also questioned the knowledge of the group’s Jewish members about religious customs because it had calculated that the total capacity of the new center would be 890 people.

“Clearly, either they have no involvement with the Jewish community, because when they say we’re going to have 800 people, that speaks to zero familiarity with how a Jewish institution functions,” Zarchi said.

Lubavitch’s architect said he designed the project to serve up to 250 people at one time – the capacity needed now – noting that different activities such as meals and religious services would never occur concurrently. The neighborhood group maintained its position, saying it is based on the building code and details of the expansion plan.

At the June 20 hearing, the rabbi also took aim at what he perceived were complaints about the size of his family. “They told me a month ago ‘When you had two kids, you were fine. Then you had three, then you had four. Then you had five.’ Yes, our garbage is 10 times more than our neighbors.’ You know why? Thank God we’re blessed with six children. Most of them don’t have any children. That’s

choices they made, or their children moved on. So it’s insulting ... This is a public prosecution of a family and of the Jewish community here.”

Accusation of rigging

The Kerry Corner Neighborhood Association said the increased floor-to-area ratio of the expansion would change the character of the neighborhood, a complaint that Lubavitch interpreted as antisemitic. “It is not uncommon for antisemitic groups to form and try to impede zoning applications by Jewish groups,” Lubavitch’s lawsuit said, citing a case in Rockland County, New York.

At the May 9 hearing, board associate member Carol Agate “insinuated that Chabad’s growth was detrimental to the neighborhood, stating that, ‘When there is more space, there are going to be more people. And more people is going to change the nature of the neighborhood,’” the lawsuit said. “The language employed by Ms. Agate, expressing concern for a ‘change’ in the ‘character’ or ‘nature’ of a neighborhood, is typical coded language for ‘your kind are not wanted here.’”

The suit also asserted that the zoning board chair, Jim Monteverde, and associate member Agate “rigged

Neighborhood character cited

The two board hearings on the request were tense. Supporters spoke of finding a needed community at the Banks Street center, called Chabad House. Some said it was a place of comfort in a world of heightened hatred of Jews. One person who said some in her family were secular Jews called it a place that welcomed all.

“In a segmented city where much is either individual residences or student housing and commercial, a religious and community gathering space, rather than changing the feel of the neighborhood, is vital to the character of the community. Further, right now it especially feels important to support Jewish places of gathering and community,” said Molly Rothenberg, a nearby resident for 30 years. “I feel I should qualify this by saying that my family is an interfaith family and mostly secular, and we have always felt welcomed by Chabad despite that.”

Opponents said the quiet neighborhood already contended with increased trash, noise, deliveries and light from Chabad’s operations. They said they worried that Chabad would keep growing.

On one occasion there were 1,000 people in the street, which was closed by Cambridge police, one neighbor said. “This is a very large expansion, that will have a very large negative impact on life in the neighborhood,” the neighborhood association said in an April 5 letter to the zoning board.

Zarchi said the gathering occurred after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack, when invading fighters killed about 1,200 people and took approximately 240 hostages. Israel’s retaliation has destroyed much of Gaza and killed about 48,000 people, according to Gaza’s health ministry.

As for problems with trash, noise, deliveries and light, Lubavitch’s attorney Sarah Rhatigan said that “the impacts that the neighbors experience now will be better, will be improved by this project, not to the contrary.”

The lawsuit said the board had granted a similar expansion request from a mosque less than a month after rejecting Lubavitch’s application. The Al-Amin mosque had asked to increase its space at 378-380 Rindge Ave. by adding a third story; it also wanted to add minarets to its roof to look more like a mosque. Yet in contrast to the Lubavitch application, there was no neighborhood opposition in the Al-Amin case, according to a transcript of the zoning board hearing July 11.

“This is a very large expansion that will have a very large negative impact.”

Kerry Corner Neighborhood Association

the administrative process to ensure that [Lubavitch’s] application would never be granted.” The two allegedly made sure that Agate, who opposed the expansion, would hear and vote on Lubavitch’s request, by substituting her for another member who attended the meeting, the suit said. Monteverde, the chair, also opposed the petition, and it would fail with two members voting no, the suit said.

The board has five members and six associate members, the lawsuit said; currently there are four members and five associate members. The associate members can fill in if needed. The suit said Monteverde didn’t say why the member Agate replaced – only for the Lubavitch case – couldn’t hear the case, despite an explanation being required.



Board of Zoning Appeal

A rendering of Lubavitch of Cambridge’s rejected proposal on Banks Street in Riverside.



Marc Levy

An empty house at 53 Chester St. is okayed for redevelopment next to Redbones Barbecue in Somerville’s Davis Square.

New commercial space, homes OK’d for Davis

By ALYSSA CHEN

A four-story redevelopment at 53 Chester St., next to Redbones Barbecue, will provide a trio of three-bedroom condominium units atop a commercial space in Davis Square. The building’s designs were approved Feb. 20 by Somerville’s Planning Board.

Neighbors have been generally supportive of the project, saying that it would provide much-needed revitalization to an unoccupied house, though some neighbors and a board member objected to the three parking spots included in the plan.

City documents indicated that the developer, G2 Par Somerville, was interested in having an art gallery in the 779-square-foot ground-floor space. In a Feb. 6 board meeting and in an interview, the project’s attorney clarified that the building has no tenants in mind and is not looking specifically for an art gallery to fill the space.

“We don’t want to constrain this project or this commercial space to one any given thing,” project attorney Anne Vigorito said. “Once it’s built and put up for rental, we’d love to see the right business come in.”

The art gallery concept was brought up by neighbors at a neighborhood meeting, not by the developer, Vigorito said. The site was previously home to Nave Gallery Annex, an art gallery that closed in 2018, which possibly contributed to the confusion.

Unplanned commercial space

Board member Lynn Richards expressed concerns around adding yet another commercial space to a square already experiencing shuttered storefronts. Peter Quinn, the project architect, responded that the vacant storefronts in Davis Square are primarily a result of stalled lab projects.

Around three years ago, several Davis Square businesses moved or closed in preparation for the construction of two office- and lab-building redevelopments, which have since stalled due to a regional economic downturn for lab buildings. One of the projects is moving forward as a residential development instead, and some existing stores, such as McKinnon’s Meat Market, have already opted to not return after construction.

Whether or not the square needs more storefronts, zoning effectively requires the building to have a storefront or space that encourages “active use.” The attorney and the neighborhood meeting notes made reference to a possible yoga or wellness space; the building will probably not house a cafe



Peter Quinn Architects

Designs for homes in Davis Square at Chester and Herbert streets.

or restaurant; residents can sometimes be “not pleased with the smells and the odors,” Vigorito said.

Neighbors expressed support for the plan at the Feb. 6 meeting. The current building was described as “unfortunate” by Brendan Ritter and “overrun by rats” by Laura Mariano, who both live nearby. Multiple neighbors were hopeful that the redevelopment will help fix the lot’s rodent issues.

Rob Gregory, the owner of Redbones Barbecue who also lives on Chester Street, said, “It’d be nice to have the building in good repair.”

