



CAMBRIDGE DAY

THE WEEK OF AUGUST 20 – AUGUST 27, 2026

FREE

Grabbing a Bite with: Ran Bechor

By SUSANNE BECK

One in a series of conversations with some of our many noteworthy neighbors — people who call the city home or head this way to work or study. We grab a bite, talk shop, learn more about why Cambridge, and shoot the proverbial ... well, you know.

Let us know what you think. Suggestions welcome at editor@cambridgeday.com



Sophia Day

An illustration of Ran Bechor.

The playwright and director Ran Bechor steps into Beacon Street's Café Saint Germain, at the corner of the Cambridge/Somerville line, flashes a boyish smile and greets me with a grace that can only be described as from another, gentler age. His manner is calm, light and unexpectedly unassuming. "You need to know I don't speak English so well," he volunteers with a shy grin. "I'm not reading a lot of things in English," he adds. "Most of what I'm reading is in Hebrew, so this is a journey for me." Language, he believes, may be a barrier for many people, including in a theater setting. "I think this is part of our conversation," he suggests, "how to make theater without language. This is, I think, a real thing that we need to speak about."

The café is quiet at this hour (9 a.m.) and the menu is limited, as well. Especially for those like Bechor, whose diet precludes gluten and coffee (also alcohol). "I never drink coffee," he says. "I didn't like it. Never have. And I don't do things that I don't like," he says, adding "who does?" Another one of his offhanded smiles. Bechor politely directs an "orange juice, please" to the cashier.

I, on the other hand, am primed to take full advantage of the menu: cappuccino (large), and a slice of the densest chocolate chip banana bread pudding imaginable.

We settle into a corner table near the bar. We aren't even seated before our conversation turns to his background and the many roles he has played in his short life (he turned 40 earlier this year): I know he's been an actor in a telenovela. An award-winning playwright. A

founder and director of a theater for young audiences.

A Modern Hebrew preceptor at Harvard. And before any of that, the principal of a school of 1,400 gifted children in Israel.

As Bechor talks, I stab into my bread pudding followed by a slurp of my coffee. He arrived in Cambridge four years ago after his wife, Romy Neumark — a longtime Israeli television journalist who hosted her own nightly news show — won a Nieman fellowship at Harvard. He spoke very little English at the time. "I have the vocabulary," he says, "but I didn't actually speak."

They only expected to stay a year. But Bechor found work teaching Modern Hebrew at Harvard and spent his spare time developing material to feed his theater passion. In 2023, he co-founded Adam Theater with executive director and designer Karin Sharav-Zalkind, with the goal of producing high-quality children's theater.

This year he committed himself full-time to playwrighting and directing. I ask whether walking away from a stable, income-producing position at Harvard feels like a risk. He looks puzzled by the word. "Risk? No. It's natural," he counters. "[Adam Theater] is what I want to be focused on." It is the most Cambridge-by-way-of-Israel answer one could give. The credentials are background, the work is foreground, and the calendar bends to the work.

See RAN BECHOR, page 9

Civic assemblies can build trust in local government



Brandon Turner, Unsung Hero Media

Members of Lexington Ky's first civic assembly on a government charter pose for a group photo.

By TAVISHI CHATTOPADHYAY

Cambridge is applying a civic assembly, an idea little-used in the United States, to assess the thorny problem of adopting the surveillance technology ShotSpotter. Experts say such assemblies can build trust in government decisions.

ShotSpotter, an acoustic detection system deployed to improve public safety response times when shots are fired, has roiled the city, with voices both strongly against it and loudly in favor. City Council voted to stop using the technology in May but on Aug. 3 a policy order was passed restoring the system for 90 days, and establishing a civic assembly to assess it. The

city has 90 days to create a plan for the civic assembly and initiate it, according to Jeremy Warnick, the city's media relations director. Currently, the community engagement office is working on planning and finding partnerships to create a civic assembly.

A core part of civic assemblies is bringing together randomly selected community residents — known formally as sortition — to discuss public policy and provide the government with community insight and recommendations. Assemblies give people the opportunity to listen to each other in a way that other public forums like city council meetings don't, said Jane Mansbridge, a political scientist and professor at Harvard University.

"My experience with these assemblies is that the citizens listen hard to one another, take one another very seriously, and very often bond across political, ethnic, and class lines as they engage seriously together on a common problem," Mansbridge said in an email.

In Europe civic assemblies or their smaller counterpart, citizens panels, have been a frequent go-to for lawmakers. Mansbridge said the assemblies help residents gain more trust in their elected governments and the legitimacy of decision-making, because members of the community make the suggestions, not the elected politicians.

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Turn to page 10 for our tour of local ice cream shops. Pictured at left: Butter being drizzled on a scoop of Gerly's sweet corn ice cream at Kuya Jay's in Somerville.

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CAMPAIGN 2026

Markey on innovation, ICE and surveillance tech

By BRIANNA EARLE

Journalists representing *The Belmont Voice*, *Brookline News*, *Cambridge Day*, *Lexington Observer*, and *The Waltham Times* met with U.S. Senator Ed Markey, D-Mass., who is running for re-election to the U.S. Senate. The same group met previously with Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass.

In a sit-down interview with local newspapers, Sen. Ed Markey shared personal ties to Cambridge, how his mother and aunts motivated his career in politics and discussed his plans for re-election. Markey, 80, has served as senator for 13 years and before that spent 37 years in the U.S. House of Representatives and three in the Massachusetts House. He said he wants to defend the local innovation economy from the Trump Administration budget cuts, will continue to champion immigrants, wants to see the country establish Medicare for All and promote affordability through programs like free public transit.

Cambridge's dominant institutions, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have been under siege from the Trump Administration through sharply higher endowment taxes and massive proposed cuts to research budgets at the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, which also threaten the city's biotech and high-tech industries. Markey said re-investing in these local economic drivers are on his priority list.

Funding the innovation economy

"We are the innovation economy," said Markey. "[Kendall Square] didn't even exist 35 years ago. It all has come from largely the NIH grants that create the basic research, that then spins off to other companies that grow into the big names that are standing above the buildings ... That is what I continue to fight to protect." He pointed to companies like Moderna and Vertex, both founded in Cambridge (Vertex moved to Boston in 2014), as specific examples of industry powerhouses in Kendall Square.

Markey said he has worked across the aisle to help restore funding cuts in several sectors, noting "I fought hard as the lead Democrat on the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee to create exemptions for the small businesses here in Cambridge and other communities," in particular working with Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa to restore Small Business Innovation Research grants.

He said after the Trump Administration proposed cutting the National Institutes of Health budget by 40 percent, he and other members of Congress have worked to restore that funding.

"Massachusetts per capita is number two in the receipt of NIH grants, we're number two



Photos: Bruno Muñoz-Oropeza

Sen. Ed Markey (second from left), during an interview with journalists at Cambridge Day's office.

in National Science Foundation grants. That's the money that then draws the young talent to people from around the country and around the world to come here. I've been leading the effort,



Markey emphasized his experience and ability to work across the aisle.

the restoration and protection of those funds, to make sure that we don't see a destruction of this engine of scientific and innovation growth, which we've been able to create here in Cambridge and other communities."

Markey said that he believes industry development cannot happen without the help of immigrant communities and that Trump has "declared war" on their ability to come work and attend school in the United States.

Pathway to citizenship

He continues to call for abolishing the U.S. Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), something he first did in 2018). He also wants to establish a proper pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country.

"I voted against the creation [of ICE]" he said, explaining that he feared that it would plant "seeds of authoritarianism." He continued, "now that prediction has been borne out by the way in which Donald Trump is using ICE as a means of terrorizing communities across the country." Markey said he and Rep. Ayanna Pressley have legislation to appeal qualified immunity, which would push back protections that shield federal agents. Additionally, he pushed

for the passage of the Securing Help for Immigrants Through Education and Legal Development (SHIELD) Act which created a \$100 million grant funding program which is aimed at providing lawyers for individuals facing deportation.

Why free transit matters

On affordability, Markey and Massachusetts Rep. Pressley released the findings of a case study report they conducted in western and central mass that made bus transportation free for riders.

"What we're seeing in Pioneer Valley, what was seen in Worcester, and what we've seen around the Commonwealth is when fare free transit is put into place, it dramatically increases ridership and It increases economic activity." Markey also added that free ridership helps provide lower income families a way to get to work and



Markey called for creating a path to citizenship for immigrants currently in the U.S.

around the community without having to take a "disproportionate bite" out of their monthly budgets.

As a longtime environmental activist and co-author of the Green New Deal, Markey said that fare free transportation "also reduces greenhouse gases because people get out of their cars. and they start to take public transit. So it fits into a strategy of cleanup communities, but greater accessibility."

Markey is also a strong proponent of Medicare for All, which would extend the health care coverage system for seniors to all U.S. citizens. In the short term,

he said he is working to restore \$100 million in cuts to Medicaid funding slated for January, saying "that would devastate Cambridge Health Alliance." He added, "We know that [health care] costs are too high and access is too difficult for too many...We have to eliminate all middle men and women, all of the additional costs."

Surveillance a local decision

Markey said the use of surveillance technology such as ShotSpotter, a hot issue in Cambridge, needs to be decided locally. "Each community has a decision to make," he said.

