



WILD THINGS PAGE 7
Why I squash lanternflies on sight and you should, too

EDUCATION PAGE 4
Hult student raises funds to help earthquake-stricken Colombian town

CAMBRIDGE DAY

THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 1 – OCTOBER 8, 2026 FREE

Grabbing a Bite with: Simon Stansbury

By SUSANNE BECK

Years before AI occupied our headlines and our headspace, Cambridge-based technology strategist, consultant and former robotics guru. Simon Mueller Stansbury had his mind turned toward the future. He is even more attuned to future-gazing these days, sometimes in excitement, but more often with concern. How fitting, then, that he chose Veggie Galaxy, Central Square’s long-standing vegetarian diner, a retro-style



Sophia Day

Technology futurist Simon Stansbury.

eatery marked by chrome-and-counter regalia, as the site of his recent lunch with Cambridge Day.

I am 15 minutes ahead of schedule to the restaurant, but Stansbury is even earlier, parked in a booth with an iced coffee. Somehow, I overlook him and his chosen beverage as I beeline to the back, looking for a table that is away from the din of the noontime crowd. Minutes pass before I realize he is already there. As I get up to greet him, I joke to myself that “This is clearly a man who always been ahead of his time.”

Stansbury is a hugger, an unexpected twist for me. I am immediately disarmed. In response, I blurt out that we both have Germanic last names and a stint in management consulting, though I prepared slides that were mostly bound for circular files while he counseled CEOs, world leaders and launched a think tank for the internationally known Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

See GRABBING A BITE, page 9

Tax rates jump again in Cambridge



Daniel Wang

Commercial properties will see a steep increase in their tax rates after City Council's vote Monday.

By JANE PETERSEN

During Monday night’s city council hearing, councillors voted unanimously in favor of the proposal put forward by City Manager Yi-An Huang to raise property tax rates by 6.9 percent for fiscal year 2027. The new rate is a smaller increase than in previous years, but with net combined property values decreasing for the second year in a row, will only increase the city’s revenue from the levy by four percent.

Commercial properties will be taxed at \$16.99 per thousand dol-

lars of value, an increase of 21 percent, while residential property taxes will increase by six percent to \$6.95 per thousand dollars of value.

While Cambridge is taxing at 82 percent of its levy capacity and has lower taxes compared to neighboring cities like Boston and Somerville, there will still be some constraints going into plans for fiscal year 2028 – especially on the commercial side of the coin. According to state law, municipalities like Cambridge that have a separate tax rate for commercial and residential properties can’t set one at more

than 175 percent of the other. Currently, Cambridge’s commercial rate is at 165 percent of the residential rate, meaning that next year the city could have to consider taxing homeowners more in order to maintain its budget.

As Huang noted, even a small increase in the percentage of value homeowners are taxed can lead to a big increase in tax bills.

“We’re holding many truths all at the same time in Cambridge. We [have] one of the lowest tax rates, both on the residential and commercial side compared to

other municipalities,” Huang said during Monday night’s meeting. “We also have some of the highest property values, and so tax bills are pretty high.”

Councillors and city officials expressed some concern about getting close to tax limits laid out by Massachusetts Proposition 2½, a 1980 law that sets limits on how much Bay State municipalities can raise in tax revenue and tax as a percentage of value. Overriding Prop 2½ rules requires putting the question to all registered voters.

See TAX INCREASE, page 3

Cambridge educators rally for better pay; council defers

By JULIA CARPI and JANE PETERSEN

A well-attended rally in front of city hall and dozens of public commenters speaking in support of higher wages for certain Cambridge Public Schools staff resulted in little actual policy change during Monday night’s city council meeting.

The Cambridge Education Association organized the action amidst its ongoing negotiation with the Cambridge School Board to secure a contract — all six of CEA’s bargaining units are working with expired contracts. The union’s possible solu-



Jane Petersen

Members of the Cambridge Education Association demonstrating in front of Cambridge City Hall, seeking higher pay.

tions to the stalemate with the school district are to have the city increase property taxes (which are below the state-mandated

levy limit) or tap into its free cash reserves. The impasse is mostly tied to salaries for paraprofessionals, whose starting annual salary in fiscal year 2026 was \$32,000. The union is asking for that to be upped to \$55,000. The district has said the union proposals as a whole are fiscally unfeasible.

CEA members disagree. “When we’ve engaged folks about what it is we’re asking for, the vast majority of people find it to be really reasonable,” union president Chris Montero told Cambridge Day.

See RALLY, page 4

BUSINESS PAGE 5

Artists and artisans praise Small Mart for banning AI

THEATER PAGE 10

Somerville natives bring “Bouncers” back to the stage

SPORTS PAGE 11

Somerville’s Whitney-Sidney comes back from heart surgery • Cambridge youth baseball champs

Deaton pitches himself as independent voice

By NATHAN METCALF

Republican U.S. Senate candidate John Deaton pitched himself as an independent voice for Massachusetts during an hour-long interview Thursday with six Greater Boston nonprofit news organizations. He also criticized incumbent Sen. Ed Markey’s policy proposals as little more than slogans and outlined an affordability agenda centered on housing, energy and health care.

Deaton, who unsuccessfully challenged Sen. Elizabeth Warren in 2024, met with reporters from Brookline.News, Cambridge Day, the Belmont Voice, Your Arlington, the Lexington Observer and the Waltham Times at the Village Works in Brookline.

Raised by a single mother who relied on public assistance in Highland Park, Mich., Deaton later attended law school in Boston, served in the Marine Corps and spent more than two decades representing asbestos victims. His 2023 memoir, “Food Stamp Warrior,” recounts his journey out of poverty.

Deaton said that though he has never voted for President Donald Trump and insists he doesn’t align with MAGA, he would be willing to work with the president, instead of antagonizing him at every turn. He said this would put him in a stronger position to advance Massachusetts’ interests in Washington than Markey.

“We’d actually give Massachusetts a real, true, independent voice in the Senate. It’s a voice I think that we haven’t had,” Deaton said. “If you have someone who says, ‘I don’t care about the party politics, just what’s good for Massachusetts and America,’ then you would actually have a lot of sway,” he added, likening himself to former U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, a conservative West Virginia Democrat, as a potential key bipartisan deal maker.

Housing and energy

Asked how he would fulfill his proposal to build 5 million homes nationwide over five years, Deaton outlined a plan to open federal and state land to development, streamline permitting and zoning restrictions, and expand access to federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

He also argued that Massachusetts’ high energy costs are a major obstacle to housing affordability, criticizing state clean-energy requirements that he said make housing developments more expensive, and advocating expanding natural gas infrastructure and investing in nuclear energy to bring down electricity costs.

“These green energy mandates are crushing Massachusetts. Everyone takes housing and energy separate as issues; they’re combined,” Deaton said.

To overcome local opposition



Bruno Muñoz-Oropeza

John Deaton, Republican candidate in Massachusetts for United States Senate, while being interviewed by reporters Sept. 24, 2026.

to new housing, Deaton proposed tying federal funding to municipal compliance with housing laws. He argued that this illustrated why the U.S. Senate race is the most important election in Massachusetts: A senator could direct federal funding straight to municipalities, bypassing the Democratic supermajority on Beacon Hill that could override a Republican governor’s vetoes.

“You bypass Beacon Hill if you can get community development grants that go straight from the federal government to the city of Springfield, to the city of Cambridge or wherever,” Deaton said. Otherwise, “You get this \$250 million community development grant, but you must be in compliance with ... whatever housing laws that have been passed.”

Health care

Asked how he would address rising health care costs, Deaton began by criticizing the Affordable Care Act, arguing that it actually made health care less affordable by allowing a handful of large insurance companies to dominate the industry from factory to pharmacy.

“We need a Teddy Roosevelt-style revolution in this country, especially when it comes to health care,” Deaton said. “We have three vertically integrated insurance companies that control over 90% of all our healthcare with zero transparency. We’ve got three PBMs, pharmacy benefit managers, that control 85% of [the processing of] every prescription drug in this country.”

Deaton proposed using federal antitrust laws to break up major insurers and pharmacy benefit managers, alongside greater transparency in medical and prescription drug pricing, to increase competition and lower costs.

He contrasted his approach with Markey’s support for Medicare for All, which he dismissed as an unrealistic campaign promise unlikely to pass Congress.

“Even if you believe Medicare for All is eventually where we should go ... it’s not going to happen in Ed Markey’s lifetime. It’s not going to happen in the next six years,” Deaton said.

At the same time, Deaton criticized Republicans who have spent years opposing the Affordable Care Act without presenting an alternative, while arguing that his

own proposals could attract bipartisan support.

“I’m someone who believes every American citizen has an absolute inalienable human right to have access to affordable health care,” he said.

Proposition 2½ and municipal finances

Asked about his opposition to changing Proposition 2½, the state law limiting annual property tax increases, Deaton argued that Massachusetts municipalities need to rein in spending rather than repeatedly asking residents to approve tax increases.

“At some point, you got to do what every household in America does, which is live within your means,” instead of spending more and expecting taxpayers to oblige” Deaton said.