As is customary in dense Somerville, some criticized the developer’s choice to provide three parking spots when the Davis Square MBTA station is, according to Google Maps, 0.1 miles away – a three-minute walk.

“That much parking that close to the area, given the other stated goals for the city, raises some concerns for me,” Richards said.

Resident Aaron Weber encouraged the developer to add another unit of housing instead and said that “housing for people is more important than storage for cars.”

Somerville has been shifting away from car dependence in its transportation policy and stated goals. The city removed parking minimums near MBTA stops in 2019, meaning that developers no longer needed to provide a certain number of parking spots per unit. In December, the city removed all parking minimums citywide.

Chair Michael Capuano said the board should allow developers to build parking according to the market.

The project will move forward with the proposed three parking spots, seven bicycle parking spaces and a new sidewalk.

Given neighbors’ support, board approval means that building construction will likely start soon – after a monthlong appeal period. Though the developer provided no specific timeline, Vigorito said that construction will probably take around 18 months.

EVENTS AHEAD MARCH 6-13

4 p.m. March 6
Knafel Center of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, 10 Garden St., west of Harvard Square, Cambridge

Stories and Histories: A Conversation with Celeste Ng

Free, but register. The celebrated novelist of, most recently, “Our Missing Hearts.” Schlesinger Library faculty director Erika Lee joins.

6 to 7:30 p.m. March 13
Longfellow House and the Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site, 105 Brattle St., West Cambridge

“Choosing a Commander: Myths & Realities Behind the Continental Congress’ Decision to Make George Washington the General” lecture

Free, but register. Author and local American Revolution historian J.L. Bell sifts archival documents to explore the politicking behind the Congress’ choice 250 years ago this July.

7 p.m. March 11
First Parish Cambridge Unitarian Universalist, 3 Church St./1446 Massachusetts Ave., Harvard Square, Cambridge

Peter Wolf reads from “Waiting on the Moon”

\$40.89 with book. The Boston rock legend and former J. Geils Band frontman discusses his memoir, subtitled “Artists, Poets, Drifters, Grifters and Goddesses” during this Harvard Book Store-sponsored event. Peter Guralnick, biographer of Elvis Presley and Grammy-winner for his liner notes for “Sam Cooke Live at the Harlem Square Club,” joins.

Comedy Studio in the basement at 5 John F. Kennedy St., Harvard Square, Cambridge

7 p.m. March 9 Chanel Ali

\$15 to \$20. The native Philly comedian says she took the big step to move to New York City “as a challenge ... to see if paying twice the rent motivates me. It has. I rob people now.”

6 p.m. March 10 (and every second and last Monday of each month)

Monday’s Pages

Free. At this cold reading series, actors and writers get together to work on their crafts via 10-page submissions, with casting at 6:15 p.m. and reading at 7 p.m. The Variety Free Open Mic and The Theo Griffin Experience house band follow at 8:15 p.m.

Geological Lecture Hall, Harvard Geological Museum, 24 Oxford St., in the Baldwin neighborhood near Harvard Square, Cambridge

5 to 6 p.m. March 6

“Making Milk: Mongolia’s Unique Role in Dairy’s History” lecture

Free, but register. Harvard’s Christina Warinner takes a fresh look the often surprising 5,000-year-old history of milk in Mongolia, where more than 90 percent of the population should be lactose intolerant – but is not.

6 to 8:30 p.m. March 13

Cartoonist Jorge Cham and neuroscientist Dwayne Godwin discuss “Out of Your Mind”

Free, but register. Facts and mysteries from a book subtitled “The Biggest Mysteries of the Human Brain,” a signing abd Harvard brain scientists stationing themselves in museum galleries to await your brainy questions. A cash bar is available with wine, beer and other beverages much better for your brain.

6 to 8 p.m. March 12
Paddy’s Lunch, 260 Walden St., North Cambridge

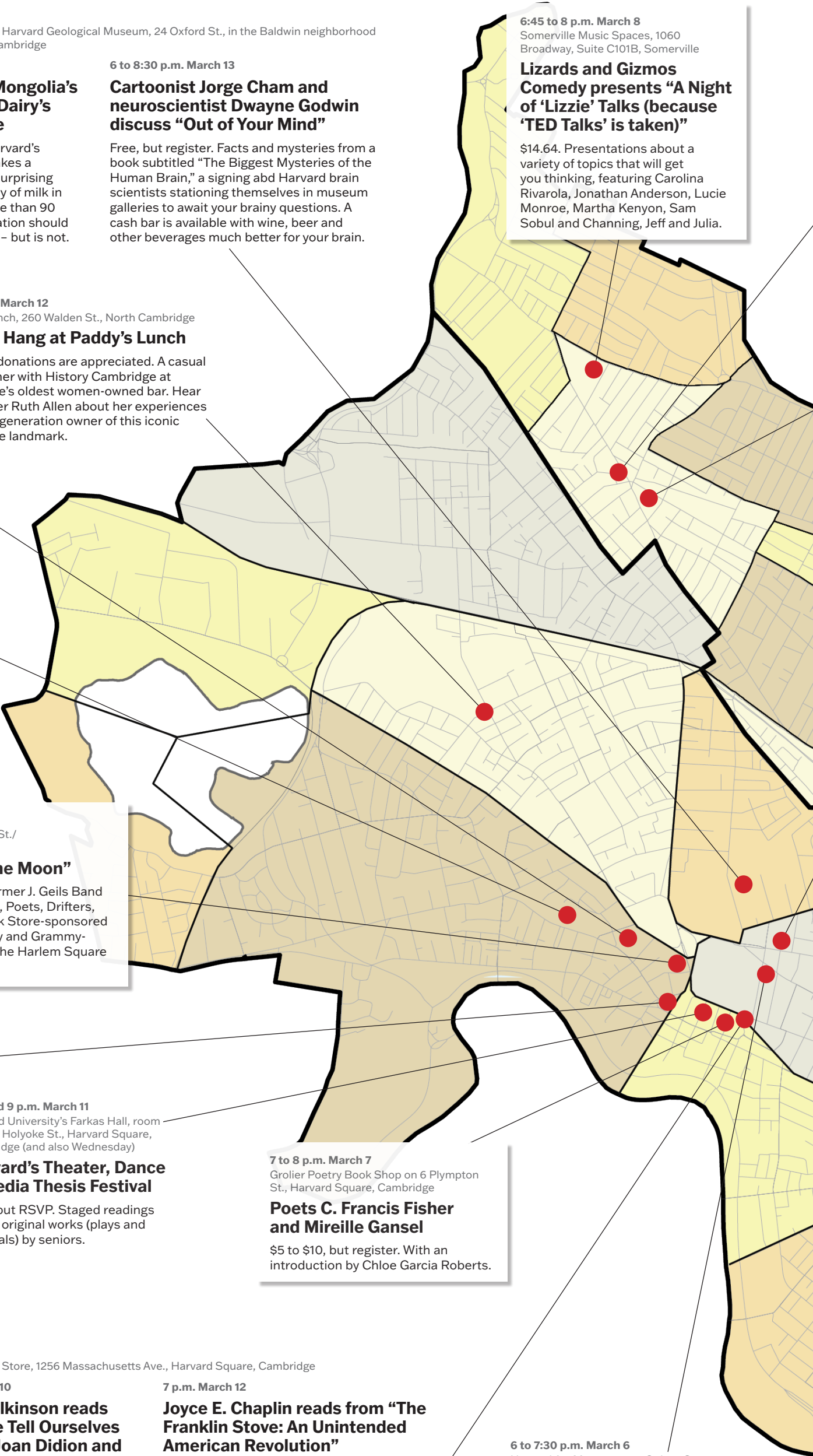
History Hang at Paddy’s Lunch

Free, but donations are appreciated. A casual get-together with History Cambridge at Cambridge’s oldest women-owned bar. Hear from owner Ruth Allen about her experiences as a third-generation owner of this iconic Cambridge landmark.