On the federal level, Markey acknowledged safety concerns about the technology itself, as well as within communities, and "without question, without safeguards, without regulation, there will be a compromise," said Markey. "Whether we have ShotSpotter, or Flock, there have to be safeguards built in. We have to ultimately understand that vast amounts of



Sen. Ed Markey during an interview with journalists.

information about every single citizen in the community is being gathered simultaneously with the police having access to that information ... but it should not be assumed that it's just automatically safe."

He said the same need for regulations was true of artificial intelligence. Additionally, last month Markey released his framework for how he plans to approach AI legislation. The framework includes a series of safeguards to protect users, especially children, from engaging with AI and its algorithmic feedback.

At the end of the conversation Markey got candid. He said, "Everything I do is just motivated by the reality that I'm not as smart as my mother or my Aunt Mary ... I just got opportunities" they did not. Both his mother in Malden and his aunt, who lived on Langdon Court, had to help raise their siblings after their mother passed.

"Let's not pretend that they didn't have dreams, too. They just never got to realize it," Markey said. "What Trump is doing is attacking all of these kids on every porch all across our country, because they're Black, they're brown, and they're immigrants. It just brings out the Malden and Cambridge in me ... it absolutely ticks me off."

The Massachusetts primary election will take place on Sept. 1.

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Cambridge Day is published by a nonpartisan, nonprofit media organization, Cambridge News Inc. Our mission is to provide our readers with impartial, informative reporting, and to be an outlet for civic engagement and discourse on public policy, politics, government and other matters of citywide concern.

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Members of a Lexington, Ky. civic assembly discuss changes to the government charter.

Assemblies

From Page 1

One U.S. city that has used a civic assembly is Lexington, Ky., which hosted one in March to get resident feedback on a new government charter. Preparation for that assembly took three years, local officials said. The city council in Lexington designated a local non-profit working to boost civic health, CivicLex, to design the process and fundraise for it, including coming up with money to give stipends to the assembly participants.

“Assemblies are incredibly labor-intensive and time-consuming and expensive,” said Kit Anderson, CivicLex’s deputy director. “You want to give yourself enough time that you’re doing it right, because you want it to be worth it.”

CivicLex knew city charters did not draw a lot of public interest, said Anderson. A civic assembly could help spur engagement, and it would also help draw new voices into public discussion.

“It can be frustrating to always hear from the same people when you’re asking for input on local government issues,” Anderson said.

To create a microcosm of Lexington’s community, CivicLex sent out 10,000 postcards to randomly selected residential addresses in Lexington. The postcards linked to a demographics survey. The survey data was fed into a program called Panalot, which generated between 120 to 130 potential panels of residents that met demographic criteria similar to Lexington overall. To ensure the final panel was randomly selected, CivicLex drew from a bingo cage.

The 30 assembly members met eight times in March, then submitted their suggestions to the city council. Despite the intense schedule, Anderson said it was not difficult to get people

to show up for the discussions, because the organization had worked to reduce the barriers for participation. Members were offered participation stipends of \$1,200 each, along with transportation stipends and childcare stipends. “The other reason a lot of people kept showing up is because it mattered,” Anderson said. “They had legitimate decision-making power. They were locked in.”

Akron, Ohio, started a civic assembly to discuss the city’s housing crisis. It worked with Unify Akron, part of Unify America, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to solve civic challenges through collaborative problem solving. Unify Akron’s Morgan Lasher, who leads its U.S. Democracy Leagues team, said it approached sortition differently than CivicLex, creating outreach teams that contacted residents to discuss what a civic assembly was and how they felt about the housing situation. From those interviews, invitations were sent out.

“Civic assemblies move at the speed of trust,” Lasher said. “If you have networks already created inside the city and inside your community ... it can move quite quickly.”

It took about 16 months of planning for the civic assembly in Akron, and the sessions ran for 10 weeks.

Even with all the groundwork, both Anderson and Lasher said the civic assemblies still initially faced public distrust. Lasher described assembly members coming in with skepticism and looking more reserved during the first session.

But assembly members quickly saw how different the civic assembly was from city council meetings. In Akron, Lasher and her team used the first four to five hours of their session to build trust with assembly members.

While both of these assemblies were organized in a much longer

window of time than Cambridge has, Anderson said the time to create and carry out a civic assembly varies widely. She has seen some done in a weekend. She spoke highly of how they worked.

“It was a pretty incredible experience,” Anderson said. “Assemblies can be really powerful. They can build back a lot of faith.”

This story is part of a partnership between Cambridge Day and the Boston University Department of Journalism.

Suspect arrested in July hit-and-run that injured a 12-year-old



Cambridge Police Department via Instagram

A photo of the alleged hit-and-run scooter perpetrator provided by police to help identify him.

By REBECCA GOODMAN

At 8:40 a.m. on Monday, police arrested Jayson Wilson for an electric scooter hit-and-run that injured a 12-year-old girl on July 9.

The Cambridge Police Department issued a press release noting that Wilson was arrested in Everett by the Massachusetts State Police Violent Fugitive Apprehension Section, with assistance from the Everett Police Department and the State Police technical services.

Wilson was arraigned later on Monday in the Cambridge District Court on multiple charges, includ-

ing assault and battery with a dangerous weapon causing serious bodily injury, leaving the scene of personal injury, reckless operation of a motor vehicle, and negligent operation of a motor vehicle.

The July 9 incident occurred on Vassar Street in Cambridge, when a 12-year-old girl was seriously injured after being struck by a man on an electric scooter, allegedly Wilson.

Prior to the arrest, the Cambridge Police Department had released a photo of Wilson and asked for the public’s help in identifying him. An update shared on July 30 said they had successfully identified him.

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Average sale price of property in
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CONDOS	SINGLES	MULTIS
820K	1.74M	1.42M
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CONDOS	SINGLES	MULTIS
635K	827K	956K

Source: MLS PIN statistics for "Market Pulse"

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EDUCATION

Winter Hill, Brown schools will merge



Danielle Howe

The Winter Hill Community Innovation School in 2024.

By JULIA CARPI

Somerville’s School Committee voted 8-1 Monday in favor of merging the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and the Benjamin G. Brown School into one large school where Winter Hill’s building is, with City Council President Lance Davis casting the lone ‘no’ vote.

“This is a mistake,” Davis said. “Let the record reflect I am calling this out, as I have before, as a misguided process that we are going to regret in the long term.”

Davis stirred up debate during the meeting over his concerns about the loss for students of the intimate learning environment the Brown school offered. The Committee approved a 925-seat Pre-K-8 school at Winter Hill’s 115 Sycamore Street site, which will be sent to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The Brown School’s Willow Avenue building faces decommissioning.

Vice Chair Leiron Briton, the only other opponent of the merger at previous committee votes, ultimately sided with the rest of the committee. “I still have my reservations, but I am committed to making sure that we build the best

school we can at the site,” Briton said.

Proponents of the merger focused their arguments on accessibility. “Nine months ago, there really wasn’t an alternative solution that was cost effective and addressed all the accessibility issues,” said Committee Member Laura Pitone. She added the “train has already left the station” on the decision.

Several members referred to previous votes from the Construction Advisory Group (CAG) and committee that pointed toward a preference for the larger school. Davis criticized that process as well.

“The CAG recommendation was not a consensus,” Davis said. “I believe that process was slanted and geared towards a desired result.” Some parents at the Brown School had campaigned to keep Somerville’s only stand-alone elementary school. Its building needed substantial renovation to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Preferred Schematic Report for the 925-seat school at 115 Sycamore Street now heads to the MSBA, which will vote on its approval and clarifications this fall.

Larry Aaronson’s life of lessons

By TOM MEEK

For generations of Cambridge students, Larry Aaronson was the kind of teacher whose lessons did not necessarily end when the bell rang — or even when you graduated.

Aaronson, a longtime Cambridge Rindge and Latin School social studies teacher, activist and ubiquitous photographer of Cambridge life, died Aug. 1 at age 85 at the Neville Center at Fresh Pond in Cambridge. He had been battling chronic lymphoblastic leukemia. Over three decades at CRLS, he taught thousands of students to look at American history critically, question accepted narratives and consider the experiences of people who too often appeared only at the margins of traditional textbooks.

People were at the center of his life, and many of them felt the same way about him. A tribute page has drawn scores of submissions and more than 700 comments have been left on Aaronson’s Facebook page.

“One thing that was amazing to witness in the last few weeks and months of his life were how many people showed up for Larry,” said Abby Brown, a former student of Aaronson’s who lives in Strawberry Hill. “He gave so much for so long to the community and the community gave it back at the end, when it mattered most. During his last week, his bed was surrounded from morning to night with former students, colleagues, parents of former students, friends, and community members.”

She said on his final night, 11 people, family members, friends and former students, gathered “around his bed talking, telling Larry stories, and singing. It was remarkable - he was teaching us about community right up to his death - forever the teacher!”

Born Lawrence Samuel Aaronson in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 31, 1940, Aaronson attended Sidwell Friends School and Earlham College before earning master’s degrees from Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Journalism initially seemed a possible career, but teaching ultimately became his life’s work.

After beginning as a teacher in Washington in the 1960s, Aaronson came to Cambridge to pursue doctoral studies at Harvard. He left the program for the classroom, teaching at Cambridge’s alternative Group School before joining CRLS in 1977. He remained there until his retirement in 2007, along the way chairing the school’s Social Studies Department.

Aaronson’s classroom reflected the progressive politics that informed much of his life outside it. He taught Howard Zinn’s “A People’s History of



From Aaronson's Facebook page

Larry Aaronson, who passed away Aug. 1, was truly a Cambridge legend.

the United States” and put civil rights, race, labor, war and social justice at the center of discussions about American history. His goal was not simply to have students memorize what happened, but to ask who was telling the story, whose voices were missing and why.