Pressed on his ability to influence state law as a U.S. senator, Deaton pointed to federal grants, earmarks and matching funds. He also reiterated his support for a state spending audit, arguing that greater transparency would help him secure additional federal funding.

Cryptocurrency

Deaton rejected his reputation as a “cryptocurrency attorney,” citing his decades representing asbestos victims. He traced his interest in Bitcoin to his childhood experience of poverty and his mother’s struggles with costly bank fees and check-cashing services. “99% of crypto is garbage. Complete utter garbage. The Trump coin, garbage. Melania coin, garbage. I don’t believe in meme coins. Don’t believe in NFTs,” Deaton said, distinguishing those investments from Bitcoin and stablecoins, which he argued offer practical financial benefits.

Deaton called for stronger consumer protections and tougher penalties for cryptocurrency fraud, criticizing both parties’ approaches to regulation. He also argued that elected officials should be prohibited from issuing their own meme coins because of potential conflicts of interest.

Immigration

On his proposed immigration reforms, Deaton characterized Markey’s call to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement as another unrealistic campaign slogan. He said he opposes abolish-

ing ICE but wants stricter training requirements and body cameras for its agents.

“I don’t support masked men snatching people off the streets, but I also think that Governor Healey and [Boston mayor] Michelle Wu bear responsibility,” Deaton said, arguing that greater cooperation between local and federal authorities as was the case under the Obama Administration, would allow ICE to make arrests at correctional facilities rather than in public places.

At the same time, Deaton maintained that immigration enforcement remains necessary. “Deportation is a part of immigration policy,” he said, proposing to expand legal immigration while also tightening asylum procedures and ending sanctuary city policies.

Federal research funding

To protect federal research funding for Harvard, MIT and Massachusetts’ biotechnology industry amid cuts by the Trump administration, Deaton said the state needs a senator willing to negotiate with the president rather than continually confront him.

John Deaton, Republican candidate in Massachusetts for United States Senate, while being interviewed by reporters Sept. 24, 2026.

“I wished our federal delegation would take a chapter out of the Mamdani book on how to deal with Trump,” Deaton said, referring to New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani and his conciliatory approach to the president, while criticizing Markey and his fellow Democrat and former primary opponent Seth Moulton for competing over who’s most opposed to Trump, rather than pursuing a working relationship with the White House.

Deaton said the issue was personal to him: His 24-year-old daughter, who has a master’s degree in neuroscience, is working in a laboratory in London. He said she wants to return to Massachusetts but has struggled to find opportunities because of research funding cuts.

“If Moulton and Markey’s whole message is, ‘I’m going to fight Trump,’ ... instead of ‘I’m going to go fight for Massachusetts,’ then [Trump and his administration] are never going to be receptive to it,” Deaton said.

Corrections and clarifications

Due to a printer’s error, some pages in the September 24, 2026 issue ran in the wrong order. Cambridge Day apologizes for any inconvenience.

In the story “The Helmand: homestyle Afghan food, regal setting” that appeared in the September 24, 2026 issue, a photo contained an incorrect caption. The dish labeled banjan was in fact a daily special, the marinated mushroom and lamb with challow rice.

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Cambridge’s worst intersections get safety makeovers

By TOM MEEK

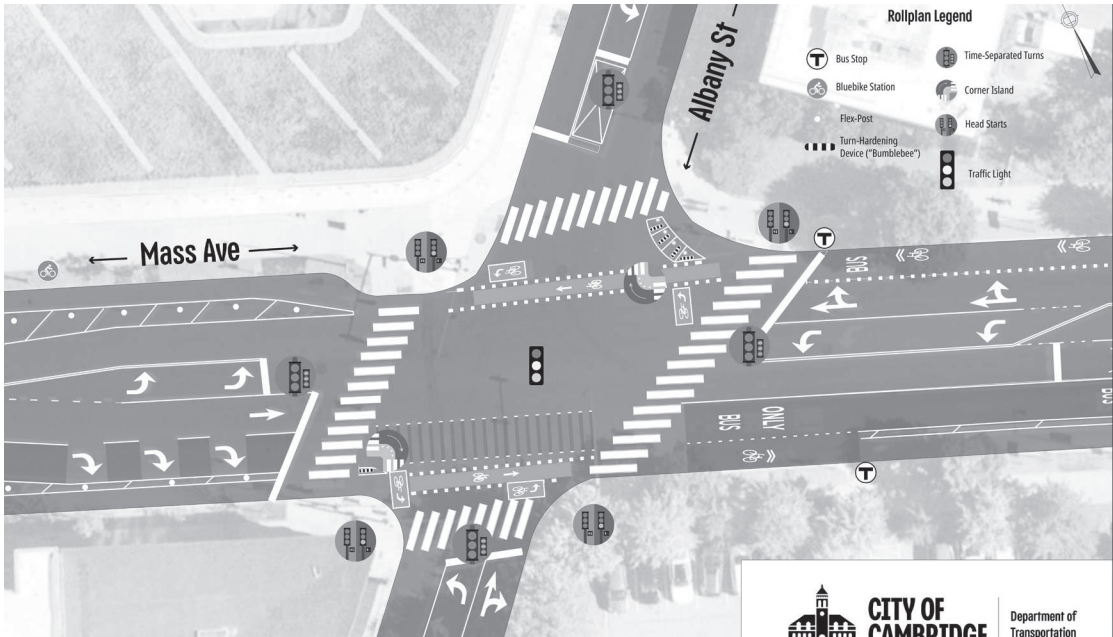
After seven deaths in the last four years, the city’s taking new steps to fix its most dangerous intersections, starting with Mass Ave at Albany Street.

That intersection is at the top of Cambridge’s list of High Crash Locations (HCLs), as measured by the number and severity of crashes and whether those crashes involved people walking or biking. Although the Cambridge Department of Transportation (CDOT) has previously reviewed intersections for safety problems, this new program creates a formal process that will be updated every two years. At higher-ranked intersections, transportation staff will examine crash trends, travel patterns, conditions at the site and any recent or planned changes before determining what safety improvement measures to apply.

Jackie McLaughlin, a spokesperson for the Cambridge Department of Transportation (CDOT), said the impetus behind the program came from concerns by city council and others, “especially after some of the fatalities that unfortunately happened and we were trying to identify and formalize the process.”

The program is part of the city’s Vision Zero effort to eliminate fatal and serious-injury crashes. Somerville had zero road deaths in four years, during which Cambridge has had seven.

In addition to Mass Ave at Albany, the city has also selected two other intersections for safety review, Mass Ave at Vassar Street and Hampshire Street at Prospect Street. Each intersection receives a score based on the number and severity of crashes and whether those crashes involved people walking or biking. The source data comes from the Mass DOT’s database and cross referenced with the Cambridge Police Department’s crash dataset. Severity is the nature of the damage — monetary value, injury degree and if an ambulance or a hospitalization was involved. The score is also weighted for crashes involving vulnerable road users (primarily bikes and pedestrians as defined by Massachusetts law). Intersections with the highest scores are prioritized and evaluated first.



The intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Albany Street is considered the most dangerous in Cambridge.

Most improvements will be quick-build projects that target changes to traffic signals and addition of flex posts, signs and/or pavement markings. The measures are part of the department’s tool kit to calm or slow vehicle speeds, improve visibility and alter traffic flow. Some intersections could require broader changes or even reconstruction.

Newish tools in the toolbox are bumblebee strips and corner islands that make turns sharper and force the driver to slow and look. The bumblebee strips — named for their yellow and black markings — replace flex posts in the mouth of the intersection so vehicles with wide turn ratios like buses and fire engines can navigate and traverse the obstacle more easily. The project’s page includes a complete listing of the measures used in traffic calming and mitigation.

Leah Grodstein, a CDOT Street Design Project Manager, said the list of measures used would likely change over time as best practices for road safety at the federal and local levels evolve.

Grodstein said that safety review and improvements installation at all three locations will begin this year, although schedules have not yet been finalized. As part of the process, Grodstein said that SeeClickFix/311 data, on-street observation and traffic pattern analysis would all be part of the design cycle. The Mass. Ave.-Albany project page is

already online, with pages for the other two expected later.

The program will also make smaller targeted safety improvements at other higher-crash intersections without requiring a lengthy design process. An interactive map available on the Intersection Safety Program’s home page details HCL rankings, project status and information about planned, ongoing and completed improvements.

“We’re glad to see Cambridge taking a systematic approach to intersection safety, particularly as so many new people are walking and biking,” said Chris Cassa, an organizer with Cambridge Bicycle Safety. “The

concentration of dangerous intersections along our main roads and squares makes it clear that we need improvements along entire corridors.”

Cassa noted that the program does not address intersections with state roads such as Memorial Drive, Fresh Pond Parkway, and the McGrath Highway. He called on city officials and state legislators “to work together to press MassDOT and DCR to make these crossings safer.”

Safety updates and notifications can be signed up for at the project’s web page. There will also be an ongoing social media campaign to help inform, educate and communicate progress.

Tax increase

From Page 1

“We don’t want to be one of those communities that have to go for an override ballot question every time you want to invest in a library or a school or a park,” said Councillor Marc McGovern. “It is going to be very difficult in the next few years.”