6:45 to 8 p.m. March 8
Somerville Music Spaces, 1060 Broadway, Suite C101B, Somerville

Lizards and Gizmos Comedy presents “A Night of ‘Lizzie’ Talks (because ‘TED Talks’ is taken)”

\$14.64. Presentations about a variety of topics that will get you thinking, featuring Carolina Rivarola, Jonathan Anderson, Lucie Monroe, Martha Kenyon, Sam Sobul and Channing, Jeff and Julia.



7, 8 and 9 p.m. March 11
Harvard University’s Farkas Hall, room 303, 12 Holyoke St., Harvard Square, Cambridge (and also Wednesday)

Harvard’s Theater, Dance & Media Thesis Festival

Free, but RSVP. Staged readings of five original works (plays and musicals) by seniors.

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

Poets C. Francis Fisher and Mireille Gansel

\$5 to \$10, but register. With an introduction by Chloe Garcia Roberts.

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

7 p.m. March 10

Alissa Wilkinson reads from “We Tell Ourselves Stories: Joan Didion and the American Dream Machine”

Free. The author and New York Times film critic examines how Didion’s screenwriting work – and Hollywood in general – informed her writing. TV writer, producer and showrunner Bradford Winters joins.

7 p.m. March 12

Joyce E. Chaplin reads from “The Franklin Stove: An Unintended American Revolution”

Free. The Harvard history professor and author of “The First Scientific American: Benjamin Franklin and the Pursuit of Genius” describes how Franklin’s understanding of the Little Ice Age as a “climate crisis” spurred him to invent a stove that modified how heat and air moved through the indoors. Annette Gordon-Reed, author of Pulitzer-winning book “The Hemingeses of Monticello,” joins.

6 to 7:30 p.m. March 6
Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy St., near Harvard Square, Cambridge

“Edvard Munch: Technically Speaking” art exhibition opening lecture

Free, but register. In conjunction with the exhibition on Level 3, on view through July 27, curators and conservators make presentations about Munch’s techniques, materials and methods, followed by a discussion about the artist’s printmaking and painting practices.

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



8 p.m. March 7
Somerville Theatre's Crystal Ballroom, 55 Davis Square

Boston Ironsides' Toga Party

\$25 to \$30 and 21-plus. A night of “cheeky, sultry, toga-clad fun” with prizes for Best Toga, drag performances and dancing.

8 p.m. March 8
Rockwell, 255 Elm St., Davis Square, Somerville

One-Liner Madness comedy show

\$15 to \$20. This fast-paced, bracket-style, single-elimination, one-liner joke contest travels the country; tonight, 64 Boston comedians compete with audience applause determining “the best joke writer in Boston.”

7 p.m. to 1 a.m. March 7
Upstairs at Bow, 1 Bow Market Way, Union Square, Somerville

Bingo & Baila: Dance, Win, Rebuild Amantolli

\$10 to \$20 suggested donation. A fundraiser to help rebuild a Mexican handmade goods shop devastated by fire in Bow Market in February. Features bingo (cards are \$5 each or three for \$10), a silent auction, dancing and complimentary mini margaritas and mini arepas from Carolicious.

7 to 9:30 p.m. March 12
Legoland Discovery Center, 598 Assembly Row, Assembly Square, Somerville

Build the Thrill adult Lego night

\$20, and 18-plus. Building and racing competitions – of tiny cars through Lego tracks – with no kids in sight and alcoholic drinks available for those 21 and over.

5 p.m. to midnight March 6
Warehouse XI, 11 Sanborn Court, and The Jungle, 6 Sanborn Court, Union Square, Somerville (and continuing through Saturday at other locations)

Boston Bitdown Chiptune/ Digital Fusion Festival

\$129.89 for a three-day pass. A new artist-driven festival of music inspired by video games with 50-plus performances over three days in five venues “none of which are in Boston,” as our music reporter points out.

6 to 9 p.m. March 13
Cambridge Street Upper School, 850 Cambridge St., Wellington-Harrington

Cambridge Community Iftar

Free, with registration recommended. All are welcome at this evening meal at which Muslims break their fast after sunset during the Holy month of Ramadan. Free halal food, and speakers.

6 to 9 p.m. March 13
MIT Museum, 314 Main St., Kendall Square, Cambridge

After Dark Series: Artfinity

Free and 18-plus. The monthly after-hours event mixed with the MIT Artfinity Festival offers open exhibitions to browse, a sketch-a-stranger activity, playful art making, textile pattern design based on plant intelligence, a sustainability-focused data visualization exercise and a talk by Gaze to the Stars project designer Behnaz Farahi. Live DJ sets and food and drink for purchase, as usual.

6 to 8 p.m. March 11
CanalSide Food + Drink, 100 CambridgeSide Place, East Cambridge

Music bingo

Free, but RSVP. Test your knowledge of diverse types of music during this game, marking off bingo cards as songs from various decades and genres play; get five in a row and yell bingo to claim victory (or just sing along).

7:30 to 8:45 p.m. March 9
Lehrhaus, 425 Washington St., Somerville

Beyond Laughter Through Tears: A Short history of Jewish Humor

\$10. Rabbi Moshe Waldoks, co-editor of “The Big Book of Jewish Humor” (still in print for 40-plus years) produced, wrote and performed the one-person show “You Can Live If They Let You” last year at the Boston Center for the Arts.

4 p.m. March 10
Nexus community space on the first floor of the Hayden Library Building at 160 Memorial Drive at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

Lit Tea x Artfinity

Free. As part of the MIT Artfinity Festival, the MIT Literature Section’s weekly tea gathering becomes a public showcase of student poetry readings and multimedia presentations of student artwork from literature courses.

7 p.m. to 1 a.m. March 12
Exterior of the Great Dome of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 222 Memorial Drive, Cambridge (and also March 13 and 14)

Gaze to the Stars projection

Free. This MIT Artfinity Festival work projecting images of varying students’ eyes, filled with stars, onto the Dome, as much as it may symbolize “shared human aspirations and dreams,” will never not look like a literal illuminati reference.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Kresge Auditorium, 48 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge

8 to 10 p.m. March 7

MIT Symphony Orchestra

Free. As part of the MIT Artfinity Festival, the world premiere of Elena Ruehr’s Violin Concerto No. 2, titled “Return,” performed by Natalie Lin Douglas, who inspired it. (The piece pivots halfway through, when the music “turns around” and plays backward to its beginning.) Also, Sir Edward Elgar’s series of musical portraits, “Enigma.”