Decker added that Aaronson “helped me understand that I belonged in the conversation about our history, our society, and our future.” She said his class “helped shape the trajectory of my life and the person I have become.”

His students included some who went on to fame, including Matt Damon and Casey Affleck, but Aaronson’s legacy was perhaps better measured by the countless former students who remained part of his life. Even decades after they left CRLS, running into “Mr. Aaronson” around Cambridge was hardly unusual.

And Aaronson was difficult to miss, because he was so often carrying a camera.

Photography became another way for him to teach, document and participate in the life of the city. He photographed CRLS students and school events as well as demonstrations, political gatherings and the everyday civic life of Cambridge. Over the years, the collection became an informal visual history of a changing city, preserving people and moments that might otherwise have disappeared from the record.

His politics similarly extended well beyond the classroom. Aaronson was a longtime advocate for peace, racial justice and progressive causes, and Cambridge honored him with a Peace and Justice Award. After his retirement, he helped establish Social Justice Works! The Aaronson Fund, which supports Cambridge public school graduates pursuing social justice work — an extension of the values he had spent decades encouraging in his

students.

Aaronson also found himself unexpectedly connected to one of the darkest episodes in recent Boston history. He knew Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev from CRLS and lived only a few houses away. When Tsarnaev was identified as a suspect in 2013, Aaronson publicly expressed his shock, remembering the young man he had known as gracious, caring and compassionate.

That moment brought national attention to a man whose life’s work was fundamentally local.

Aaronson’s Cambridge was a place to participate in, argue about, photograph and improve. He taught its youth, documented its people, and challenged students to think about the responsibilities that came with being citizens of it.

In the end, perhaps his greatest lesson was the example he set outside the classroom: that education, civic engagement and community were not separate endeavors, but parts of the same lifelong project.

City Councillor and CRLS alumni Marc McGovern said “Although I wasn’t fortunate enough to have Larry as a teacher, I was fortunate to have him as a friend and mentor. Cambridge lost a true icon.”

McGovern, fellow councillor E. Denise Simmons and Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui sponsored a resolution at the Aug. 3 city council meeting recognizing Aaronson’s influence on generations of students and his commitment to public education and social justice. McGovern told Siddiqui that a key to the city that was given to Aaronson shortly before he died had been meaningful to Aaronson, saying he “did not let go of that for three days and died with it in his hand.”

A memorial service will be held August 30. Details will follow.

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Sculptures l Marcus W. C Gallery give an irrev take on Amer Christianity By Claire Ogden Sept 14, 2025

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

New donut shop opens



Courtesy of Greedy Cow

The Greedy Cow Donuts storefront, which opened to the public over the weekend.

By MADISON LUCCHESI

Cows are naturally driven to sugar-rich grass and other foods. Local restaurateur Paul Rungta hopes Cantabrigians are just as drawn to his latest culinary endeavor: Greedy Cow Donut Factory.

Serving classic donuts and modern flavors made with homemade glazes and cream fillings, Greedy Cow Donut Factory’s soft opening was on July 31 and grand opening was over the weekend.

Rungta previously used the space at 114 Magazine St. for Surya Indian Kitchen. He also ran Surya Indian Express at CambridgeSide Galleria and Cafe Spice in MIT’s Stratton Student Center. He closed all three during the COVID-19 pandemic, then did not reopen any of them because he said running an Indian restaurant, let alone three, became a lot of work at his age, 63.

Instead, he flipped to his pandemic project, which had been making bagel sandwiches at home and posting pictures of them on Instagram. After two



Strawberry iced donuts, a recent daily special at Greedy Cow Donuts.

years of this, in 2022 Rungta opened Brooklyn Bagel Factory at 168 Hampshire St. in Inman Square. The Magazine St. space has been an office for several years, and Rungta said he is excited to use the donut factory as a way to “express my creativity.”

Greedy Cow allows Rungta to constantly experiment with flavors by offering daily specials. Last weekend, he made donuts topped with fresh strawberries and blueberries and plans next to dabble with white chocolate and pineapple-flavored donuts.

Rungta also thinks a donut shop will be “more aligned [with] the community” than the Indian restaurant was. But, he said, Cambridgeport residents who knew the restaurant recognize the family when they come into Greedy Cow, and are excited to try something new.

“This business is giving me more job satisfaction and happiness,” which comes from seeing joy on his customers’ faces, he said.

The donut factory also offers coffee, bagels from Brooklyn Bagel Factory, six gluten-free donut options daily as well as pancakes, french toast, vegan options, and other gluten free options.



Courtesy of Greedy Cow

Blueberry donuts, a recent daily special at Greedy Cow Donuts.

Tampopo’s owner shares some recipes



Photos: Tom Meek

Crowds lined up in June for one last taste of Tampopo's cuisine.

By TOM MEEK

Tampopo may have left the building — the Lesley Building, that is — but the mutual love and time-tested affection between the Japanese street food eatery and its customers continues. Tampopo proprietor Yasumasa Ito offered some recipes from his 34 years of business along with “insider how tos” on a Tampopo commemorative website.

The site was set up by former employee Kotaro Moria to capture farewell memories from diners and to maintain a living tribute to “Ito-san,” Tampopo’s hardworking founder and chef.

In the time since its launch just prior to Tampopo’s closing at the end of June, the website has expanded from being just a digital Post It board to include blog posts from Moria, who lives in Kanazawa, Japan. Moria has written about his employment at the restaurant when a student in Boston and his return 16 years later to help Ito get through the final throng of adoring well-wishers looking for one last glorious don buri bowl (the long lines snaked through the Lesley Building). There’s also merch (Goodbye Tampopo tees) and now, the recipes that kept bringing people back.

The site, which announces “Tampopo is closed,” also cheekily adds “See you someday at Tampopo 2.” The recipes are two sauces, two bowls and a dressing. Up top is the agedashi tofu broth and agedashi tofu itself (not too complicated from my mile-high view) and the soburo donburi bowl — the topping of which is a ragout chunk sauce of ground meat (chicken, pork and/or beef) with ginger, miso and soy sauce that can be served over rice or as an added topping for a donburi bowl — rice and cubed tofu or rice and agedashi tofu with that agedashi sauce. Ito-san’s house made salad dressing seems to be the richest of all — soy sauce, sesame seeds, ginger, egg, rice vinegar and onions blended together for that tangy yet sweet dressing that made Tampopo’s side salads a nice dazzle to your meal.

On Reddit, Moria warned home cooks that recipes “may need some adjustment for home cooking.” He noted that “Ito-san was always the one who tasted the dressing and made the final adjustment” and in the past when he shared the recipe with people they had a hard time replicating it at home.

Moria also has posted “After Tampopo” stories, with such chapters as “The Final Month Was Not Normal,” “How It Ended For Me” and “A Good Ending.”

Much on the Reddit post had specific how-to questions (cuts of meat, where to get ingredients, etc.) from readers who also thanked Ito for his kindness. Wrote one poster, “Recipes are a very special part of community and good recipes are sacred!!



Yasumasa Ito in the kitchen at Tampopo, which he started in 1992.

Please deliver another thank you to Ito-san as well! This is beyond kind.”

While what was once called Little Tokyo has mostly emptied out (Cho Cho’s, Tampopo and Sapporo Ramen are all gone), there are signs of life. Xian Cool Noodles is slated to open in the booth next to where Tampopo was ensconced for more than 30 years. That space housed Yume Ga Arukara udon before its 2024 move to the street facing space it shares with Itzakaya Ittoku. Xian Cool Noodles has had a “coming” sign posted in the Lesley Building lobby since last spring. A recent phone call to the Shaanxi-style eatery yielded a comment from management that it is primed to open next month.

EVENTS AUG 20 TO SEPT 3

Saturday, Aug. 29, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Lovestruck Books, 44 Brattle St., Harvard Square.

Art Exhibition: Holding The Moment

Free. The romance cover art of Elaine Gignilliat is on view. This is the first public exhibition of these original paintings, nearly half a century after their creation. Exhibit will run through Monday, Aug. 31.

Tuesday, Sept. 1, 7 p.m.
Porter Square Books, 1815 Massachusetts Ave., Porter Square.

Susan Eisenberg recites from “Fault Line”

RSVP. The poet’s latest book looks at how the political and moral landscape, friendships and language itself become altered by the catastrophic destruction in Palestine. Joined by Amal Equeiq, author of “Indigenous Affinities: Toward Solidarity Across the Global South.”



Scan here for more events.

Tuesday, Aug. 25, 6 p.m.
Danehy Park, 99 Sherman St., in Neighborhood 9 just east of Fresh Pond.

Summer Concert: Nora Meier

Free. Nora Meier’s debut album, “Outfield” was released in October 2024. Spectrum Culture called the album “a gently percolating but still laid-back brand of folk-pop.”

Wednesday, Sept. 2, 7 p.m.
Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square.

The FIXX, Colin Blunstone (voice of the Zombies) and Peter Asher

\$64 to \$116. The FIXX of multi-platinum hit fame including “One Thing Leads to Another” and “Saved by Zero,” Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Fame vocalist Blunstone (The Zombies) and one half of Peter & Gordon, Peter Asher, join forces for a multi-city tour, beginning in Somerville.