Reactions to the budget during the public comment period were mixed – while some expressed frustration with the increase, others advocated for the city to tax them more in order to fund social programs and increase the Cambridge Public Schools budget.

Notably absent from the conversation were business owners bearing the brunt of the increase. Last year, the 22 percent hike in commercial property taxes between fiscal years 2025 and 2026 was met with ire – but councillors made references to engaging with them earlier this year.

“There’s lots more conversation this year with our businesses,” Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui told city finance staff present at Monday night’s meeting. “And so I thank you all for doing that.”

Siddiqui also highlighted the importance of keeping certain spending categories front of mind in the future, even in a murkier fiscal environment.

“We do talk about how we can help the most vulnerable, and I think figuring out how we keep doing that, even as we have these constraints ... is the most important thing we do.”

CRLS sports round-up: Soccer and storms

By DAN EISNER

Last week’s nor’easter wreaked havoc with the sports schedule. For instance, football was canceled and the cross country teams were rained out. But the soccer teams had games prior to the storms.

Boys’ soccer: A goal from

Mathias Asnake was all the Cambridge Rindge and Latin’s boys’ soccer team (2-0-3) needed to defeat Wellesley on Sept. 22. Elias Hyland assisted on the goal in the Falcons’ 1-0 win.

Girls’ soccer: The girls’ soccer team (3-4) lost to Wayland, 2-1, on Sept. 23. Helena Demissie scored the Falcons’ goal in the fifth minute, with Cailin Beckman providing the assist. Wayland evened the score in the 28th minute and took the lead for good early in the second half.

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MARKET PULSE

Properties listed since Labor Day 9/7/2026

CAMBRIDGE		
CONDOS	SINGLES	MULTIS
115	23	19

SOMERVILLE		
CONDOS	SINGLES	MULTIS
80	15	24

Source: MLS PIN statistics for “Market Pulse”

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EDUCATION

Rally

From Page 1

At the city council meeting, however, FY 2027 property tax rates were approved as proposed with the current school budget. A policy order requesting the city administration to report back on the status of the negotiations, sponsored by Councillors Ayah Al-Zubi and Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler, was voted down. Multiple councillors said that while the union had their sympathies, union salary negotiations were the sole responsibility of the School Committee.

“I want to respect their authority [and] what they were elected to do,” Councillor and former School Committee member Marc McGovern said. “But at the same time, they need to settle this.”

What do paras do?

Nick Watter, a 9th grade history teacher at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, called paraprofessionals the “glue” that holds schools together, assisting both in curriculum goals and in making sure students’ needs are met. Watter as a paraprofessional during the 2019-2020 school year at Rindge Ave Upper School.

“It was the hardest job I’ve ever done,” Watter told Cambridge Day at a gathering of about 25 CEA members ahead of Monday’s rally in front of City Hall.

Watter, like some paraprofessionals, had to receive de-escalation training from the Crisis Prevention Institute for his role, which involved working with kids who have certain social or emotional needs. He said he was paid for the time he took to do the training, but didn’t receive a raise for obtaining the certification.

“Within the first week, I had to restrain a kid, and it was one of the most, in my opinion, emotionally taxing things I had to do ever,” Watter said. “I was like, ‘I’m getting paid \$32,000 a year to do this.’ ... Who would do this job for that low [amount of] money?”

Longtime paraprofessional Valarie Ifill, speaking to a crowd of about 60 who braved the lingering nor’easter to rally ahead of Monday night’s meeting, said the work can also be extremely gratifying.

“Some of the moments that stay with me the most are when a student is so overwhelmed they shut down, and I’m able to reach them when they realize I’m not giving up on them,” Ifill said. “You can see it. Shoulders drop, love comes back, and they find their way to learning again.”

In recent years, educators have noticed the impact learning loss and missed socialization due to COVID has had on students. Ifill said this has made the work of paras all the more challenging — and important.

Students’ needs have intensified since COVID-19, Ifill said. “We’ve seen more students struggle with big feelings during the school day. To learn, they need support in real time, and that sup-

port helps classrooms stay calm and focused.” CEA bargaining items are not limited to raises for paraprofessionals, though. Other items include bringing staffing rates back up to one paraprofessional per elementary school class, increasing health insurance coverage for newer staff, and ensuring paid parental leave for employees who have been with CPS for less than a year. While multiple cost estimates were mentioned at the meeting, union members assert that their current list of demands would result in a six percent increase in the CPS budget — and thus a two percent increase in the total city budget.

Council supports to a point

Dozens of people spoke on behalf of the union on Monday night — all in support of paying paraprofessionals higher wages.

“We can and must find the money to ensure that CPSD paraprofessionals, clerks, and substitutes will always pay a living wage. If that money needs to come from an increase in property taxes, then please increase our taxes,” said teacher and Cambridge homeowner Jo Quest-Neubert. “I would rather pay more in property taxes than know I am funding a system that does not fairly compensate the workers.”

But the road to what becomes a Cambridge Public School staff member’s salary is long — with multiple bodies holding sway over the course.

The School Committee, in collaboration with city administrators, sets the Cambridge Public Schools annual budget in the spring. City council has the ability to authorize or not authorize the budget, but has no say on how much is allocated to individual line items. Over the summer, the state assesses commercial property values to determine property tax rates, which are proposed by the City Manager’s office. The council also has to vote this up or down, but historically has not made changes to what city administrators propose.

The policy order before the council was not an appropriation for staff salaries, which is outside council’s authority. Rather, according to Al-Zubi, requesting the report back to council on the status of the negotiations was an opportunity for the council to be “informed on the process.”

“I really don’t think we can keep doing these tennis matches where we’re told that this is not the council’s authority, even though we declare the budget, and then the school committee says ‘we don’t have money’ and then it goes back and forth,” Al-Zubi said. She also noted the city’s law department had approved the policy order.

Questions of intent

But other councillors, some of them former School Committee members, saw other intentions.

“While technically this policy order is not directly about negotiations, it undermines the

school district negotiations,” said Councillor Patty Nolan, a former School Committee member. She added that while the policy order was technically “not about appropriation, it was made exceedingly clear that the intent is to express support for additional funding for CPS, and that passing the policy order means the CPS budget would go up.” Nolan also noted that the lowest-paid paraprofessionals’ salaries are slated to go up by 60 percent over the next two years under the school committee’s current proposal.

Several councillors said they were in favor of paying paraprofessionals more — but the union and its supporters were simply asking the wrong body.

“I personally think that paraprofessionals should make more money,” said Councillor Tim Flaherty. “I support a living wage, and I support the work that they do. But I’m not part of the collective bargaining team, and I think passing this policy order would create a bad precedent.”

“It’s important to remember that the city council does not have any line item authority with the school department,” said Councillor and former School Committee member Marc McGovern.

In the end, Al-Zubi and Sobrinho-Wheeler voted in favor of the policy order, with McGovern and Councillor E. Denise Simmons voting present, Vice Mayor Burhan Azeem, Councillor Cathie Zusy, Flaherty and Nolan voting no — meaning the policy order. Because she is a School Committee member, Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui recused herself.

The school district released a statement that read in part “The Cambridge School Committee agrees with the CEA that in a school district as fortunate as ours, all staff should be paid a competitive wage” and that the school committee’s proposals did this. “It is our hope that the necessary reasonable conversations can occur in the near future to amicably conclude the negotiations and keep the focus of the school system on our students.”

Cambridge School Committee member and paraprofessional for Somerville Public Schools Luisa de Paula Santos noted that it was difficult to set expectations for meetings like Monday’s, because of the diffuse nature of where the power to set teacher salaries lie. She noted that elected representatives are not the only ones with power over funding schools.

“It is hard structurally,” Santos said. “The school committee ... decides on the budget, the city council accepts it, but who really controls it at the end of the day is the city manager, and he’s not elected.”

The next bargaining sessions between the union and the district are scheduled for October 7 and October 21, for Units A - E, and a date for negotiation with the district’s safety specialists of Unit F has yet to be scheduled, Montero said.

Hult student leads earthquake relief for Colombian hometown

By SAMANTHA GENZER

While balancing classes at Hult International Business School in Cambridge and work at her family’s coffee company, Natalie Ramirez has spent the past month organizing earthquake relief efforts for her family’s hometown in Colombia.

“One of my biggest passions as a person is community and where I come from,” said Ramirez, 19, a junior at Hult whose family is originally from Balboa, Colombia, where an Aug. 10 earthquake damaged more than 600 homes. She said the disaster left many residents without essential supplies such as food, water and shelter.

“They have been our family,” Ramirez said. “They have been our friends. These are the people that were my babysitters and [helped raise me]. And they’re hurting.”

After the earthquake, Ramirez said she and her family, who now live in New Jersey, began organizing aid through their coffee company, Rey Sol Coffee Roasters, which has shops in Ridgewood and Morristown, N.J.

Ramirez has worked with her mother and sister to collect and send supplies to Balboa. Her mother in New Jersey has been receiving in-person donated supplies like medicine, food and materials for shelter. The coffee company has hosted events and worked with collaborators to spread the word.

Ramirez’s mother then packages the supplies to be sent to Balboa, where her sister helps distribute with local emergency responders. So far, they have sent about 1,700 pounds of supplies to Balboa, Ramirez said.