4 to 6 p.m. March 9

Cambridge Symphony Orchestra presents “Romance”

\$20 to \$30. The CSO welcomes back Boston Symphony Orchestra associate concertmaster Alexander Velinzon to perform Shostakovich’s monumental Violin Concerto No. 1 paired with Tchaikovsky’s tone poem of doomed love, “Romeo and Juliet.”

FILM AHEAD

LOCAL FOCUS



Kasi Lemmons’ “Harriet” stars Cynthia Erivo as Harriet Tubman.

It’s ‘Dinner in America’ and tales of great women from Emily to Harriet

By OSCAR GOFF

International Women’s Day is Saturday, which, for reasons I don’t feel I need to expand on, takes on a heightened level of significance this year. In association with the good folk at Strictly Brohibited, a group dedicated to female and gender-expansive voices in film, **The Brattle Theatre** celebrates this weekend with “**True Tales of Wonder Women**,” a three-day program of biopics and other real-life stories of women throughout history written and/or directed by female filmmakers.

The series begins Friday with Kasi Lemmons’ “**Harriet**” (2019), starring Oscar nominee Cynthia Erivo as underground railroad hero Harriet Tubman, and Madeleine Olnek’s “**Wild Nights with Emily**” (2018), a celebration of the long-suppressed lesbian history of Amherst’s own Emily Dickinson (played by the always great Molly Shannon). Saturday brings The Brattle debut of Kinuyo Tanaka’s “**Forever a Woman**” (1955), about the great Japanese poet Fumiko Nakajō, as well as, naturally, “**Professor Marston and the Wonder Women**” (2017), about the creation of the iconic DC Comics heroine; that night, in perhaps the centerpiece of the series, Strictly Brohibited hosts a conversation after a 35 mm screening of Mike Nichols’ “**Silkwood**” (1983), written by Nora Ephron and Alice Arlen and starring Meryl Streep and Cher. The series concludes Sunday with Nancy Kelly’s “**Thousand Pieces of Gold**” (1991), Marjane Satrapi’s animated memoir “**Persepolis**” (2007) and Julie Taymor’s “**Frida**” (2002).

The **Harvard Film Archive** commences its latest celebration of one of the world’s most intriguing and vital filmmakers Friday. In “**Albert Serra, or Cinematic Time Reimagined**,” the HFA pays tribute to the Catalan filmmaker’s curious mix of spectacle and minimalism, as well as his penchant for adapting the seemingly unadaptable. In “**The Death of Louis XIV**” (2016), the black comedy that commences the series Friday, Serra has a bedridden Sun King decaying visibly in the heart of Versailles while his entourage attempts to stage-manage his demise. The series continues through mid-April.

The **Kendall Square Cinema** continues its tribute to British filmmaker

Edgar Wright on Tuesday with arguably the director’s finest work to date, “**Hot Fuzz**” (2007).

“Hot Fuzz” is the second entry of Wright’s so-called “Cornetto Trilogy” – a loose series of affectionate genre parodies made in collaboration with actors Simon Pegg and Nick Frost – and, for my money, represents the height of the trio’s invention and razor-sharp timing. “Hot Fuzz” weaves in multiple strains of police drama, beginning as a cozy mystery before taking a hard right into folk horror, finally emerging as a gloriously bombastic action thriller in the Michael Bay vein. But what makes the film sing is Wright’s whip-smart comic timing and the wonderful chemistry between Pegg, Frost and a murderer’s row (so to speak) of British talent, including a post-Bond Timothy Dalton and a pre-Oscar Olivia Colman.

In this age of accelerated online discourse, true cult films – the kind that build a following slowly through word of mouth – have become a rarity. One happy exception is Adam Rehmeier’s gleefully profane rom-com “**Dinner in America**” (2020), which makes a triumphant return to the screen Wednesday and Thursday at the Somerville Theatre. Cult star Kyle Gallner plays John Q. Public, a dirtbag punk rock singer who, on the run from the law, shacks up with oddball pet shop employee Patty (Emerson alum Emily Skeggs) – unaware that she’s the dream girl who’s been sending him anonymous lyrics and dirty Polaroids for years.

“Dinner” pulls off a tricky tonal balancing act, its raunchy, anarchic humor transitioning into a genuinely affecting love story so subtly you barely notice. Unfortunately, it had the poor timing to premiere in Covid-stricken 2020, when it was slated as the opening night selection of that year’s scrapped Boston Underground Film Festival. It delighted critics on the virtual festival circuit but had trouble attracting a distributor, ultimately dumping unceremoniously onto Hulu two years later. It has become something of a streaming sensation via clips on TikTok, and has finally found the audience it so richly deserves.

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



Jude Law is the law in Justin Kurzel’s “The Order.”

‘The Order’: Going to extremes

By TOM MEEK

Relatively new to streaming and taking a recent dip in rental price, this crime drama from Justin Kurzel (“Nitram”) dials back the clock to the 1980s Pacific Northwest, where the rise of white supremacist hate groups was a thing. The gritty take-’em-down thrills start as burned-out FBI agent Terry Husk (Jude Law) settles into the remotes of Idaho to decompress after a heart attack and years of wrangling with the mafia in NYC. But Husk is a gruff, suspicious sort who won’t let it go after he walks into a missing-person case that the local police don’t want too much exposure on – they know the terrain and are widely deferential to the well-armed Aryan Nation groups in the area that believe the time has come for the white man to take back his soiled lands. That missing soul was part of the sect of the title, a militant group led by Bob Mathews (Nicholas Hoult, looking even more boyish than usual, if that was even possible), an extremist ideologue and master planner. Bob and “The Order” are behind the missing (because he talked too much), a series of brazen bank and armored car heists (all staged deftly) and the murder of Colorado Jewish talk radio personality Alan Berg (Marc Maron) for sparring on-air with antisemitic callers. Much of this, based on Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt’s “The Silent Brotherhood,” is factual (Berg’s on-air battles and demise was portrayed with riveting aplomb by Eric Bogosian in Oliver Stone’s 1988 “Talk Radio”). In the mix are Tye Sheridan (“Ready Player One,” “The Card Counter”) as the lone officer in the sheriff’s department willing to step in and help Husk chase down leads, and Jurnee Smollett (“True Blood”) as Husk’s fellow FBI agent and a voice of reason. The film doesn’t work without Law, who’s nearly unrecognizable as the disheveled, on-the-edge sort.

On Amazon Prime Video.



Miles Teller and Anya Taylor-Joy in “The Gorge.”