Sunday, Aug. 30, 2 to 5 p.m.
Lamplighter Brewing, 284 Broadway, The Port.

Brewery Book Fair

Free, but RSVP. This pop-up book fair features Cambridge authors, who autograph throughout the afternoon. There will also be a selection of local books and bookish gifts for the whole family.

Sunday, Aug. 30, 3 p.m.
Longfellow House and the Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site, 105 Brattle St.

Concert: Pete Smith

Free. Pete Smith is a New York City-based guitarist and H.W. Longfellow descendant who is a founding member of Grupo los Santos (Santos4tet), a vanguard Afro-Cuban and Brazilian-style quartet. He has played New York’s Town Hall and concerts throughout the U.S., Cuba and Austria.

Friday, Aug. 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Kendall/MIT Open Space at 292 Main St., Kendall Square.

Outdoor Movie: “The Wiz”

Free, but register. This film series is curated by The Brattle, and is first come, first served regardless of registration. Bring a blanket or a chair.

Thursday, Sept. 3, 7 to 9 p.m.
Lou’s, 13 Brattle St.

The Hardest Part: A tribute to Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

\$15 to \$50, reservations only. Featuring a rotating cast of some of Boston’s best musicians, featuring Bill Guerra and Joe McMahon, the band brings the music of the great Tom Petty to life.

Monday, Aug. 24, 8 p.m.
Club Passim, 47 Palmer St., Harvard Square.

Bloodroots, Mel Starr in performance

\$27. Bloodroots is a folk and Americana trio including Marin Danz, Rianna Straka and Eva Paddock. Mel Starr is a self-taught singer/songwriter inspired by the folk tradition and the fingerpicking style.

Friday, Aug. 21, 1 p.m.
Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy St., near Harvard Square.

Lightning Gallery Talks: Teen Eyes on the Collections

Free. This session is led by this summer’s cohort of Hao Family High School interns. Each intern focuses on a single object in the collections that they’ve selected and researched. A brief question and answer period follows each talk.

Sunday, Aug. 23, 7 and 9 p.m.
The Mad Monkfish, 524 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square.

Jazz and World Music Legend Jamey Haddad

\$25 plus dinner. Paul Simon percussionist Haddad brings members of his acclaimed jazz quartet, pianist Leo Blanco and acoustic bassist Ian Ashby, to perform. Haddad was a percussionist for Paul Simon from 1998 till 2026 and appears on more than 225 audio recordings and movie soundtracks. He studied at the Berklee College of Music and was a full-time professor there from 1992 to 2010.

Wednesday, Aug. 26, 7:30 p.m.
The Comedy Studio, 5 John F. Kennedy St., Harvard Square.

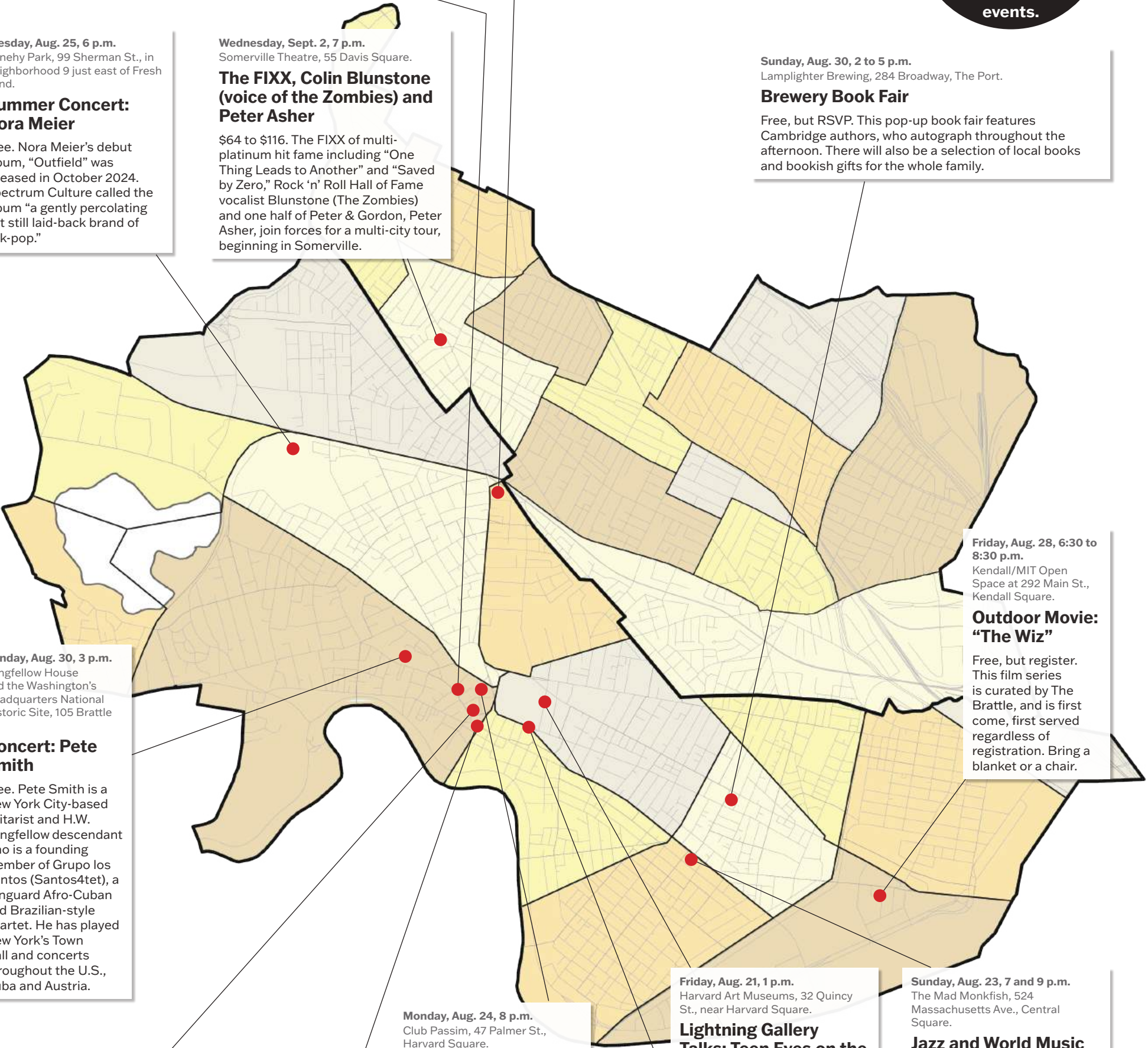
Rising Stars Showcase

\$24. Catch a lineup of Boston’s rising stars: future headliners delivering a night of laughs.

Thursday, Aug. 27, 7 p.m.
Harvard Book Store, 1256 Massachusetts Ave.

Ali Barthwell presents “Reality TV for Snobs: Everything You Need to Know About the Shows You’re Too Intellectual to Watch”

Free. Barthwell, an Emmy-winning writer for “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver,” breaks down 20 groundbreaking shows from the past 25 years, and in the process reveals why they matter. Author of “Good Grief” E.B. Bartels joins.



■ 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.

WILD THINGS

Older than the dinosaurs and still flying

By JEANINE FARLEY

Of the more than 300 species of dragonflies in North America, none are more interesting than the black saddlebags dragonfly (*Tramea lacerata*), so named because of the black patches on its hind wings. When viewed from above, the patches look to be resting on each side of the abdomen, resembling saddlebags draped across the back of a horse.

Naturalists first wrote about dragonflies in the 1500s, but the fossil record for dragonflies stretches back more than 300 million years. In other words, dragonfly relatives patrolled the skies 70 million years before the first dinosaurs appeared!

Five hundred years ago, scientists thought that adult dragonflies were a difference species from their larvae. This belief is not completely baseless: Adult dragonflies are winged fliers, while their larvae swim in water and breathe through gills. However, in 1669, the Dutch biologist Jan Swammerdam used a microscope to prove that dragonflies started as eggs, developed into larvae and finally became adult dragonflies.

Black saddlebags life cycle

A female lays eggs in a pond, marsh or other still water. Each egg hatches into a nymph (also called a naiad) — a squat, six-legged aquatic bug with an oval body, spindly legs, and developing wings folded on its back. Each nymph breathes through internal gills by pulling water into a chamber in its rectum. There dissolved oxygen passes across thin, folded tissues and enters the respiratory system. The nymph then expels the water. If it senses danger, the nymph can expel the water with enough force to propel itself through the water like a miniature jet ski.

Another unusual feature of these nymphs is an extendable lower lip, folded underneath the head. When prey swims within reach, the nymph shoots the lip out, grabs the victim with a pair of hooked appendages on the lip, and pulls the prey in like a fishman (or woman) reeling in a line.

When the nymph is fully grown, it crawls out of the water and up a plant stem. Its skin splits open and



Andybirkey

Black saddlebags dragonflies are named for the black patches on their wings.

an adult dragonfly slowly crawls out. The dragonfly pumps fluid through the veins in its crumpled wings, expanding them. Once the wings and body have hardened, it flies away, leaving behind its empty skin.

Black saddlebags spend much of their day flying, rarely perching — even while feeding. Because of this, they have developed an unusual way of coping with heat: while flying, to cool their body, they lower their abdomen into the shadow cast by the dark patches on their wings. They also cool themselves by gliding rather than beating their wings, which reduces the amount of heat their body produces. In addition, they increase the circulation of hemolymph (insect blood) to the abdomen, which has a large surface area and cools more quickly than other parts of the body. When the temperature reaches 95°F or more, the heat is too much even for



Tom Murray

Dragonfly wings work independently, allowing them to fly forward, backward, sideways and even upside down.

these hardy dragonflies, and they find a cool place to rest.