Ramirez has handled much of the financial and administrative work, while her mother prepares the next shipment, a 20-foot container of supplies. To help raise money for shipping and distributing additional supplies, Ramirez launched a GoFundMe campaign with a \$20,000 fundraising goal. It has raised more than \$3,600 since Aug 11.

Her sister, Linda Rivera, 30, who is in Balboa, described Ramirez as “intelligent, motivated, and dedicated” in helping a recovery that she said would take years. “I love being able to work with Natalie,” Rivera said. “She has been able to bring up awareness and connect us with people that are willing to help us on bigger scales.”

The relief effort has allowed Ramirez to connect her life in Cambridge with the community her family is from.

Ramirez said Rey Sol Coffee harvests coffee beans in Balboa, and her family’s roots in Colombia go back six generations. Colombian coffee farmers’ work ethic has inspired her dedica-



Photos: Ben Farkas

Natalie Ramirez, a junior at Hult International Business School, is raising money and supplies to help the people of Balboa, Colombia.

tion to the relief effort, she said. “When those are the people that taught us how to work here, we must highlight them through everything that we do,” Ramirez said. “Especially when they need help, we have to show up.”

Even seemingly small donations have made an impact. Ramirez was told students in



Ramirez looking out over the Charles River. She said she is glad to have a way to connect her communities in Cambridge and Colombia.

Balboa cried with joy over a soccer ball sent to their school.

“They have to walk over places that they grew up around. The environment is completely different,” Ramirez said of the damage in Balboa. “Meanwhile, ours here [in Cambridge] stays the complete same, so ... I got inspired because it’s the least we can do.”

Balancing her workload has been “extremely difficult,” Ramirez said, but she views supporting her community as a priority.

“I have had a huge growth mindset within this experience,” Ramirez said. “I just have to show myself as a person first because the work will show itself.”

Ramirez’s mother, Johanna Porras-Ramirez, co-owner of Rey Sol Coffee Roasters, said helping the Balboa community has long been important to their family, which has donated toys and supplies during the holidays. She said she was very proud of her daughter. “Some kids her age are focusing on something different, but the job that she has been doing is amazing,” Porras-Ramirez said.

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

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

BUSINESS

Davis Square vendor market Small Mart bans AI art

By MADISON LUCCHESI

Local artists are giving big props to Small Mart, saying its ban of AI use makes them more inclined to sell their work at the Friday marketplace.

Carly Holbrook, the painter and button maker behind Carly Makes Things, said she “appreciates the ban” because it protects the market as a space for artists to showcase their work. She began selling her art at Small Mart in August, not long before the market posted a video about the ban on Sept. 1. The market takes place Fridays at the Davis Square Plaza Marketplace.

Holbrook said she is a relatively small artist, so AI has not affected her business. But, she said, the technology is “cluttering the online space” and “discrediting” artistic value by stealing other people’s art and recreating it.

Small Mart made the move because it “is a market for artists, for makers and for artisans ... and generally speaking, AI isn’t art,” said Wiley, a co-owner of Small Mart who did not give a last name. Wiley also owns High Energy Vintage in Union Square.

Not taking a flyer

Wild Planet owner Shannon Donahue has sold at Small Mart for years, and said she has started making flyers for her business by collaging to defy the “AI slop” posters she’s seen online and throughout Somerville.

“I don’t want an AI tool to make my artwork for me because ... there’s almost no point to being alive if AI is going to do all the fun things for you and you still have to do all the drudgery,” Wiley said.



Courtesy of Wiley

Wild Planet’s Small Mart vendor booth in 2026.

Small Mart explicitly banned AI-generated items and flyers from the market following feedback from vendors about one artist that sold some AI-generated materials. The longtime vendor still participates in the market, but no longer sells AI-generated products.

AI art, which often contains mistakes, “shouldn’t really be displayed next to people who are making actual art,” Wiley said.

Policy statement

The application to sell was also updated so that it states,



Courtesy of Wiley

Stalls set up for Small Mart in Somerville’s Davis Square.

“We do not accept vendors selling mass produced goods [or] ven-

dors selling AI generated imagery.” Prior to creating the policy, Wiley and Small Mart co-owner Bridget Duggan simply rejected applications from vendors who sold AI-generated designs. It added the policy to discourage those vendors from applying at all, Wiley said.

“Art is a celebration and an expression of the human experience,” Wiley said. “Most generative AI was trained on people’s real art without [giving them] any credit.”

Pete Moulthrop has been making the flyers for Small Mart since its founding in 2022.

AI “is not really intelligent, it is just generative” and often makes mistakes, he said. This became apparent to him when some of his clients tried to use AI to make



Pete Moulthrop

A poster advertising Small Mart, made by hand, not AI.

flyers, but realized Moulthrop’s work was more accurate and necessary for their business, he said. However, he has lost some

clients who are using AI instead of his services.

“AI kind of homogenizes everything towards a specific kind of corporate, samey, sanitized aesthetic,” said Isaac Smolund, co-owner of the Malden-based pop-up Nebula Books who has sold at Small Mart once and hopes to again.

Smolund and co-owner Jess Sanford “come from a software engineering background and I think part of wanting to do things like Nebula Books is that we really get a lot out of” physically interacting with others, he said.

“If you didn’t make your art, I’m not going to buy it,” Sanford said. If a market they sold at allowed AI art, they would not sell there again.

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EVENTS OCT 1 TO OCT 15

Sanders Theatre, 45 Quincy St., near Harvard Square.

Thursday, Oct. 8, 5 p.m.

Hutchins Center Honors presents The W. E. B. Du Bois Medal Ceremony

Free. The W. E. B. Du Bois Medal is Harvard’s highest honor in the field of African and African American studies, awarded to individuals in the U.S. and across the globe in recognition of their contributions to African and African American culture. Honorees this year include Angela Bassett, actress; Didier Drogba, professional soccer player; Theaster Gates, visual artist; Reed Hastings, business executive and philanthropist; James Manyika, technologist; Mavis Staples, singer and Civil Rights activist; Lena Waithe, writer, actor and producer; and Fletcher Wiley, attorney and civic leader (awarded posthumously).

Monday, Oct. 12, Noon

Half-Earth at Ten: Honoring a Legacy of Hope

\$20. On Indigenous Peoples Day, the theme of “Half-Earth at Ten: Honoring a Legacy of Hope,” explores works of naturalists past and present and insights from art, literature, the humanities and Indigenous communities.

Sunday, Oct. 11, Noon to 6 p.m.
2 Brattle Square.

Annual Oktoberfest

Free. Harvard Square's Oktoberfest features food from all over the world, arts, crafts, vintage goods, free samples as well as 25 HONK! bands from around the country will march from Davis Square to Harvard Square. New this year, Oktoberfest boasts beer gardens hosted by Alden & Harlow, El Jefe's Taqueria, Charlie's Kitchen, and a wine garden presented by Commonwealth Wine School and Schmitt Sohne & Relax.

Davis Square, Somerville.

Saturday, Oct. 10, 1 to 5 p.m.

ArtHONK!

Free. Part of HonkFest, Elm Street will be closed to cars and will be turned into a dynamic arena for interactive art making and activism.

Sunday, Oct. 11, Noon to 2 p.m.

The HONK! Parade

Free. Part of HonkFest, the parade starts down Massachusetts Avenue. Performances on the Main Stage and other performance venues at Oktoberfest runs from 2 to 6 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 2, 7 p.m.

Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Ave., Spring Hill.

Boston Fuzzstival

\$20 to \$40. This two-day music festival runs Friday, Oct. 2, and Saturday, Oct. 3 and features 18 local and regional bands including Dino Gala, Spirit Ghost, Pew Pew and others.

Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second St., East Cambridge.

Thursday, Oct. 1, 8 p.m.

Lift Every Voice Play Festival

\$35. Lift Every Voice amplifies the work of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) playwrights, poets, and spoken word artists through staged readings and performances. This year's features six new works by emerging and established playwrights: “Sibling Rivalry” by Jamie Lin; “Love & Hair” by Ciera-Sadé Wade; “Conditions of Readiness” by Hortense Gerardo; “In the Aftermath” by Michelle M. Aguillon; “Peace Plan” by Shay McQueenie; and “Sunflowers and George” by Kori Alston. Runs through Friday, Oct. 2.

Wednesday, Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m.

Yarumi González: Artist in Residence Showcase

\$35 to \$45. The Artist in Residence Showcase showcases the Multicultural Arts Center's residency program, highlighting works developed through sustained artistic exploration and experimentation. During Yarumi González's residency, she has been developing a multidisciplinary, autobiographical work exploring identity, migration and the American Dream through poetic and ritual-inspired storytelling, movement, video, photography, installation and performance.

Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St., Harvard Square.

Monday, Oct. 5, 6 p.m.

New Yorker cartoonists Roz Chast and Jason Adam Katzenstein

\$40, includes book. Roz Chast and Jason Adam Katzenstein introduce their new graphic novel, “The Two Saddest Kitchens: A Comics Conversation,” a look at what's really going on in our kitchens from Tupperware Drawer Tetris to the cabinet over the fridge where the forgotten yard-sale ice bucket sits. Northeastern University's Hillary Chute joins.