‘The Gorge’: A swing and abyss

By TOM MEEK

Another kick-ass pairing of talent that titillates on paper but disappoints in actuality. Miles Teller and Anya Taylor-Joy play freelance operatives contracted mostly by governments to do covert hits. Each is a master sharpshooter able to take out a target at 3,000 meters without a thought. Teller’s Levi, addled by PTSD, represents the West or United States, while Taylor-Joy’s Drasa is the East’s assignee (ostensibly Russian, though she’s Lithuanian by birth), as the two are stationed for a year on opposite sides of a mist-filled ravine that goes on as far as the eye can see into the wilderness. Where is never made clear, as each is blindfolded, stripped of all modern devices – smartphones, GPS tech and the like – and airdropped in. The assignment is to maintain and guard watchtowers perched on opposing precipices. From what threat, you might ask? It’s not the person across the gorge. When you find out what lurks below, it’s kinda silly, but Teller and Taylor-Joy make the nonsense watchable as they flirt via handwritten messages viewed via binocular from across the abyss. Helmed by “Doctor Strange” (2016) director Scott Derrickson, this notches high production values but is best with Taylor-Joy, sleek and alluring in a cropped black bob, all business and ninja nimble in great action sequences but also evoking free-spirited fun as her Drasa dances in the dark to a veritable soundtrack of ’90s alterna-pop.

On Apple TV+.



MUSIC

ATTEND

Copilot lifts off

By MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

There’s a dramatic moment in David Lynch’s “The Elephant Man” when a crowd of curiosity seekers corners the pitiable protagonist, John Merrick, in a London train station. The canvas sack Merrick wears over his head to conceal his deformity is snatched away. Exposed and in danger, the “Elephant Man” cries out in defense of his own safety and personal dignity:

“No! I am not an elephant! I am not an animal! I am a human being. A man. A man.”

The London crowd does not appear overly chastened in response. But presumably the audience in the movie theater, or watching at home, experiences feelings of empathy with Merrick.

We’ve watched him endure incredible abuses on his flight from bondage as a sideshow freak. We’ve marveled at his resilience; despite his cruel treatment, his heart still holds love for and faith in the ultimate goodness of the world. We wonder if our hearts would hold up so admirably if put to a similar test.

The film’s moral takeaway is clear. Society puts certain labels on people to give itself permission to treat them as things, rather than as human beings deserving of dignity. “Freak” is an especially atrocious label that permits especially atrocious treatment. If John Merrick was a freak, it was because he held onto his humanity in the face of a society that was so quick to trade away its own in exchange for cheap, voyeuristic thrills.

Believe it or not, I’m reminded of this constantly when researching, interviewing and writing about artists. They hate labels and they’re not bashful about telling you.

You know what? I hate labeling. Writing is difficult, and writing about music comes with its own set of challenges. I find myself situated between the artist and general public, trying to bridge the gap in a way that illuminates, rather than darkens, the landscape of aesthetic sensibility. Sometimes that involves labels, be it genre, style or a musical trend.

Let it be known, musicians, I recognize your humanity, respect your dignity and I will endeavor to write up your music in a way that acknowledges the untethered scope of your creative expression. But if you’re an artist (1) performing at a [fill-in-the-blank genre] fest, who’s (2) self-described their sound as [fill-in-the-blank genre] in the past and (3) has appeared on multiple bills with [fill-in-the-blank genre] bands, I’m not going to lose sleep at night advertising your music as a contribution to [fill-in-the-blank genre].

You’re not a freak, I’m not a voyeur, the sun will come out tomorrow and we’ll all march happily along. RIP David Lynch.

Hit this

Thursday through Saturday
Boston Bitdown (various, Somerville and Arlington)
The inaugural edition of the three-day Chiptune fest lands all over Somerville (plus one night in Arlington). Loads of bleeps and bleeps. I’ve been advised by sources deep within the Chiptune Industrial Complex that it’s less a genre, more a “sonic aesthetic.” As in “Sonic the Hedgehog.”

Sunday *Ray Bull* (*The Sinclair, Cambridge*)

Ray Bull is prolific. Musically, sure. But also in terms of “content.” The Brooklyn indie rockers are the kind of band that other bands see and despair of ever making a dent in the collective public attention span. “You mean we have to be from one of the five boroughs, put out a podcast, maintain an entertaining library of YouTube clips, all while surfing the major social media channels? Fuck this, I’m taking up golf.” One of their video clips is a polished piece of clickbait titled “100 Songs That Are The Same,” in which they ding artists for “borrowing” popular melodies for their own songs. The first comp dings our local popster Clairó for “borrowing” from the Strokes. Hey, Ray Bull’s “Better Than Nothing” sounds like Horatio Sanz’s “I Wish It Was Christmas Today.” What goes around, comes around.

Live: Copilot at The Rockwell

The sweet and soulful pop of Copilot at The Rockwell on Saturday was nearly enough to take the sting off seeing \$13 listed as the price of a Narragansett tallboy.

Nearly. I mean, yowza, even if it’s an extra “tall” boy at 24 ounces. Even if it’s Massachusetts. Even if it’s inflation. Even, even, even. What are we doing here? Did Doge just cut a domestic beer subsidy I’m unaware of?

If the new beer prices lost you, maybe the house lighting will win you back. The black box theater, home to music, drama and comedy, has always shown a more profound respect for artful stage lighting than your average music-only venue. But lately it’s like looking at a work of high art. Rothko, to be exact. Color fields of deep orange, rich violet, luscious pink and electric blue bathed the stage. Beautiful. I don’t just want to attend concerts in that light – I want to be buried beneath the stage and soak in the ambient glow of the stage lighting for eternity.

But before I die, let me catch one or two more shows by Copilot. The retro pop six-piece inhabits an atmosphere of perpetual joy, each member daring the next to live, laugh and love to ever more perilous extremes. Am I crazy, or is there a faint whiff of soft-coded Christian rock to the proceedings? The audience couldn’t care less about which tent is being revived as long as the life-affirming playlist of “The Voice”-ready balladry keeps on trucking.

Speaking of “The Voice,” there are three voices: Maggie Hall, Ry McDonald, Jake Machell. The trio packs a harmony-laden wallop few local acts can match. Ry is big on stage banter and splits time with a guitar. Maggie and Jake, on the other hand, are pure vocalists, and they focus their whole mind, body and soul on squeezing every last syllable of the lyrics for meaning. It’s impressive. And no surprise that Boston Calling booked the band to perform this year. The three-part harmony will take magisterial flight on the big stage in May.

Steve Rondo opened with a distinctive laptop guitar-slapping method that will make you want to experiment at home on your own six-string. Just remember to take your rings off.

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

FOOD

WHAT WE’RE HAVING



Tom Meek

Marinated mackerel with confit kumquat, part of a tasting menu at Urban Hearth in North Cambridge.

A five-course tasting menu at Urban Hearth

By TOM MEEK

You don’t need a life-changing event to go out for a special meal. Babies, marriage vows and birthdays are all good causes for celebration, but sometimes an overdue meetup with friends or the simple quest for a unique feast is more than reason enough. Regardless of the occasion, finding a special place can be a challenge.

Omakase and tasting tables are a good place to start looking, and we’ve extolled the virtues of omakase at North Cambridge’s Umami in the past. But tasting tables in the area are disappearing: The revered Tasting Counter in the Aeronaut Brewery Food Hall closed almost two years ago (replaced recently by Mimi’s Chūka Diner), as did the phenomenal table at Season to Taste early in the pandemic (though a tasting table concept opened at Season to Taste’s newer locale by Harvard).

But one with novel, local dishes is back at the cozy and intimate chef’s counter at Erin Miller’s Urban Hearth. It’s best to sit at the counter, where you get to watch the kitchen team, led by Miller, assemble your meal. There are only four seats there, but it’s available five nights a week.