The black saddlebags dragonfly is one of only 18 North American dragonflies that migrates. However, not all of these dragonflies migrate.

In late summer or fall, the migratory saddlebags fly to the southern United States or even to Mexico, where they reproduce. The adult offspring live throughout the winter in the south, and lay eggs that grow into adults that fly north to our region in the spring. These spring dragonflies may arrive before overwintering saddlebags larvae have transformed into adults.

This means that a black saddlebags dragonfly you see now may not have spent its entire life in this region. It may have migrated from the south. Of course, it's also possible that it spent its whole life here. Scientists have not documented

the black saddlebags' complete migratory pattern nearly as well as that of the common green darner dragonfly, but they can use techniques, such as stable-hydrogen isotope analysis, to determine where these insects grew up.

Mosquito Control

Black saddlebags dragonflies—both nymphs and adults—are

good at controlling mosquito populations. Dragonfly nymphs may eat on average 40 mosquito larvae per day. Adults catch and eat mosquitoes in mid-air. Male saddlebags dragonflies may even form swarms to gobble up mosquitoes.

So, the next time you see a black saddlebags dragonfly, remember its astonishing history. Its ancestors flew millions of years before



Richard George

Black saddlebags can see almost 360 degrees.

the first dinosaurs appeared and have survived mass extinctions, ice ages and shifting continents. What a remarkable little creature it is.



Tom Murray

Black Saddlebags are about 2 inches long with a 3-inch wingspan.



Richard George

A black saddlebags in Danehy Park, July 15, 2020.

FILM

LOCAL FOCUS



Fritz Lang’s “Ministry of Fear,” adapted from a Graham Greene novel, will show at the Harvard Film Archive.

Harvard Film Archive re-opens

By OSCAR GOFF

The students aren’t the only ones returning to Harvard this week. Following a three-month closure for much-needed restorations, the **Harvard Film Archive** reopens its doors Friday for a brand-new season of rare screenings and expert curation. The first series out of the gate is the wonderfully titled “**The Cold Heart Is More Precious than Diamonds: The Cinema of Graham Greene.**” Greene one of the most celebrated novelists of the 20th centuries, was also a prolific film critic and screenwriter, both of original screenplays and adaptations of his own work. The series begins Friday with a pair of typically dark Greene adaptations: “**The Fallen Idol**” (1948), directed by frequent Greene collaborator Carol Reed, and the terrifyingly bleak gangster picture “**Brighton Rock**” (1948). Saturday brings Fritz Lang’s adaptation of Greene’s “**Ministry of Fear**” (1944), as well as “**This Gun for Hire**” (1942), featuring Veronica Lake at the peak of her powers and a star-making turn from Alan Ladd. The series’ first weekend closes out with a pair of children’s shorts which Greene praised as a critic, Jean Vigo’s “**Zéro de Conduite**” (1933) and the Disney classic “**Mickey’s Grand Opera**” (1936). “The Cold Heart” continues to beat through late September, with more treasures from Greene’s storied career.

Earlier this year we lost one of the screen’s funniest actors in **Catherine O’Hara**. To celebrate the life and work of this brilliant comedienne, the **Somerville Theatre** has lined up a full weekend of her most celebrated works, all projected lovingly on 35mm. The series begins Friday with a role which has served as many viewers introduction to O’Hara’s comic talents: that of flighty stepmom Delia Deetz in Tim Burton’s classic horror comedy “**Beetlejuice**” (1988). Less remembered, but no less brilliant, is O’Hara’s turn as a vindictive ice cream vendor in Martin Scorsese’s jet-black comedy “**After Hours**” (1985), screening Sunday.

But O’Hara was arguably never better than when working in the mockumentary comedies of Christopher Guest, of which three are lined up: “**Waiting for Guffman**” (1996) on Saturday, and “**Best in Show**” (2000) and “**A Mighty Wind**” (2003) on Sunday. In addition to showcasing both her knack for improvisation and her bona fide chops as an actress, Guest’s films paired O’Hara with her longtime friend Eugene Levy. The two started collaborating in the classic sketch show “SCTV” in the late 1970s and were on air together in the streaming favorite “Schitt’s Creek” in the 2010s. Want to do more than watch and laugh? Each night’s

programming will be followed by an after party at the **Crystal Ballroom**, complete with costume contests, themed cocktails, and “scene karaoke,” in which partygoers are invited to reenact O’Hara’s greatest onscreen moments.

Elsewhere on Friday, Yeon Sang-ho’s global phenomenon “**Train to Busan**” (2016) has a 10th anniversary celebration at the **Brattle Theatre**, featuring a brand-new 4k restoration of. A staple of both the burgeoning world of Korean horror and the 21st century zombie canon, “Busan” stars Gong Yoo as an emotionally distant father who takes his daughter on a bullet train that becomes ground zero for a zombie-virus epidemic. In just a decade, “Busan” has cemented its status as a modern horror classic, its hordes of overpowering flesh-eaters as nightmare-inducing as anything in the films of George A. Romero or Danny Boyle. And if you find yourself hungering for more (so to speak), don’t worry: Yeon’s new film “Colony” opens in theaters later this month!

On Wednesday, the Brattle’s “TV Goes to the Movies” series turns to a chillingly prescient political thriller: Elia Kazan’s “**A Face in the Crowd**” (1957). The movie features a pre-TV Andy Griffith as Lonesome Rhodes, a singing cowboy who is discovered in a drunk tank by enterprising TV reporter Marcia Jeffries (Patricia Neal). Realizing they have a potential star on their hands, Jeffries’ producers give Rhodes his own show. His folksy charisma instantly makes him a national star – only for the singer to become a mouthpiece for increasingly radical right-wing politics. In the decades since the film’s release, the parallels between Lonesome Rhodes and any number of real-life political figures (including more than a few currently holding office) have been unmistakable, and the screenplay, penned by the great Budd Schulberg, has lost none of its scabrous wit. “A Face in the Crowd” is paired with a similarly dark media satire, Dan Gilroy’s “**Nightcrawler**” (2014), proving the more things change, the more they stay the same.

On the new release front, this week brings a pair of fascinating features in limited runs. From Friday through Thursday, the Brattle presents the local premiere run of Kent Jones’s “**Late Fame**” (2026), starring Willem Dafoe as a retired poet who finds himself the subject of much-delayed praise. Then, from Monday through Wednesday, the Somerville has an exclusive run of Tommy Jay Dwyer’s “**Burnin’ Down the House**” (2026), a documentary shining a light on the underreported crises of funding and health (both mental and physical) faced by Massachusetts’ firefighters. Both are about the overlooked heroes in our midst and are well worth your while.

REVIEWS



Courtesy of Magnolia Pictures

A still from “Late Fame.”

“Late Fame” lags

Director Kent Jones (“Diane” (2018)) works with a killer cast in this reset of a novella by Arthur Schnitzler, with 1890s Vienna transposed to modern day New York City (the script’s by Samy Burch, “May December” and the upcoming “Coyote vs Acme”). The esteemed Willem Dafoe stars as Ed Saxberger, a New York City postal worker who back-in-the-1980s-day penned an obscure work of revered poems. He’s rediscovered by a gaggle of youthful writers and artists who brand themselves the Enthusiasm Society. There’s a beatnik vibe to the group, led by a scarf-wearing dilettante who goes by the moniker of just Meyers (Edmund Donovan, who gives his pompous character a modicum of depth and vulnerability). They embrace Ed as something of a Bukowski-esque literary lion and through fawning flattery entreat him into their circle. The newfound notoriety rekindles

Ed’s creative passions. As he starts to see the world through the progressive lens of his admirers, he calls out fellow old White guys for the intolerance he had become numb to over the years. The rising arc becomes Ed’s mounting affections for the much younger Gloria (Greta Lee, the soulful heart of “Past Lives”), the group’s aspiring actress, chanteuse and something of a Blanche DuBois in the making.

Lee, who you can also catch in the subpar sci-fi thriller, “The Last House” over on Netflix, strikes the screen as a luminous wonder, but at times feels miscast and out of place. She does strike a genuine (if more platonic than romantic) chord with her veteran costar. Ultimately, the film feels drawn out, as Dafoe Ed never brings congruence to a hodgepodge of ideas and icons, despite the actor’s affable effort.

— TOM MEEK



Playing at the Brattle Theatre

“Tony” a treat

“I was, to be frank, a spoiled, miserable, narcissistic, self-destructive and thoughtless young lout,” celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain once wrote of his younger self, “And badly in need of a good ass-kicking.” It is this lout who serves as the central character in “Tony,” the likably shaggy new biopic from director Matt Johnson (“Blackberry”). “Holdovers” breakout Dominic Sessa plays Tony (“Only my mother calls me Anthony!”) as a ball of brooding, unfocused energy. Tony’s dreams of becoming a bad-boy writer in the Kerouac vein are stymied when he’s denied a fellowship at Vassar; disastrously, he pitches his novel to the tawny professors as a “buildings Roman” rather than a bildungsroman. Frustrated and embarrassed, Tony sneaks out of his family’s New Jersey home and hops a ferry to Provincetown in hopes of reconnecting with his high school crush (Emilia Jones). To make ends meet, he takes a job washing dishes in a seafood restaurant, where he is hassled by the seasoned townie employees (among them Leo Woodall, last seen in this year’s IFFBoston centerpiece “Tuner,” and podcaster Stavros Halkias). Nevertheless, the chef (a tender Antonio Banderas) sees something in the angry young man and begins teaching him the wonders of the kitchen.