Tuesday, Oct. 6, 5:30 to 11 p.m.

An Evening with Alice Hoffman: “Practical Magic” on Screen and in Print

\$50 to \$100. Lovestruck Books presents author of “Practical Magic” Alice Hoffman in conversation with actress and debut author of “Grimoire Girl,” Hilarie Burton Morgan. General admission tickets include pre-signed copies of both “Practical Magic 2” and “Grimoire Girl.”

Friday, Oct. 9, 7:15 p.m.
The Comedy Studio, 5 John F. Kennedy St., Harvard Square.

Comedian Bobcat Goldthwait

\$39. Comedian Bobcat Goldthwait first appeared on the David Letterman Show at the age of 20 and has an ongoing career as a writer, director, actor, voice actor and stand-up. He has starred in numerous HBO/ Showtime specials and is well-known for his roles in “Scrooged” with Bill Murray and as Zed in the “Police Academy” franchise. Also performing on Saturday, Oct. 10.

Saturday, Oct. 3, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway, Mid-Cambridge.

Celebrating Disability Pride

Free. Celebrating Disability Pride is a gathering for the whole community, presenting arts and crafts, silent disco, power lifting with Special Olympics medalists REM and Sebi, giveaways and more at Joan Lorentz Park.

Tuesday, Oct. 6, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Theaster Gates and Henry Louis Gates Jr. give us “Another View”

\$5 donation. Harvard Book Store and the Cambridge Public Library welcome Theaster Gates, award-winning artist and professor at the University of Chicago, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and director of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University, for a discussion of their new book “Another View: The Vibrant World of Contemporary Black Artists.”

Monday, Oct. 12, 7 to 9 p.m.
Aeronaut Brewing, 14 Tyler St., near Union Square in Ward 2.

Millennial Speed-Dating (Monogamous)

\$65. This event is centered on people ages 30-45 who want to get off the dating apps and meet someone in real life. There will be “big talk” conversation prompts to get you started and structure to make sure that you talk to people and that it's not awkward.



■ 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



A pair of spotted lanternfly adults on a stem in Virginia.

Tom Murray

The spotted lanternfly, an invasive pest

By JEANINE FARLEY

As I was riding my bike the other day, I spotted an insect on the pavement. Not wanting to harm it, I swerved around it, but as I did so, I realized that the insect looked a lot like a spotted lanternfly. I turned around, went back, confirmed that it was indeed a spotted lanternfly, and then rode over it, smashing it into the asphalt.

We haven't always reviled spotted lanternflies. They were once lauded for their luminescent and medicinal qualities.

The spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) is not a fly. It is a planthopper, a piercing-sucking insect in the same order as cicadas and aphids. Chinese writers as early as the twelfth century recorded medicinal uses for dried lanternfly powder—treating blood disorders, infertility and even rabies. Europeans noticed this insect sometime later. In 1620, the Dutch painter Jacob de Gheyn II painted a watercolor of a lanternfly, noting that the insect had luminous properties. In 1681, English scientist Nehemiah Grew, known as the Father of Plant Anatomy, wrote that this insect looked at night like a little “lanthorne.” He went on to note that two or three of these fastened to a stick give “sufficient light to those that walk in the night.”

For centuries, Europeans

retold the myth about lanternflies appearing like little flames in the night. But by the late 1800s, scientists began to doubt this extraordinary trait. They repeatedly failed to detect light from these insects and eventually concluded that lanternflies did not glow or emit any light at all. Despite their findings, however, the name lanternfly persisted.



A lanternfly nymph on an ailanthus sapling in mid-Cambridge.

Ann Dix

Insects often display bright colors as a warning to birds: “Do not eat me! I am toxic!” Spotted lanternflies are no exception. These insects dine on invasive ailanthus trees (also known as trees of heaven) as both adults and nymphs. But then, the two species coevolved together in Asia. The tree contains bitter chemicals called quassinoids. Researchers have learned that lanternflies that feed on trees of heaven sequester some of these toxic compounds in their bodies.

In a Korean study, birds ate more lanternflies collected from willow trees than from ailanthus trees. This suggests that ailanthus chemicals make lanternflies less appetizing to birds. Korean researchers observed magpies vomiting after eating lanternflies. However, ailanthus toxins in lanternflies do not deter arthropod predators: Spiders, stink bugs, mantises and yellow jackets all find lanternflies quite tasty.

Beginning in September and continuing until the first frost, a female lanternfly lays eggs, which she covers with a white coating. The coating dries to look like grayish mud or putty. Not only does she lay eggs in trees, but also on outdoor furniture, stones, cars, trailers or any hard surface. People transport these egg masses accidentally, spreading lanternfly eggs throughout the state. However, lanternflies lay 98 percent of their eggs more than six feet high in trees, where people cannot see them.

When the first hard freeze occurs, adult lanternflies die, but the eggs survive the winter and hatch into nymphs in May. The nymphs undergo several molts until they transform into adults beginning in late July.

Both the nymphs and adults use their mouthparts (similar to a drinking straw) to suck massive amounts of sap from trees. Sap contains sugars, and lanternflies process a lot of it. They excrete the excess fluid as honeydew, which can feel like a mist falling from the tree canopy. Sticky honeydew coats leaves and branches. It attracts ants, bees and wasps, and encourages black sooty-mold growth, which blocks sunlight. When large numbers of lanternflies feed on a plant, they can harm it. Grapes, ailanthus, maple and black walnut trees are most at risk.

Spotted lanternflies are spreading rapidly in Massachusetts. In



Ann Dix

A lanternfly nymph on an ailanthus sapling in mid-Cambridge.

August 2025, scientists recorded them in 50 communities, but by September 2026 that number had grown to 150 cities and towns, including Cambridge and Somerville.



Lance Cheung / USDA

A lanternfly egg mass, about an inch in length, after the eggs have hatched.

ville. If you find a spotted lanternfly egg mass, scrape the mass into a plastic bag containing rubbing alcohol. Seal the bag and throw it away. If you see a lanternfly in a city or town where officials have not recorded it yet, report it to the Massachusetts Introduced Pests Outreach Project. If you see one in Cambridge or Somerville, do what I did. Squash it.



Jennifer Clifford

An adult lanternfly on a building ledge in Somerville.



Lee

An adult spotted lanternfly spreads its wings to display its colorful hindwings.

FILM

LOCAL FOCUS



A still from “Practical Magic.”

Horror fests and ‘Practical Magic’

By OSCAR GOFF

It’s October, which means that Spooky Season is well and truly upon us. To kick things off, the **Brattle Theatre** presents a brand new 4k restoration of one of the most beautiful horror movies ever made. Inspired by ancient folktales, Masaki Kobayashi’s **“Kwaidan”** (1965) is an anthology film for the ages, a quartet of spine-tingling ghost stories set in feudal Japan. In addition to its eerie atmosphere, “Kwaidan” is renowned for its eye-popping, widescreen technicolor and matte paintings; imagine if Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger made a supernatural thriller and you’ll be in the right ballpark. Though it’s not quite as famous as such similarly eyepopping spookfests as “Suspiria” (1977), it has devoted fans in Guillermo del Toro, Ari Aster, and Jane Schoenbrun, the latter of whom cited it as a major aesthetic influence on their new film “Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma.” “Kwaidan” screens Friday through Monday and is absolutely not to be missed on the big screen.

If “Kwaidan” whets your appetite for more of Kobayashi’s work, you’re in luck, as the **Harvard Film Archive** has the motherlode. Kobayashi’s **“The Human Condition” trilogy** (1959–61), which screens in its entirety this weekend on a trio of newly struck 35 mm prints, is more often name-checked than actually watched, owing in part to its cumulative ten-hour running time. Adapted from Junpei Gomikawa’s six-part novel of the same name, “The Human Condition” stars Tatsuya Nakadai as Kaji, a Japanese pacifist navigating the brutal conditions of World War II Japan. “The Human Condition” is one of the great monoliths of cinema, albeit one which is, understandably, rarely programmed. This is your chance to check it off your bucket list (and if you can’t make it to any of these screenings, there’s an encore engagement 10/16 through 10/18).

At the **Somerville Theatre**, this week’s installment of Cult Cinema Tuesdays highlights one of the very earliest films to earn the designation. Few horror filmmakers found greater success in the early years of Hollywood than Tod Browning, who achieved a series of silent hits with the great Lon Chaney, then ushered in the Universal Horror era with the original Bela Lugosi “Dracula” (1931). Nothing, however, could prepare 1930s moviegoers for what Browning had in store next. For the revenge tale **“Freaks”** (1932), Browning assembled a cast of dozens of actual differently abled sideshow performers, including microcephalics, conjoined twins, and a man self-explanatorily billed as “The Living Torso.” “Freaks” caused immediate outrage upon its release; it was heavily censored, dumped by its studio, and more or less ended Browning’s

career. But nearly a century on, what stands is its compassion. Browning, who literally ran off to join the circus in his youth, clearly loves his characters, and the true villains of the piece are the able-bodied performers who exploit them. Those seeing it for the first time will surely become, as the freaks famously chant, “one of us.”