The five-course feast is varied in texture, flavors and combinations. The first small plate was marinated mackerel with confit kumquat, which caught me by surprise with its smooth and clean flavor – I was expecting something more pungent and fishy.

The big surprise of the evening came next, in the winter salad with chamomile cider and ale-cooked barley. The grains had a meatiness and made your mouth pucker slightly from the ale and cider. A mushroom and caramelized onion crème brûlée followed.

It was then back to the sea for an utterly delightful halibut steak filet in a verjus (unripe grape juice) reduction with a parsnip purée. The texture of the fish was consistent throughout, perfectly between flaky and rare.

To finish off the mains was a tender New Hampshire wagyu served with a mole-XO sauce (a fusion on Mexican and Hong Kongese) that accented the meat nicely without overwhelming it. The dinner plates all came tasting size,

■ **Urban Hearth**
2263 Massachusetts Ave., North Cambridge

but the dark chocolate delicé – a complex and rich chocolate mousse – was a full-size portion, fronted by a pleasing assortment of curried pecans and miso marmalade dark chocolates.

Urban Hearth’s to-die-for butter biscuit comes with the meal, so tantalizing and infectiously savory. When it’s gone, you’ll want more.

Like most omakase or tasting table experiences I’ve tried, each dish and wine pouring comes with a story from the chef or server about where the ingredients come from and how they’re prepared. If you have a culinary question, you can just lean over and ask the team.

It’s a transfixing experience for the counter view alone – and you may just learn a stovetop hack or two along the way, whether from watching your meal be assembled or something for those receiving the regular menu.

The cost of such a grand gourmand grub session is not as much as you might expect. The five courses – with the biscuit and dessert added to each end – total \$140. If you opt for the very generous wine pairing or order other beverages à la carte it will obviously up your tab, but it is more than worth it.

Most of the food is sourced locally (the farms are listed on the Urban Hearth website), and the menu changes over every three weeks or so. Some of the dishes are first tries of dishes to be added to the eatery’s rotating seasonal menu, which right now features celery root crème brûlée and marinated duck breast as well as that signature biscuit, which you cannot have too many of.

You’d be wise to book ahead. If dining solo, email or call; Open Table won’t let you book a single spot.

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



Bakey cinnamon babka

Price: \$6
Back in July, I reported that Kendall Square would soon get a location of Bakey, the babka-forward bakery with locations in Boston, Brookline and Newton, and it finally opened Feb. 14, in time for Valentine’s Day. On the menu are bagels, burekas, cookies and more, but I thought I should try what it’s known for – a treat sometimes described as “part bread, part cake”: I picked the cinnamon babka (there’s also chocolate, almond, pistachio and raspberry, as well as choco-banana pecan). At \$6, it’s certainly a pricier pastry, but a delicious one. The croissantlike dough was well-laminated, with lots of flaky layers, and the babka had a just-crispy outer shell. It was sprinkled with cinnamon that created a sort of caramelized crust and added a nice textural element to break up the breadiness of the pastry, and the cinnamon filling interspersed between the layers provided strong flavor without being overpowering.

MADELEINE AITKEN

■ **Bakey, 238 Main St. Kendall Square, Cambridge**

ARTS

WEAR



In Somerville's Davis Square on Feb. 23 are Lisa Reddy, left, and Read Van West, wearing cold-weather fashion somewhere between the furs of people over 70 and the puffer jackets of younger generations.

Marc Levy

Winter fashion: Lessons from Cambridge's best-dressed

Winter isn't done with us, and when it feels like the past few weeks, fashion often takes a back seat to survival.

There are some questionable choices on the streets – rain boots or sneakers on ice, mismatched color or pattern gloves and coats, or the brave (foolish?) souls baring their legs in freezing temperatures. Amid the chaos, one group seems to have winter style figured out: women over 70.

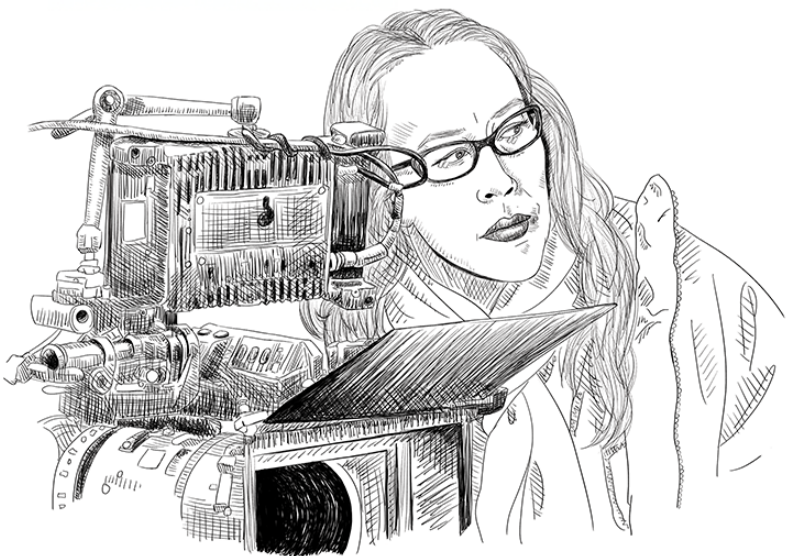
Last week in Cambridge, I spotted them, effortlessly chic in Russian-style fur hats, elegant leather gloves, heeled snow boots and long, belted coats. Who knew they'd win my fashion award? Maybe some people are born with style, but I suspect years of experience – and a bit of frustration with New England – help refine it.

I can't help but wish younger generations would trade in their light LL Bean windbreakers, bulky puffers, Ugg boots and hoodie layering for something just as practical but a touch more refined. If only great winter fashion could trickle down through the decades.

JULIE MAHDAVI

- **Shop it** Every store has its own little gem; don't go to one store for everything.
- **For fleece** Shop vintage at **The Garment District**, 200 Broadway, The Port, Cambridge, or new at **REI**, 181 Morgan Ave., North Point, Cambridge
- **For a coat** Invest in an outdoor brand such as **Patagonia**, 39 Brattle St., Harvard Square, Cambridge
- **Scarves and hats** **Mint Julep**, 43 Brattle St., Harvard Square, Cambridge

BEHOLD



“Jennifer’s Body” director Karyn Kusama by Alex Kittle.

‘Cinema Her Way’ reframes women directors with illustrations by The Brattle’s Alex Kittle

Zinester Alex Kittle, an Arlingtonian and a projectionist at The Brattle Theater in Cambridge's Harvard Square, has illustrated film critic Marya E. Gates' book of interviews, “Cinema Her Way: Visionary Female Directors in Their Own Words,” released last week.

The book and its illustrations are a charming tribute to creative voices that don't often get due credit.

Kittle has chosen to portray her subjects in action. Cheryl Dunye, director of “The Watermelon Woman,” has a megaphone in hand. Martha Coolidge is posed on a stool, peeping through a

huge camera. Every filmmaker has a determined and discerning look, particularly “Jennifer’s Body” director Karyn Kusama, whose likeness gives a striking side-eye.