While the trailers paint “Tony” as a by-the-numbers biopic, the film is thankfully something more intimate and free-wheeling. Even if you didn’t know Sessa’s character was meant to be Bourdain (his full name is never spoken until the film’s final moments), you’d be left with a fully



A still from “Tony.”

satisfying coming-of-age period piece — a “buildings Roman,” if you will. Johnson perfectly captures both the anxieties of youth and the woozy atmosphere of 1970s P-Town, anchored by a wistful piano score by Johnson’s “Nirvana the Band the Show” costar Jay McCarrol. At the center of it all is Sessa, who proves himself one of the most exciting and charismatic young actors working today. Not bad for a kid who was discovered five years ago at Deerfield Academy!

“Tony” sags a bit in the third act, veering into conventional melodrama and biographical box-checking — “You should go by ‘Anthony.’ It suits you.” Still, this is the rare biopic where the conventions of the genre feel like dressing for the drama rather than the other way around. Whether you’re a certified Bourdainiac or simply in the market for a well-acted Cape Cod hangout film, “Tony” makes for a satisfying meal.

— OSCAR GOFF



Playing at Somerville Theatre and Kendall Square Cinema

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

FOOD

WHAT WE'RE HAVING

Lining up for Burger Night at Vinal Bakery and General Store



Photos: Tom Meek

Vinal Bakery and General Store draws summer crowds for Burger Nights.

By TOM MEEK

Tuesday’s at Vinal Bakery and General Store have become an event on par with the block-wrapping lines at BerryLine and the weekend curb waits at Bagelsaurus. I ventured over last week for a burger — the Miso Maple, cheddar cheese, thick-cut bacon, bread and butter pickles, and of course, miso maple butter — and there had to be over 40 people milling along Somerville Ave. All the bench seats in the Ken Kelly Park across the street were filled and the General Store had a wrap-around line waiting for soft-serve.

Vinal proprietor Sarah Murphy is used to lines. She worked at Bagelsaurus and launched her signature English muffin concept in the Porter Square bagel shop as a pop-up, then opened Vinal Bakery and Cafe in 2019 and the General Store next door in 2022, naming them after the avenue in Somerville where she lived and hatched her muffins.

The interiors have a retro 1950s soda shoppe vibe. The menus update daily. The Bakery, which shutters at 1 p.m., sells mostly breakfast sando fare (the Ham Jamboree is exceptional as is the house-made turkey sausage). The Store offers healthy-leaning (turkey and tuna) subs and sandwiches, bodega snacks (Haribo gummies at the fore), beer and wine and soft-serve ice cream and closes most days at 4 p.m., except on Tuesdays for Burger Night and Thursdays and Fridays for Ice Cream Socials.

You can’t enter the Bakery on Burger Night. You order online and pick it up at a sliding window. It can get backed up and when it does, it shuts down the online ordering until it catches up again. In fact, when I arrived the system was off, but they told me it would be back up in five minutes, so I sauntered over to the General Store for a glass of wine (Avinyó Blanc Petillant, so refreshing). I

had to wait in line there, too. Eventually I got my wine and was able to place my burger order. Only the wait was 50 minutes, so plan ahead, because the wait is well worth it. The signature English muffins are fluffy but dense (they make mini pizzas on them on the Bakery menu), the burger, nicely medium, lean and not greasy at all, with well-cooked bacon that was crisp yet pliable, and the miso maple, a shot of heaven. Size-wise, it’s just right, a one-hander that

passed away in 2015 after a protracted battle with throat cancer. The park is a fitting memorial: an impressive urban oasis beautifying what was an abandoned lot, and the perfect family gathering spot to enjoy cold swirls and sprinkle topped cones al fresco.

Burger Night runs through August and also for you summer convenience, Vinal sells Beach Boxes — a General Store sando or sub with a side of tri-color pasta, chips and a summertime gummy



A burger served up during Vinal Bakery's Burger Night.



People crowd into Somerville's Ken Kelly Park while waiting for their food on a burger night at Vinal Bakery.

sates without overfilling. The five-burger slate includes a classic Wimpy (American cheese and ketchup) and the Woo, Baby! (griddled onions, American cheese and a black pepper/Worcestershire “woo” sauce). A note on that pocket park across the way: it’s named for the local restaurateur behind The Independent, Foundry on Elm, P.J. O’Ryan’s and others. Kelly

mix packed up for excursions to the sea. **Vinal Bakery and General Store** 220 & 222 Somerville Ave., Somerville **\$ (out of \$\$\$\$)** *Have a favorite dish or dine out spot that we’ve not covered, and you think we should? Email Tom at tmeek@cambridgeday.com.*

Ran Bechor

From Page 1

The name “Adam” carries a double meaning for Bechor. Adam is the Hebrew word for “human being” — to be a person in the fullest sense, a mission he holds dear — and also the name of his 11-year-old son. Does his son know the theater is named after him? “Sure, he knows,” he chuckles. “Oh, sure.”

The company stages serious plays for young audiences on subjects most American children’s theater avoids: divorce, war, isolation, the shape of a self under pressure. Its inaugural production, “Library Lion,” opened at the Boston Public Library in 2024 with a life-size three-person lion puppet built by Jim Henson’s Creature Shop, and ran again last winter at the Calderwood Pavilion, receiving generally excellent reviews. As a matter of artistic principle, none of the company’s plays end happily. “Instead, I bring hope,” Ran says. “Because it’s important to me that every kid feels like an owner in his journey.”

He’s working now on a new play, “The Flood.” The show brings together two children — a boy whose parents are divorcing, a girl who cannot bring herself to leave her room and watches the world through her own arrangement of security cameras. They meet, build a private Noah’s Ark out of cardboard and toy-camera projections, and try to decide together what is worth saving. “In my play, it’s not God who tells you to build the ark,” he says. “These two kids decide, themselves, to keep something.”

On stage, the girl’s micro-cameras will project miniature scenes — a finger, a tin animal, a doll’s house — into the world of the ark. He pulls out his phone to show me a rehearsal still: a thumb-sized camera tilted over a model with the gravity of a film crane. “Beautiful,” I say. He laughs, knowing what’s really involved. “It’s terrible to stage,” he admits.

Before he was a playwright, Bechor was principal in Israel of a school for 1,400 gifted students, in third through ninth grades, drawn weekly from mainstream classrooms across the region for one full day of one-on-one work with adults on individualized plans. He chose the gifted population, he says, because, for him it was an easy target to change for the better. “It doesn’t make sense that 60 percent of the kids are coming from the same neighborhood.” He was particularly annoyed that parents appealed their sons’ failed entrance results 75 percent of the time and their daughters’ only 25 percent. He and his colleagues reached out to mainstream schools to talk to the families directly. “Your girls,” he would tell them, “are not less gifted than your boys.”

They were less well represented by their parents, I offer. “Yes,” he says. “Exactly that.” As Bechor continues to talk,

taking short sips of his orange juice, I begin to see a pattern. “Off-stage,” the play that won him an Israeli fringe prize in 2013, took seven scenes from Greek tragedy — Oedipus and his mother in bed, Agamemnon murdering his daughter — and staged them across seven separate spaces, with the audience walking from one to the next. Their guide between scenes, the figure who escorted them between worlds, was a Palestinian man telling his own true story. People shouted. One staging, in which a bound figure had not yet been released when the next scene began, stopped the show until the actor was untied. “They thought we don’t understand the connection between Greek and Israel and Palestine,” he says. “Every show is asking something else. To think the whole world is just political — when you look at the world and see everything is pink, the problem is the world, or the glasses you put on.”

This, I am beginning to suspect, is the through-line: a teacher who won’t test for what doesn’t matter, a playwright who refuses to point at his own meaning, a director who, when telling a story about war, is not telling a story about a war. Boundaries, for Bechor, seem to be artificial designations that bring nothing but unnecessary divisiveness. Even his choice of this morning’s meeting spot — housed along the city limit separating Cambridge from Somerville — is just coincidence, not a statement. “I can only tell the difference by the street signs,” he says with amusement. “Green for Cambridge and blue for Somerville.” The distinction means nothing to him. As in his work, Bechor is simply observing the outlines while aiming for the heart of what might be true. It’s an act of constant reinvention and reinterpretation, infused with possibilities and hope, like the poster on his wall at home that reads “Please release me from my old narrative.” “The Flood” is another example. The audience will see, simultaneously, the actor on stage, the camera in the actor’s hand, and the projected image of what that camera makes — three layers of the same moment. “I want to expose the mechanism of the theater,” he says. “But also, the mechanism of the soul of these kids without staying there.”

I suddenly notice the time, that our appointed hour is almost up. Bechor has had nothing to eat, although he has finished his juice. I have been too consumed by the conversation to give any more attention to my bread pudding or my coffee. In a deliberate attempt to close out our conversation, I ask him of all the things he is — playwright, director, teacher, principal, actor — which resonates with him most?

To read the rest of this story, scan the QR code



FOOD

A tasty tour of our local ice cream scene

Cambridge Day compiled a list of ice cream shops in Cambridge and Somerville to help you make the most of the last few weeks of summer. Although there are notable ice cream chains in our area (looking at you, Van Leeuwen and Ben & Jerry's!), we prioritized local shops that specialize in hard-serve ice cream.