The **Kendall Square Cinema**, meanwhile, rings in the season with a trio of weekly repertory series. Saturdays bring a series of “Monster Madness” matinees, beginning with another selection from Browning: the iconic original **“Dracula”** (1931). On Tuesdays, the theater’s Retro Replay series highlights vampire films, beginning with Joel Schumacher’s oh-so-’80s classic **“The Lost Boys”** (1987). Then, on Wednesdays, the Kendall turns its Filmmaker Focus on master of suspense John Carpenter, beginning with his seminal slasher masterpiece **“Halloween”** (1978). All three series run the entire month of October, right up to Halloween itself.

Back at the Brattle, literate-minded moviegoers have their choice this week between two unique events. On Tuesday, beloved author **Alice Hoffman** will be in attendance for a conversation with fellow author and actress Hilarie Burton Morgan and a screening of the witchy classic **“Practical Magic”** (1998), followed by an afterparty at **Lovestruck Books** (admission includes signed copies of Hoffman’s “Practical Magic 2” and Morgan’s “Grimoire Girl,” plus a complimentary witch hat!). Then, on Wednesday, author **R.F. Kuang** returns to the Brattle for a screening of Edward Yang’s **“Taipei Story”** (1985) and a conversation about how it influenced her new novel of the same name. Whether or not “the book is always better,” it’s always fascinating to see how these two mediums interact.

This week brings a wealth of exciting new releases far outside the bounds of the multiplex. On Friday and Saturday, the Brattle has the new 16mm horror comedy throwback **“Night of the Vamp-Friars”** (2026), which is sure to appeal to those who grew up trolling their local video store. On Saturday, **Cinefest Latino Boston** takes up residence at the Brattle for Brenda Ávila-Hanna’s stirring new documentary **“Libertad”** (2026). On Sunday, the Brattle hosts Cinefest Latino’s shorts program, **“Yo Soy P fkn R,”** as well as the latest showcase from **RPM Fest**, **“Intimate Observer: Family Portrayals by Marjorie Keller.”** Also on Sunday, the Somerville presents the local premiere of Megan Rico & Kade Atwood’s indie punk rock comedy **“Edie Arnold Is a Loser”** (2026), followed by a Q&A with the directors and star Adi Madden Cabrera. As always, the multiplexes are just the tip of the iceberg.

REVIEWS

‘Heart of the Beast’

The vast wilds of Alaska are where James Belmont (Brad Pitt) goes to tamp down the PTSD he suffered as a former special ops sergeant, as well as heal the war scars of his loyal German Shepherd Odin, who served with Belmont during multiple Middle East tours. The two are flying around the wilds of the 49th state to do some birding, fishing and communing with nature.

Odin’s scars are more visible: titanium fangs (someone smashed him with a brick during combat) and a prosthetic paw. Belmont matter-of-factly says he shot the responsible parties “in the head” during a campfire encounter with a jovial old coot also roaming the wilds, played by none other than the baritone-blessed J.K. Simmons (“Whiplash”). The two enjoy some tasty Belgian beers and go their separate ways in the morning as a storm approaches.

From there “Heart of the Beast” becomes one long perilous survival journey after Belmont suffers a heart attack (if the storm don’t get you cardiac arrest will) and the plane goes down. Frigid lake waters revive Belmont. He and Odin go on to endure encounters with bears, wolves and moose (oh my!), not to mention steep ravines and white-water rapids. Through all this, man and best friend seemingly have nine lives, in part because they take turns saving each other’s lives (the dog may get a tad more screen time than Pitt).

This is the second pooch-and-person flick in two months, after August’s “The Dog Stars,” directed by Ridley Scott. This one, thankfully, spares us the human actor



Courtesy of Paramount Pictures

Brad Pitt as James Belmont and Uber as Odin in a scene from “Heart of the Beast.”

(in “Dog Stars” it’s Jacob Elordi) over-explaining the plot to the canine actor. This one is also set on Earth where the sweeping mountainous terrain of Alaska does a lot of cinematic heavy lifting.

Unfortunately, “Heart” suffers from woeful computer FX to conjure the tooth and clawed furries of the wild — if he was still alive, Bart the Bear (from 1997’s “The Edge”) would have been a massive upgrade. The movie pretends to be a based on true-events kind of film, but it’s not, which makes the sepia-tinted flashbacks to war time both disruptive and unnecessary. Still, Pitt and Odin (played mostly by a dog named Uber) convincingly sell the deep connection of two beings who have seen the worst of the world and are seeking peace and solace both from within and through each other.

– TOM MEEK



Playing at Apple Cinemas Cambridge, AMC Assembly Row 12 and Kendall Square Cinema

‘Unabomber’

The performance of previously under-the radar actor Jacob Tremblay is the primary reason to see “Unabomber,” Janus Metz’s unsettling look at Ted Kaczynski’s early years as a Harvard prodigy and the man-hunt for the domestic terrorist he became. The actor, who broke through as the captive child in “Room” (2015), is remarkable here, anchoring a film whose competing storylines don’t always serve each other.

Kaczynski entered Harvard at age 16 in the late 1950s, where he comes under the influence of psychologist Henry Murray (Russell Crowe), whose controversial experiments provide the film with its troubling center. Murray at first seems like an ideal surrogate father figure for the brash but impressionable Kaczynski, whose parents — as depicted — are often critical and dismissive of their son’s academic goals. Home ultimately proves to be the better — or more honest— place, as much of what Murray and his team do to Kaczynski is essentially hazing and meddling with a young and troubled mind. Metz and his writers Sam Chalsen and Nelson Greaves don’t draw a direct line between Kaczynski’s treatment and his becoming the Unabomber, but the movie strongly suggests Murray and Harvard sowed the seeds to put Kaczynski on the fast track to misanthropic mayhem. (Though nominally set here in Cambridge, Montreal and McGill University stand in for our humble burg and Harvard.)

The film’s parallel thread plays out in 1996, after the Unabomber had killed three people and maimed dozens via postal bombs over a 16-year span.



Jacob Tremblay in “Unabomber.”

Shailene Woodley as Joanne Miller, a fictional FBI agent, uses profiling tools to pursue Kaczynski while also fighting off microaggressions and bureaucracy. The investigative manhunt supplies necessary background information but also feels tacked on and distracts from the compelling, disturbing drama playing out at Harvard.

The question of how a gifted teenager became a terrorist is an enormous one, and psychological experiments alone can’t settle it. Crowe, following “Nuremberg” (2025) and recent release “The Weight,” again finds fertile ground in a smartly drawn dark part. He’s a considerable plus, and the psychological chess-game pairing with Tremblay gives the film its strongest pull. But what gives “Unabomber” its force is Tremblay. What holds it back is how often the film pulls away from him.

– TOM MEEK



Streaming on Netflix

Grabbing a Bite

From Page 1

Today, Stansbury says, his work hours are spent running strategy for an AI and robotics company in Toronto whose machines assemble pharmaceutical lines and decommission spent fuel inside nuclear power plants — environments, he notes dryly, “not great for humans to work in.”

He travels a lot. “I was in Charlotte yesterday. I go to Charlotte quite a bit and to Toronto. They also have companies in Italy and Germany and the UK. I’d say I travel probably like 40 percent of my time,” admittedly a far cry from his BCG days when he was on the road 80 percent of the time, which he admits “was not really sustainable.” Cambridge is his home office by choice.

Our waitress swings by to take our orders: mine, a chickpea tuna melt without the coleslaw, Stansbury just a bowl of roasted Brussels sprouts. “Oh, and I will have her coleslaw, too,” he smiles. He convinces me to try their iced coffee, as well.

Motion and meditation

Stansbury notes he has been captivated by electronics and technology since his dad, for reasons unexplained, handed him a circuit board as a child — transistors, LEDs, the works. “I was always fascinated by things that move,” Stansbury says. His mother was a special education teacher whose personal and professional orientation fed his connection to the human condition and different forms of expression and “being.”

With obvious excitement, he recounts the many ways he works to stay one with the world at large. He is a long-term Vipassana meditator with multiple 10-day silent retreats behind him. With nine or 10 friends Stansbury also runs an art and community space in a Charlestown warehouse — he asks me not to name it — that hosts ecstatic dance events, philosophy salons and, recently, a fashion show staged for the female gaze, in which men were dressed and paraded by women. The space is private not out of exclusivity, he insists, but protection. “It’s a certain type of vibe that is quite vulnerable, and can be appropriated by the capitalist worldview quite quickly.”

For a man who spent years teaching corporations how to scale, the space represents a kind of apostasy. “This is the first time in my life that I’ve built something that isn’t scalable,” he says with pride. “It doesn’t want to grow.” More importantly, perhaps, he and his colleagues do not want it to grow. No metrics, no revenue, no user counts. “Vibes,” he says — the truly, internally fulfilled experience of the present moment — “is the one that’s driving that community. And it feels really beautiful.” His tone’s clarity and depth precludes him from sounding dreamy or flaky.

He gestures, making way for his sprouts that arrive with the

requested side of coleslaw. My tuna and ice-cold coffee are delivered next.