The vibes are fierce and quite different from your average male auteur.

The interviews are well worth a read, made even stronger by the hand-drawn visuals alongside them – a great way to kick off Women's History Month.

■ **The book is \$50 online from various retailers.**

CLAIRE OGDEN

LAUGH



Lloyd Sharp

Men in Comedy co-producer Viv Martin.

Men and their history, by the people who know them best. Maybe second-best.

“Come celebrate the men in your life by listening to women” is the pitch for the all-femme comedy collective Men in Comedy's second annual “Men's History Month” show. Held cheekily each Women's History Month, it features stand-up from some rising female and nonbinary comedians who are “willing to speak on men's experiences for them.” Last year's inaugural edition was Men in Comedy's biggest show to date and “proved that, contrary to some of the things male comics had advised us, so many people are eager to show up for an all-femme lineup,” co-producer Viv Martin said.

In addition to its roster, Men in Comedy is becoming infamous for the activities alongside the jokes. Previous shows have included animation-themed poetry slams, art auctions and drinking games with pies in the face as punishment; this year's historically aware show includes trivia about, as they put it, “the greatest moments in men's history.”

AMMA MARFO

- **“Men in Comedy Presents: Men's History Month” at 9 p.m. March 14 at The Rockwell, 255 Elm St., Davis Square, Somerville. \$15 to \$20.**

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

OPINIONS

In special education, haphazard priorities result in uneven outcomes

I am a parent of a fifth grader at the Kennedy-Longfellow School in Cambridge. When we learned last November that the school would close at the end of this academic year, our community knew we were experiencing the end result of a long, long series of incremental decisions and neglect that resulted in unbalanced outcomes for students throughout the Cambridge Public School district.

And we were mad. We said we wanted to make sure what happened to K-Lo never happened again. We want to prevent systemic imbalance and lift up policies that prioritize and center the needs of all kids in the district. Because we at K-Lo know intimately that being considered “low priority” actually just shows a district’s priorities.

This experience makes the Feb. 19 Harvard Crimson article “Department of Ed Report Finds Massachusetts Fails to Support Students with Special Education Needs” frustratingly familiar. That article says that children with special education needs – kids whose education is, at least for now, protected under the law – have not been well-served in this state. In Cambridge, effective special education service delivery has often been buried under a morass of revolving-door hiring, cover-your-ass communications practices, continued overinvestment in education products vs front-line people and

panicked attempts to pacify the loudest voices. But haphazard priorities result in uneven outcomes.

A management case in point: Kids whose medical or learning needs require a 1:1 aide for them to successfully access the curriculum.

In Cambridge, 1:1 instructional aides (also known as 1:1 special education paraprofessionals) have and do exist, and kids who have them frequently benefit from this form of support. But though the Office of Special Education does post and try to hire for a 1:1 para assigned by an individualized education program team, the practice itself is deprecated in Cambridge. As a result, the assignment process is inconsistent, opaque and murky, differs significantly between schools within the district and seems to indicate an institutional case of mixed signals and commitment issues. But while there may be better ways forward, the coordinated will to discover, innovate and put more effective systems in place has been lost in departmental fragmentation of budgets and personnel.

Here’s a possible way this could play out in action:

Consider a kid struggling to regulate their behavior in a general education setting. Maybe that student previously had a 1:1 aide, maybe they didn’t, but for whatever reason, things have deteriorated for the student and for

Closing the K-Lo was the end of a long series of incremental decisions and neglect.

their classmates. While a behavior plan to help the student was developed, the attention of the district’s consulting behavior specialist has been spread so thin by dipping in and out of multiple cases at several schools that events have progressed past their awareness. Now all recommendations are stale.

The classroom teacher is doing their best to provide differentiated trauma-informed instruction with consistently high expectations and outcomes, and at the same time, they’re being told by district middle management that 1:1 paras are an ineffective support strategy that fosters learned helplessness.

But the student’s needs and classroom safety issues keep escalating.

Faced with the departmental decisiveness of Jell-O, school-based administrators might find themselves problem-solving by assigning a building substitute or a classroom paraprofessional as an ad hoc 1:1 paraprofessional to assist that student. This child is in distress; other kids have to learn

somehow. What other choices do they have in front of them?

But because the support of a 1:1 paraprofessional was not determined by an IEP team, as per state guidance, the ad hoc 1:1 paraprofessional has been put in a very difficult position. They have not received supervision or guidance from the school district’s Office of Special Education. They may or may not have had training to support a student in crisis. They may or may not feel comfortable in the assigned role. And they are no longer able to fulfill their actual duties as a building substitute or a classroom paraprofessional. Amid the best of intentions, this “solution” has now hurting multiple students, potentially across multiple classrooms.

This worst-case scenario begs many questions.

How many students in the district have 1:1 paraprofessionals as part of their IEPs? How many students have unofficial 1:1 paras? How do the outcomes for those students compare with those of classmates with similar learning and behavioral profiles? How many principals have made the difficult decision to reassign a building sub to an unofficial 1:1 para assignment? How do those decisions affect the student in question and their classmates’ learning environment? If you’re pulling a building sub or even a general education

paraprofessional into that role, how are you filling (or are you filling) the job that individual was initially hired to do? And, finally, when individuals are reassigned to jobs that they did not seek and may not be trained to do, what is the impact on staff morale and retention?

So much swirl leading to poorer (and more expensive!) outcomes for everyone, all wrapped up in the extra staff time that it took to deal with the administrative problem of grownups who forgot that the responsibility in front of them was much clearer than the anxieties they brought to the question. Their loyalty and their priority should be to the students, not to the department.

This budget season, I urge the School Committee to get back to the one core truth embedded in an individualized education plan: What are the individual needs of the kid in front of you? How can that child access a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment?

The right way forward is often far simpler than we make it.

Anne Coburn

Otis Street, Cambridge

The writer is parent of a fifth grader at the Kennedy-Longfellow School in Cambridge.

Legal ads

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

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 – MARCH 13, 2025. 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-1147413
171 HURON AVENUE - Business A-1/Residence B Zone
RYECROFT, LLC – C/O COZY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, INC. – DANIEL P. WHITE, ON BEHALF OF RYECROFT
Special Permit: Interior renovation for daycare use.
Art. 3.000, Sec. 3.30 (Rules for Interpretation of District Boundaries). Art. 4.000, Sec. 4.33.b.2 (Educational Purpose: Preschool Daycare).
Sec. 4.30 (Table of Use Regulations). Sec. 4.50 (Institutional Use Regulations). Sec. 4.55.1.2 (Existing Use Status). Sec. 4.56.c.1 (Table of Institutional Use Regulations). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).
6:45 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-1151091
103 SCHOOL STREET - Residence C-1 Zone
103-109 SCHOOL ST. CAMBRIDGE LLC / JIN SUN, MANAGER – C/O SARAH L. RHATIGAN, ESQ.