Our favorites? Jamie's, Toscanini's, New City's, and Kuya Jay's selling Gerly's ice cream.

While these are not comprehensive reviews, we hope they'll help you differentiate between many of the local options and help you decide what scoops might be worth a trip.

Cambridge

Art's Creamery
99 Elmwood St., North Cambridge
This Belmont-based shop expanded into North Cambridge this spring. It's more like an ice cream retailer with scoops and pints. The shop is compact, so while it does have a couple of tables it would feel crowded if a group came in. For scoops, it carries New City Creamery ice creams, gelatos from Cold Fusion Gelato in Walpole, and Watertown's FoMu vegan ice creams. It offers pints of FoMu flavors plus pints from Adirondack Farms and Farm House. It is a bit complicated to get to right now, because of the ongoing renovation of the Community Bike Path. But that location will probably be a boon



A flight of flavors from New City Creamery including (clockwise from top left): Raspberry chip, tiramisu, baklava, peanut butter banana fluff, chocolate hazelnut crunch.

when the path reopens, and on the night we visited there was steady foot traffic and it had sold out of several flavors.

– Michael F. Fitzgerald

Christina's Homemade Ice Cream
1255 Cambridge St., Inman Square
Cozied in Inman Square, Christina's Homemade Ice Cream offers an array of delicate flavors, and is a great choice for those easily overwhelmed by a cloying and sugary scoop of ice cream. You can trust that this place knows flavors – it runs a sister spice shop down the block. Two of their most popular flavors, Burnt Sugar and Gina's Mocha Explosion,

pair well together. A spoonful of Burnt Sugar feels like sucking on a caramel candy that almost tastes smoky as it dissolves. Christina's ice cream retains its velvety cloud-like texture in all of its 40 sweet and savory flavors. If you head there before the end of the summer, you can try their seasonal flavor, Fresh Mint, with a whipped texture and natural flavor that embodies Christina's signature brightness.

– Julia Carpi

Far Out Ice Cream
100 Cambridgeside Place, East Cambridge
With a Cheesecake Factory and Apple store, Cambridgeside in East Cambridge is like any shopping mall in that it strips away

nearly all indicators of where we live and invites you to believe that you could be anywhere. Underscoring this is a new sweets stand in its newly developed food court serving ice cream from New Zealand. Far Out originally launched in Hull in 2020 and borrows from Kiwis by blending hard ice cream with frozen fruit. This yields a texture similar to soft serve, which swirls easily into cones or cups. Because of its whipped texture and the water from the frozen fruit, flavors like Kookaberry (vanilla ice cream with frozen strawberries, raspberries and blueberries) go down easy. But it also melts fast and the flavor dissipates just as quickly.

– Ruth Tam

Honeycomb
1702 Massachusetts Ave., Neighborhood Nine
Be prepared for a line at Honeycomb. I stood in one for almost exactly 30 minutes at around 8pm on a recent Sunday night before I placed my order. But it was worth it. Honeycomb's burnt sugar vanilla had notes of caramel without being cloyingly sweet. What I loved about the milk chocolate stracciatella and cold brew coffee chip, apart from the housemade base, was that the chocolate "chips" within were not in fact round chips, but smaller chocolate shavings. Indeed stracciatella means "little shred" in Italian, and the effect of those flakes of chocolate was that they lie flat on the tongue and melt easily, allowing you to savor a spoon of ice cream as a whole. But since it's August, it was Honeycomb's sweet corn and blackberry jam that was all the rage. This combination — which this reviewer buys by the pint every year — did not disappoint. It's a corn-y corn flavor, and the slightly tart, blackberry jelly cuts through the sweet, milky taste for regular chances to refresh your taste buds and appreciate the corn flavor all over again. The flavor is so popular that the creamery maintains a countdown on its social media channels to when it flavor will be available and once it is in season, a daily "watch" for whether it is likely to sell out.

– Shraddha Chakradhar

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SENIOR LIVING MANAGEMENT SERVICES AT JFK CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SENIOR LIVING MANAGEMENT SERVICES AT JFK

The Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA), as Owner and Managing Agent for its affiliate properties, is seeking competitive proposals from qualified consultants in providing property and facility management with enhanced services for senior living at our JFK Apartment building.

The successful firm must have significant experience in providing agencies of similar size to the Cambridge Housing Authority for property management with enhanced services for senior living.

The Request for Proposal for this project will be available on **Thursday, August 19, 2026, after 10am**. Bidders may obtain the RFP Electronically by contacting procurement@cambridge-housing.org.

Proposals will be received ELECTRONICALLY by 02:00 PM on **Thursday, September 3, 2026**. Vendors should e-mail their Qualifications Proposal to **Rocky Ludger, rludger@cambridge-housing.org**

cambridge-housing.org and Cost Proposal SEPARATELY to Kristen Donnelly, kdonnelly@cambridge-housing.org. In the body of each e-mail, vendors should clearly identify the Qualifications Proposal or Cost Proposal with the name of the firm. All proposals received will become the property of the Cambridge Housing Authority and will not be returned to the proposer. Any modification or withdrawal of proposals shall be made in writing and received by the CHA prior to the time and date the proposal is due.

Any questions or requests for further information must be submitted in writing to the attention of Andrew Kerivan, Director of Asset Management, at akerivan@cambridge-housing.org no later than **2:00pm on Wednesday, August 26, 2026**. No inquiry received after the stated deadline will be considered.

HVAC Contractor for Maintenance and Repair at Various Locations CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT INVITATION TO BID

HVAC Contractor for Maintenance and Repair at Various Locations

The Cambridge Housing Authority ("CHA"), as Owner and Managing Agent for its affiliate properties, invites sealed bids from qualified contractors to provide HVAC maintenance and repair services at various locations in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in accordance with the

Contract Documents.
The awarded contractor shall provide heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) maintenance and repair services at CHA-owned and managed properties in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on an as-needed basis and as directed through individual work orders or other written authorization issued by an authorized CHA representative, in accordance with the Contract Documents. The work will include, but not be limited to, maintenance and replacement of parts and equipment related to HVAC and associated piping systems, tests and inspections required by agencies having jurisdiction over the Authority, and emergency maintenance and repair services. Contractors must have operated as a corporation or company for a minimum of five (5) years to be eligible for consideration.
Each General Bidder must be certified by the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) in the category of Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), and must submit with its bid a current DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility.
The contract will be awarded as a three-year, as-needed draw-down contract. The total amount expended under the contract shall not exceed \$775,000.00 during the contract term. Annual preventive maintenance expenditures shall not exceed \$125,000.00.
Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available through Procore (may be viewed electronically and hardcopy download) **beginning Thursday, August 20, 2026, after 10:00 AM**.
Questions from bidders must be submitted no later than **Friday, August 28, 2026, at 1:00 PM**. Questions

received after the above deadlines may not be considered by the Awarding Authority. No interpretations of the meaning of the specifications, or other pre-bid documents shall be made to any bidder orally. Every request for such interpretation must be in writing to: 2026HVAC@cambridge-housing.org.
All bids shall be submitted electronically online at www.procore.com and received no later than **Thursday, September 3, 2026, by 1:00 PM**.

Notice of Public Hearing and Comment

Correction - This meeting has been moved from September 1, 2026 to September 2, 2026 in recognition that September 1st is an Election Day. The public meeting will be held in-person at Cambridge Housing Authority's Central Office (362 Green St, Cambridge, MA 02139) and over Zoom. Zoom meeting details will be made available on CHA's website (www.cambridge-housing.org) a week prior to the meeting date. The Hearing will solicit comments on the FY27 Annual Plan for the Moving To Work Deregulation Demonstration Program.

The draft FY27 Annual Plan will be available online for public review beginning Friday, August 21, 2026 at 4 pm on CHA's website (www.cambridge-housing.org). Hard copies will be available at CHA's Central Office on August 24, 2026, by 12:00PM. Written comments must be submitted by mail or email by 5 pm, Thursday, September 24, 2026, to Zach Gordon, Cambridge Housing Authority, 362 Green Street, Cambridge, MA 02139. Telephone (617) 405-5097; Email: zgordon@cambridge-housing.org

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

Jamie's
88 Kirkland Ave., Baldwin

Jamie's makes sweet treats for anyone who has ever wondered ... what does a bay leaf taste like? This aggressively cutesy shop improves on standard flavors with their homemade ice cream base, which boasts 15-16% milk fat, which seems higher than average. This results in a denser scoop that can allow flavors to linger longer on the palate. On my visit, I was delighted by one of Jamie's summer sorbets, which can be a watery afterthought at other shops. At Jamie's, the citrus bay leaf sorbet had body. This herbaceous and refreshing flavor held up, literally, against another seasonal favorite: the dairy-forward lemon poppy-seed loaf. And, the waffle cone, which reminded me of a crisp pizzelle, was a treat on its own. The scoops live up to the shop's loudly sincere message on the wall, "It's sexy to care." I don't know about sexy, but at Jamie's, it is delicious.