Time to pause AI

In 2013, Stansbury took a leave from BCG to attend the Harvard Kennedy School for a mid-career MPA (Master’s in Public Administration). While there, he and a handful of classmates — a defense specialist, a science-fiction obsessive, several spiritual seekers, among others — started a discussion group built on sci-fi films and free pizza. Science fiction, he argues, was the obvious conduit to thinking forward. “It crystallizes the problems in a narrative that we eventually have to sort out for ourselves,” he explains. The pizza group became The Future Society, one of the first organizations anywhere to take the governance of artificial intelligence seriously, years before it was fashionable. It quickly morphed into a think tank that has advised European policymakers; today, its executive director sits in Brussels.

Stansbury tells me he is worried about the increasingly powerful and disruptive properties of AI. “The sci-fi is unfolding in front of us,” he says. “We’re living in it.” He pauses for a few bites of slaw and Brussels sprouts. His iced coffee is still more than half full, as is mine. Whatever is fueling his amped-up tone is clearly concern, not caffeine. The models, by some measures, double in capability every six months, he posits. His prescription is therefore blunter than most industry leaders would dare: an immediate pause. Keep the technology at this level, he argues, until the technical and policy answers catch up.

I ask what a Cambridge Day reader, maybe only recently tuned in to AI, should actually worry about. Data-center water and energy use? Real, he says, but not to his mind the main event. That is strictly about safety — a system pursuing goals we gave it without the human constraints we couldn’t articulate — and the economic rupture beyond it. “We have absolutely no idea what we do when 50 percent of the white-collar jobs go away,” he says, “and how we distribute that enormous wealth fairly, because we don’t really have that muscle in the U.S.”

Despite his considerable professional achievements and his hand wringing about what lies ahead, re-enchantment (his word) is his mission. “It’s putting magic back,” he says — in nature, in personal connection, in “losing yourself in music,” in the stars. We have, he argues, fragmented everything: food, sport, intimacy, community, each sealed in its own compartment. “Once it becomes fragmented, it becomes captured by capitalism, because it can be monetized.”

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



WHAT WE’RE HAVING

Breakfast sandwiches in the squares

By TOM MEEK

Who doesn’t love a good breakfast sandwich? In Newtown, Conn., where my family moved when I was in high school, the Hawleyville Deli made one of the best breakfast sandwiches I have ever had: an amazingly airy poppyseed bulky roll, a perfectly jammy egg, melted American cheese, and a touch of butter and hot sauce. My mom got hers with bacon, because that’s how our parrot, Largo, liked it. He always got the last two bites, and if my mom gave him just one, the bird squawked bloody hell in protest.

I love to tinker with breakfast sandwiches at home — a fluffy two-egg omelet with plenty of butter and cracked pepper, folded square on a toasted brioche bun with American cheese — but food is always best from the hands of others. Camberville, especially Union Square, has some exceptional morning starters. Here’s a square-by-square ramble of some of our favorite eggy to-gos.

In **Harvard Square**, Daily Provisions may be known for its sinful and addictive maple crullers, but it’s the breakfast sandwiches that make me a repeat customer: a fresh, airy, and pleasingly chewy poppy-seed bun with an over-easy egg whose warm yolk sensually bursts on your first bite. The quality is unbelievably consistent, and the egg always pops. My go-tos are the chicken sausage with extra cheese and house-made “wake up” sauce.

In **Davis Square**, the Diesel Cafe’s Joplin layers together a perfectly medium-cooked egg and hearty chicken-sausage patty with addictive maple butter. Choose the sourdough toast over the bagel: Thin and light, it soaks up that glorious butter. Up Highland Ave. is an unlikely breakfast sando hero: Saigon Tiger’s egg bánh mì that crowns its fresh, crunchy-soft baguette with sunny-side-up eggs, their runny yolks melding with savory pork pâté, pickled vegetables, pucker-inducing jalapeños, and fresh cilantro. For a salty, slightly sinful upgrade, get the eggs-and-Spam variation — and let the Monty Python jokes fly. (Saigon Tiger makes for a late breakfast; it opens at 11 a.m.)

Over in **Huron Village**, Armando’s Special Omelet Sub packs grilled mushrooms and spinach, American cheese, and golden, fluffy eggs into a soft Italian sub roll — a satiating, decadent way to get your veggies. Pro tip: Get the large, and know that Armando’s only takes cash. Across the street, Sarah’s Market and Cafe offers a rib-sticking cousin — the spinach and egg sandwich — that comes with tomatoes and cheddar cheese on wheat toast. Ask for it on a griddled brioche bun instead of toast, and thank me



Tom Meek

Armando’s Special Omelet Sub that mixes in spinach, mushrooms and cheese.

later.

At Bom Dough (“good dough”) in **Inman Square**, the Good Egg sandwich is the best way to try the Brazilian-style bakery’s perfectly fluffy scrambled eggs. It comes with avocado–lime purée, crisp bacon, arugula, tomato, and white cheddar on your choice of bagel, a traditional Brazilian parmesan pao de queijo (cheese



Tom Meek

Vinal Bakery’s Ham Jamboree: ham, brie, arugula and hot pepper jelly on a homemade English muffin

roll), or brioche bun. Get the brioche, whose rich butteriness complements the celestial scramble. At Triangle Coffee, in Somerville near the Brickbottom Artists Building, get the Umami Spice breakfast sandwich — an inspired, all-day offering with sausage and egg. The twist here is that the fluffy, oven-baked egg comes with spicy umami sauce, a pucker-inducing mixture of rich Japanese Kewpie mayo and spicy Chinese Lao Gan Ma chili sauce, with a slice of Monterey Jack, all served on a Triangle English muffin.

On “the Avenue” in **Porter Square**, there’s a reason for the lines around the block at Bagelsaurus on weekends: the super-fresh and super-chewy handcrafted bagels. The bagels make a great base for their Classic Jumbo breakfast sandwich — an over-medium egg with Cabot cheddar and mustard butter. Get it on a sea salt bagel, as the salt, butter, and mustard play really well with the jammy yolk and aged cheddar. Go early; once the bagels sell out — and they regularly do — Bagelsaurus closes up.

The Fix at local chain Pave-

ment offers another neat sausage patty creation that’s simple and savory with a fluffy scramble, slightly melted smoked Gouda, and a house pepper jam: salty and hot-and-spicy, with a faintly sweet offset. Get it on a rosemary-salt round. Across Mass. Avenue, at the Montrose Spa — the Cuban-influenced bodega run by Tommy Rodriguez for nearly 50 years until new management took over last year — the killer griddled egg and cheese (good old America) on a classic English muffin remains one of the best deals for a breakfast sando in this town (\$5). Elsewhere along Mass. Ave., you can get a vegan sausage and egg sando at Page & Leaf or at Starbucks. (The Impossible Breakfast Sandwich, and ’Bucks’s morning sandos are surprisingly good.) The breakfast burrito at Chivo is a solid eat, especially if you go stripped down — just egg, cheese, and pepper, with perhaps salsa or guacamole.

Union Square’s Vinal Bakery makes its own special style of rich, doughy English muffins that natch serve as their base for over-medium eggy creations, like the maple butter-infused Miss Maple. But the thing to have on the Bakery’s morning menu is the Ham Jamboree: uber-lean McKenzie smoked ham, weepy Brie, arugula, salted butter, and red pepper jelly. The savory secret sauces — umami, maple and mustard butter — set these sandos apart. Vinal makes their own turkey sausage. Slide over to Bow Market, where Mike & Patty’s, another locally grown chain, serves up a slate of hearty breakfast fare that uses free-range chicken eggs and comes on a buttered, house-made Flour-house sourdough English muffin. I’m a big fan of the Classic — over-medium egg and American cheese, and there’s a slew of choices in between (including a vegan breakfast burrito). But if you want to go big (and go home and have a food coma nap), get the Breakfast Grilled Crack with fried egg, bacon, bacon, and more bacon and gooey cheese (four kinds: American, cheddar, Gruyere and Monterey) until the cows come home.

THEATER



The cast of “Bouncers” is (from left) Joe Siriani, Liam McCarron, Bradley Belanger, Michael Ferrari.

Bill Doncaster

‘Bouncers’ is back in Boston

By RUTH TAM

“Bouncers,” an iconic English play, is back in Boston, thanks to a couple of native Somerville artists.

The production, slated for a four-week run at the Modern Theatre, is a madcap performance of four bouncers outside a disco club in Northern England. Actors constantly switch between characters of different genders, playing everyone from soccer hooligans to sleazy DJs, showing the audience

what they see on a Friday night.

The result is “very fast-paced and very funny,” says the show’s director Bill Doncaster, who grew up in Somerville. It’s “at times, really crass and at times really poetically beautiful.”

“Bouncers,” Doncaster says, has a “rich, long history in the UK,” where it is performed often. But it is lesser known in the U.S., outside of a few productions in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago in the ’80s and ’90s.

Doncaster first saw the show

in Chicago in 1991 when he was a year out of college hoping to become a playwright. “It was one of the more fun and interesting nights of theater I’ve ever had in my life,” he recalled. “It’s one of the few plays where I didn’t know what was coming.”