Variance : Renovate and construct additional level, adding two units, to preexisting non-conforming structure, requiring relief from dimensional requirements. Art. 5.000, Sec. 5.31 (Table of Dimensional Requirements). Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.3 (Alteration to Non-Conforming Structure).
Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.30 (Variance).
Special Permit : Enlarge, relocate and add windows on exterior walls located within side setbacks.
Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.2.c (New, Relocated or Enlarged Windows). Art. 10.000, Sec. 10.40 (Special Permit).
7:00 P.M. CASE NO. BZA-1152107
12 HUBBARD PARK ROAD - Residence C-1 Zone
SHAIN P. ROCHE, TR. OF THE 12 HUBBARD PARK ROAD REALTY TR. – C/O SARAH L. RHATIGAN, ESQ.
Variance: Construct addition above detached garage to create a Home Occupation (therapist) office which exceeds height limit for an accessory structure. Art. 4.000, Sec. 4.21.k (Accessory Building). Art. 8.000, Sec. 8.22.3 (Alteration to 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.

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court

Estate of: Carl Bruce Slotnick
Also Known As: Carl B. Slotnick
Date of Death: October 26, 2024
Docket No. MI25P0549EA Middlesex Division

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner, Marilyn DeVos of Cambridge, MA

-A Will has been admitted to informal probate.
Marilyn DeVos of Cambridge, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve without surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.

Legal Notice for March 10, 2025 Half Crown-Marsh NCD Public Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Commission will hold a Public Meeting on Monday, **March 10, 2025 at 6:00 PM** to consider the following matters under Ch. 2.78, Article III of the City Code and the Order establishing the Commission. The meeting will be held online with remote participation only. The public may participate online via the Zoom platform from a phone, tablet, or computer. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/HCMMar25> or call (301)715-8592. Webinar ID: 831 4593 3776

1. HCM-685: 29 Ash Street, by

Catherine Hayden: Alter front porch by decreasing length by half.
2. Minutes

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION

The Planning Board of the City of Cambridge will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** located at Remote participation on Zoom (see details below) on special permit application case PB-315 for the property located at **255 Main Street, 325 Main Street, 290 Binney Street, 135 Broadway, 145 Broadway, 250 Binney Street, and 105 Broadway** for which the Applicant is Boston Properties Limited Partnership seeking special permits pursuant to Sections 14.32.2.5 Major Amendment to the Infill Development Concept Plan (IDCP) in the Mixed-Use Development (MXD) District and 22.35.3 Reduction of Green Roofs requirement for a proposal to Alter the IDCP with an alternative to Phase 4 to provide the option to shift a portion of the approved commercial GFA from the building at 250 Binney Street to a new building at 105 Broadway with no change to the total GFA.

This hearing will be on Zoom Webinar. Go to www.cambridgema.gov/planningboard to view application 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.

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.

Juncos may handle winter better than we do with snow baths and mountain climbs

By **JEANINE FARLEY**

Depending who you talk to, there are in North America anywhere from three to a dozen kinds of junco, a small bird in the sparrow family, and each has slightly different coloration. In some places, the ranges of these birds overlap, and they interbreed easily there, so scientists now consider all to be one species – dark-eyed juncos. Each color pattern indicates a subspecies, though; the grayish juncos we see in New England are part of the slate-colored group, which has three subspecies. Are you confused yet?

From October to April, juncos are common visitors at bird feeders in Massachusetts. Most juncos breed in Canada in the spring and summer. They migrate south out of Canada in the fall. Even though New England winters may seem harsh compared with points farther south, they are mild enough for some hardy juncos to overwinter here. Juncos are some-

Snow business

times called snowbirds because they seem to appear in snowy weather. In the winter, they commonly form flocks that spread out to forage during the day but come together to roost at night. At bird feeders, the dominant birds eat first.

Not all juncos winter in the same place, however. Young males tend to overwinter the farthest north. This gives them an advantage in the spring, for they can be the first to arrive at summer breeding grounds. But overwintering in the north is not without risk. A cold, harsh winter can kill many of these youngsters.

Older males overwinter farther south. In this way, they avoid the coldest, harshest weather, but they are still able to return to their northern breeding ground in time to stake

out a territory. Females overwinter the farthest south. They avoid the cold weather altogether and can find good sources of food. Females need to be well-nourished to lay healthy eggs in the spring.

Although most juncos migrate north to breed in Canada, a few breed in Massachusetts. In the summer you might find them nesting in conifer forests in the higher elevations of Worcester or Berkshire counties.

Most of the year, juncos are primarily seed and berry eaters. During the breeding season, however, insects make up a large portion of their diet. During this time, they might eat moths, butterflies, caterpillars, beetles, ants, wasps or flies.

Juncos hop along the ground foraging for seeds or insects. They scratch by hopping back and forth with both feet. In winter, if needed, they scratch away a thin layer of snow to make a 3- to 4-inch diameter clearing. If you frighten one, it will fly off, flashing its white outer tail feathers.

When warm spring weather finally arrives, the juncos that have overwintered are joined by birds that have wintered farther south. Together, the birds form a large flock and fly off to their breeding grounds in the north.

These birds are not intimidated by the cold. Ornithologist Edward Howe Forbush observed juncos bathing in streams of melting snow in August and taking snow baths in winter, much the way other birds might take a dust bath.

These hardy birds have even been known to go mountain climbing. Forbush once observed, “There, higher even than we could climb, perched on the very ridgepole of the hotel at the tiptop of Mount Washington, was a gray and white midget of a bird, greeting us with its cheery Junco song, the only bird which is regularly found in summer in this barren place.”

In the late 1800s, juncos were prevalent around Cambridge. According to William Brewster,

Juncos, in flocks containing from six or eight to fifteen or twenty birds each, may always be found in winter in the Cambridge Region. At this season I used to see them in our garden and also in many other parts of Cambridge, but most numerous and frequently by far in the country immediately to the westward of Mount Auburn ... I have long since ceased to note them in the city of Cambridge excepting during migration.

He goes on to note, however, that

Wild Things is taking questions

Do you have questions about birds, bugs, bees, butterflies or other wildlife? Send questions to wildthings@cambridgeday.com and we will find out the answer.

the birds can still be found a little farther west in Arlington and Belmont:

At the height of the migrations in November and March they are found practically everywhere, but oftenest and in the greatest numbers about weedy fields, in apple and pear orchards, and along brush-grown lanes and roadsides. So very abundant are they at times, that I have known upwards of one hundred birds to be started in a single field, and several hundreds to be seen during a morning walk or drive ... During February, 1895, Juncos suffered greatly from cold and starvation at their winter haunts in the Middle and Southern States, and since then they have not revisited Massachusetts in anything like their former numbers.

Perhaps the birds also learned to avoid humans:

On March 25, 1874, while crossing the corner of a field in Watertown, not far to the westward of Mount Auburn, I started a large flock of Juncos from a patch of weeds. They took refuge among some bushes which fringed an old stone wall and, as I advanced, flitted on ahead after the manner of most Sparrows when pursued. Happening to want a specimen, I selected a bird which perched for a moment on the top of the wall, and shot it.

Luckily for juncos (and other birds), photography has today overtaken shooting as the preferred method for capturing wild bird characteristics.

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.



Tom Murray, above and below

Juncos eat primarily berries and seeds. Female juncos have brown mixed in with the gray, as seen below.