– Ruth Tam

J.P. Licks
*1312 Massachusetts Ave,
Harvard Square (also in
Somerville's Davis Square)*

J.P. Licks has locations all over the Boston area. Because its Harvard Square location is conveniently placed a few paces past the Harvard Smith Center, it's a great place for tourists looking for a quick treat. It has a fair amount of indoor and outdoor seating so there's no need to stand as you lick your cone. I chose vanilla, which didn't stand out, and an offbeat choice of Akasan, described as a corn flavor with hints of cinnamon and anise based off of the popular Haitian breakfast drink. On the first bite of the Akasan, I didn't taste anything but vanilla and anise and I deemed the flavor passable. After eight bites the anise flavor was starting to make me agitated. The flavor isn't exactly as advertised, its description says it's creamy and smooth but it was vaguely grainy which didn't bother me but did bother one of the people I was sharing it with. The corn flavour is hinted at, the anise is overwhelming and the cinnamon is nonexistent.

– Tavishi Chattopadhyay

L.A. Burdick Handmade Chocolates
52 Brattle Street, Harvard Square

Famous for its chocolate mice and decadent hot chocolate, L.A. Burdick in Brattle Square is now in the ice cream business — just for the summer at this location. The price for a small, single scoop of one of their flavors will run you a hefty \$8.50, but that one scoop may be all you need. Few things are more satisfying than when an ice cream flavor is exactly as advertised and that was the case with the chocolate banana (banana haters beware — this is NOT for you). Given the store's specialty drinks, I also opted for two affogato variations — the stracciatella affogato, served with espresso, and the hazelnut Burdick affogato, served with 72% dark drinking choco-



Julia Carpi

Burnt sugar scooped atop Gina's Mocha Explosion at Christina's Homemade Ice Cream in Inman Square.

late. If you choose to eat in, like I did, you'll enjoy your ice cream in stainless steel cups — which also make for perfect affogato vessels. As the scoop of ice cream melts into the surrounding moat, you can abandon your spoon to just drink directly from the champagne coupe-like cup. The dark drinking chocolate with the hazelnut ice cream made for just the right amount of sweet (for me, anyway), while the stracciatella affogato — with a honey-like taste to the ice cream — sweetened the surrounding coffee just enough to make it a quick pick-me-up.

– Shraddha Chakradhar

Lizzie's
*29 Church St, Cambridge,
Harvard Square*

Lizzie's may be a small shop, but its affordable scoops make for a pleasant pit stop in Harvard Square. It has limited seating but if you snag one of the two seats outside you can people-watch to your heart's content. I got three flavours here: vanilla, Charles River Crunch and Columbian Fudge Avalanche. The vanilla was smooth and rich, with a nicely balanced sweetness. Charles River Crunch has a few add-ins that are airy and crunchy with a deep toffee flavor. I didn't love the crunch in the middle of the smoothness of the cream but to each their own. The Columbian Fudge Avalanche mainly tasted like coffee but had a thick swirl of fudge and bits of walnut that added a pleasant crunch. The sizes in Lizzie's are one of the most economically sound things in Harvard Square. They have four sizes: kiddie, small, medium and large. The kiddie size was comparable to a small at other ice cream stores and cost a little over \$5. My biggest gripe was each scoop's absurd thickness, which made spooning it into my mouth a Herculean task.

– Tavishi Chattopadhyay

New City Microcreamery
*403 Massachusetts Ave,
Central Square*

Hudson-based New City Microcreamery's claim to fame is its ultracool freezing process, which uses liquid nitrogen to freeze each flavor's liquid base as it gets whipped up. While their website claims that this process makes the end product smoother, we noticed an icier mouthfeel that could be refreshing on a hot day, but noticeably less custard-y than expected. Where New City shines

is in the flavor department, with plenty of offerings for dessert people. These include a pleasant tiramisu option and a fan favorite in its baklava ice cream, which has bits of delightfully crispy phlyo pastry incorporated throughout that somehow manage to avoid getting soft or claggy in the mix. While chocolate and nut lovers may find themselves with a wider array of choices, we were also impressed by one of the few fruit options on the menu: a raspberry chocolate chip concoction with a base that was zingy, fresh, and sans any artificial "very berry" nonsense. But that, like the texture, is a matter of personal preference.

– Jane Petersen

Third Time Together
*399 Binney Street, East
Cambridge*

Third Time Together's flavors are often delicate and surprising with names that offer important history lessons about their ingredients. For example, their vanilla bean ice cream – a crowd favorite called Albius's Legacy – is paired with Madagascar pink pepper-corn and named after the enslaved



Shraddha Chakradhar

The ever-popular Honeycomb Creamery, with a long line of enthusiastic patrons late on a Sunday night.

Réunionese teenager who pioneered the manual pollination of vanilla in the 1840s. Third Time Together is not afraid to make ice cream sour, salty, and smoky, which often rewards adults who don't need dessert to hearken to childhood. As delightful as many flavors are, there is occasional inconsistency in offerings and flavor. Sometimes only certain flavors are available, a scoop can come out crumbly, or their sorbet can be tart to the point of pain. The small shop, which also serves tasty mezze, stuffed pitas, and other Levantine food, can fill up quickly, especially after a movie ends at the neighboring Landmark Kendall Square Cinema.

– Ruth Tam

Toscanini's
*899 Main St, Central Square
(also in East Cambridge)*

With over 25 flavors from which to choose, Toscanini's has dispensed with the need to dress up their scoops with toppings and sauces. And once you've tried one of their specialty flavors, you may find that your ice cream craving will be hard to satisfy with vanilla or one of its classic peers. One of the flavors that many Toscanini's fans crave is B3, a brown butter and brown sugar base with large gooey brownie chunks. Unlike any other ice cream I've tried, B3 leaves a warm umami coating in the mouth and satisfies even with a kiddie-size scoop. If you'd rather indulge in a larger scoop, you may be better off with a slightly lighter fan favorite, Mango Sticky Rice. The sticky rice base and coconut chunks are surprisingly redolent of the Thai dessert, although I was left wanting a little more of that tart mango puree swirled throughout. Whether you're at the store's Kendall Square or Central Square location, you'll always be able to find a flavor to match your craving. Maybe you'll be braver than me and try the Goat Cheese Brownie.

– Julia Carpi

Somerville

Forge
626 Somerville Ave, Spring Hill

Tucked away in a strip mall complex in Somerville's Spring Hill neighborhood, Forge Baking Co. & Ice Cream Bar is a cafe and bakery first, ice cream bar second. The ice cream bar adjoins the cafe space, but hasn't been operational all summer, and has no imminent plans to be. Its ice cream selections (small when it comes to scoops but vast when it comes to pre-packed pints)— have classics like vanilla, chocolate and strawberry but also some twists — including the brown butter ginger, apparently a customer favorite. The ice cream base has a stretchy quality to it — scoop a spoon to taste and you'll see something reminiscent of a cheese pull. The vanilla had a floral note to it and didn't taste plain. The brown butter on its own didn't really come through but its presence probably helped cut the pungency of the spicy pieces of ginger. I also ordered a scoop of good ol' strawberry and was surprised by how much it tasted like the real fruit (almost out of season now). With that also came some icy bites (probably because of fruit's high water content), but none that detracted from the overall experience of a refreshing, summer-appropriate ice cream.

– Shraddha Chakradhar

Gracie's
22 Union Square

Gracie's looks like a place where you go for the ice cream and stay for the activism, or maybe vice versa. On the front window, what looks at first glance like a menu turns out to be multi-page instructions on what to do when encountering agents from the U.S. Department of Immigration and Customs

Enforcement (ICE). Other signs promote different progressive causes. The ice cream is made on premises and feature 14% butterfat. Owner Aaron Cohen has 16 flavors at any given time, rotating in new flavors multiple times a day as others sell out. About half of its flavors at any given time are gluten-free (look for labels on the menu board), and it keeps a non-dairy sorbet available (it also has Lactaid for sale). Sometimes these flavors are political, like its Green New Deal With It Mint Chip, sometimes seasonal, like Day After Easter On Sale Candy, and sometimes whimsical, like Unicorn Poop. It has retired vanilla as a flavor, so we had to settle for sweet cream, which was indeed sweet and creamy, if not that distinct from the honey cornbread ice cream. It did have pandan, which is bright green and pleasant, vanilla-esque but lighter with hints of nuts. Its best-seller is black raspberry chip and it is excellent, with generous chunks of chocolate and a flavorful consistency to the raspberry base.

– Tavishi Chattopadhyay and Michael F. Fitzgerald

Kuya Jay's Ube Kafe
415 Medford St, Winter Hill

Kuya Jay's in Winter Hill may have taken over the space that Gerly's used to occupy (and before that, Tipping Cow) on Medford Ave, but that doesn't mean that the ice cream has gone away. The Filipino cafe and bakery still serves classic Gerly's flavors like fig and goat cheese and dark chocolate sea salt, but it now also offers flavors common in southeast Asia. They also have uniquely Filipino treats like pandesal ice cream sandwiches and halo-halo. Your ice cream options now include flavors like pandan, durian, and sweet corn. And the punchy sorbet flavors include mango peach calamansi and guava. While these scoops lean on the sweet side, they all taste true to their vegetable or fruit ingredients, many of which are sourced at nearby Neighborhood Produce. The sweet corn, which has frozen kernels in the base and is served with melted better and shaved salt, takes like corn on the cob in ice cream form. Less true-to-flavor is their durian, which is –at best– 10 percent durian flavor, and because of that, easy for many to love. Even sweeter than the ice cream? The shop's servers, who are enthusiastic and patient with customers new to these flavors.

– Ruth Tam



To vote for your favorite and have a chance to win a \$25 gift card to one of listed ice cream shops, scan the QR code above and scroll to the end of the story.

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