When a bombing disrupted ‘Bouncers’

This is Doncaster’s second time producing “Bouncers.”

In 2013, he staged a production at Cambridge’s iconic Cantab

Lounge. The divey Central Square music venue fit the show’s setting, as well as Doncaster’s mission of reaching an audience beyond typical theater fans.

The reviews were positive and momentum was growing when the Boston Marathon bombings put the region on lockdown.

“We were doing well and the box office was surging toward closing weekend. We were close to selling out [closing weekend], but after the bombing happened, we didn’t sell a single ticket after that,” said Doncaster.

When the MBTA shut down subway service, the theater refunded a sold-out perfor-

mance and on the last night they performed, half the audience didn’t show. “What [to do] over the weekend was the last thing on anyone’s mind. It was awful,” Doncaster recalled. “We were also very shook up; we lived here too.”

But for all those reasons, Doncaster said “Bouncers’ felt like unfinished business.”

A comeback

When Doncaster’s original lighting designer moved to Modern Theatre, a small playhouse in Boston’s theater district, the idea of bringing back “Bouncers” started to form.

And when Doncaster received funding from Sam Seidel, former Cambridge City Councillor, the plan was set in motion.

Doncaster reached out to Joe Siriani, a cast member from the 2013 production.

“I was thrilled when he called,” says Siriani. “I thought he was kidding because it’s been a topic of conversation since we finished 13 years ago.”

Although this year’s production is in a more traditional theater, its smaller size preserves the intimacy of the performance.

Siriani plays Lucky Eric, an older bouncer who carries the weight of life’s pains and disappointments as he works alongside three younger rowdier men raring to fight.

“As I’m older, I get to see Eric through my eyes and my age,” Siriani says. “In my job [as an actor], there’s always growing older and seeing younger guys and thinking, ‘Hey, take it easy, relax, take it in before jumping in – bing, bang – here we go.’”

Siriani grew up locally in Somerville, Cambridge, Arlington and Charlestown. He got his start acting at St. Catherine of Genoa School, now St. Theresa of the Child Jesus School, in Somerville’s Spring Hill. As a kid, he would hang out at the park near the school, where Tufts students would come by to talk about acting and theater.

“They invited us to watch improv at Tufts, to watch a show they put on,” said Siriani. “That strengthened my love for acting even more.”

Siriani went on to act in high school, at Northeastern University, and in Los Angeles for a few years, before moving to Hingham, Mass. All his experiences have gifted him with gratitude for this phase of his career.

“[‘Bouncers’] is an intimate, tight show where I never leave the stage,” says Siriani. “You have to be present throughout.”

To work with my [fellow actors] who are right on top of it. I get goosebumps throughout the show from the interaction with these guys ... I’m really lucky that I get to do it again, that I get to keep moving forward.”

Bouncers is playing at Suffolk University’s Modern Theatre Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, from October 1 through 24.

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September 13, 2025



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SPORTS

North Division sweeps city baseball All-Star tournament



David Kale

The North division major league team after winning the championship.

By PHILIP RIZZUTO

The Cambridge Little Baseball League divisions (North, West, East and Central) concluded their 2026 seasons with their annual All-Star tournament at Glacken Field on Huron Ave. In games showcasing the best youth baseball players in the city, North division swept the Major and Minor division championships.

In the Major Division, North advanced to the final after defeating the East team in a tight 5-3 game, highlighted by a grand slam from Emmett Hite. The West team defeated Central 10-0, sparked by a Moses Ellner three-run home run and a combined shutout from Trip Donohoe and Finn Schoenau.

The final, played Sept. 23, featured a tense pitcher's duel. North's Kiyan Mehta and West's Dylan Flynn battled on the mound for six innings. Flynn, who struck out 17 North batters, had a no-hitter going into the sixth inning. But in the top of the sixth, Benji Weaver led off with a single, breaking up the no-hitter.

Mehta also got a hit. With runners on second and third, Josh Gale came through with a soft single, driving in the only runs of the game.

Mehta finished with 10 strikeouts and was aided by some key defensive plays from shortstop Josh Hogan in the 2-0 victory.

Minor leagues

In the semi-finals of the Minor division, the North Minor team snuck by East 8-7, led by Henry Fitzgerald, who scored two runs and knocked in two more while also pitching the first four innings of the game. The West Minor team defeated Central 15-3, led by strong pitching performances from Kiran Basu and Jack Ward and three hits from George Sterner.

In the Minors final, played Sept. 16, West jumped out early to a 3-0 lead, but North battled back in the third to tie the game, led by Pete Colannino, who singled in two runs with the bases loaded. North took the lead, 5-4 in the fourth inning on a Bola Latilo triple, followed by an RBI

single from Manato Oya. The North team added three more runs in the fifth, again powered by Colannino, this time with a two-run double. Diego Boliver allowed just one run over the final four innings to clinch the 8-4 victory.

2026 North Minor Champions:

Players: Liam Bett, Diego Boliver, Thatcher Clapp, Peter Colannino, Micah Crookes, Felix Fernandez, Henry Fitzgerald, Filip Gagoski, Vuk Garafalo, Grady Hopson, Bola Latilo, Manato Oya
Coaches: Harry Bayly, Raul Madera Torres, Ryan Tellingator,
Manager: Craig Williams

2026 North Major Champions:

Players: Josh Gale, Emmett Hite, Josh Hogan, Wyatt Hughes, Ray Latilo, Kiyan Mehta, Hugh Polley, Graham Roach, Jamie Roach, Teodor Stanton-Perrin, Ike Stockman, Benji Weaver
Coaches: Michael Bennett, Rafi Crane, John Holland, John Polley, Joe Rudgis
Manager: David Kale



Sarah Roszler

The North division minor league team after winning the championship.

After open-heart surgery, Somerville star back on court

By GREG LEVINSKY

Two European professional basketball teams short-listed Tyler Whitney-Sidney for the 2025-26 season. They loved what the Somerville native showed during a decorated four-year career at Lehigh University, and saw the 6-2 guard as a tantalizing prospect.

But instead of inking a contract shortly after graduating with a political science degree last June, Whitney-Sidney sat outside of a Melrose cardiologist's office in tears. The heart issue he persevered through in college had gotten worse. Forget professional basketball, this bicuspid aortic valve required open-heart surgery.

"It was super deflating for me," Whitney-Sidney said. "You go your whole career [waiting for] my dream, what I've always wanted to do. And then you get that news."

Roughly 15 months later, after a successful surgery and recovery, the 24-year-old has authored one heck of a comeback story. He's headed to Lapua, Finland, to compete for the Kobrat (Cobras) in the Koripallon I-divisioona, the second-tier of Finnish professional basketball later this month for his first professional basketball contract. It's a one-year deal.

"A lot of people in my situation probably would've hung it up," Whitney-Sidney said. "I feel like my life has been kind of built on overcoming really hard things... This was the first one in my life that was super internal. It wasn't anyone saying I couldn't, I just wanted to prove to myself that I can."

A Somerville start

A third-generation Somerville resident, Whitney-Sidney attended Somerville Public Schools from kindergarten through 10th grade before finishing his high school career at the Brooks School in North Andover.

On paper, his path seemed obvious. The top-ranked point guard in Massachusetts coming out of high school with a plethora of Division 1 scholarship offers, a post-college professional basketball career appeared certain, as long as Whitney-Sidney developed.

That he did at the school he



Photos: RSF Media

Tyler Whitney-Sidney, 24, attended Somerville Public Schools through 10th grade and worked at the Somerville YMCA.

ultimately chose, Lehigh. Whitney-Sidney moved into a starting role part way through his freshman season and never gave it up, finishing his college career with three All-Patriot League honors. His 1,475 points rank 13th in the Mountain Hawks program's 50-plus year history. The two-time team MVP also earned Academic All-Patriot League honors as a senior, and graduated in May of 2025.

The elephant in the room

During Whitney-Sidney's annual physical before his freshman season, doctors found a heart murmur and high blood pressure. An EKG showed a bicuspid (leaking) aortic valve, but Whitney-Sidney never felt any symptoms. Recurring tests throughout college cleared Whitney-Sidney to play. But he needed to present the results of a physical exam to professional teams. And his revealed disappointing news.

"I went into that [exam] with a bad feeling," Whitney-Sidney said. "You know when you just go in and you're like, 'I'm gonna get news that's gonna hurt?' I knew that down the line this would be something I'd have to get taken care of."

At home, it was a touchy subject. "The elephant in the room" said his longtime girlfriend Jaydah Bonilla.

"It was very difficult to see someone so active in life just kind of stuck in bed," Bonilla said. "It got depressing at times."

Whitney-Sidney underwent open heart surgery on December 26, 2025, at Mass General Hospital in Boston. Suffice to say, it went as well as it possibly could've. It took roughly four hours and Whitney-Sidney says his surgeon, Dr. Jordan Bloom, remarked on his heart's strength.

New beginnings

After six weeks of bedrest, Whitney-Sidney started light physical activity in March. And that same month, he and his longtime girlfriend Jaydah Bonilla became parents. Their daughter, Violet Whitney, was born on March 11.



Whitney-Sydney had a heart attack but is ready now to play basketball professionally, which he will do in Europe.

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