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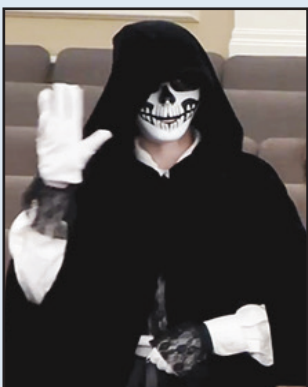
Anti-Displacement proposals

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School construction group meets

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A ghost at City Hall

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Capacity audience attends Davis Square Community Safety meeting



Concerns over safety issues in the Davis Square and Seven Hills Park areas prompted a community meeting where city officials and residents reviewed the situation. — Photo by Bobbie Toner

By Fred Bernardin

On Wednesday, October 9, the Somerville Community Baptist Church hosted a community meeting to discuss the safety situation in Davis Square and the adjoining Seven Hills Park area.

The meeting was attended by several city officials including Mayor Katyana Ballantyne, recently appointed Police Chief Shumeane Benford, Deputy Police Chief James Donovan, 311 Constituent Services Director Steve Craig, and Health and Human Services director Karin Carroll.

Connor McCombs, the Health Communications Officer facilitated the meeting. The room was filled by about 200 Somerville residents with dozens of residents relegated to the hallway outside the room.

The meeting was convened due *Continued on page 4*

Join SomerStreets Spooktacular 'Monster Mash' this Sunday

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the Somerville Arts Council (SAC) are inviting the community to join the final SomerStreets festival of the year, the spooky and fun "Monster Mash" on Sunday, October 20, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. (rain date October 27) on Somerville Ave. between School St. and Warren Ave.

Monster mischief along Somerville Ave will include:

- All day live music on two stages: Stage at Church St curated by Mass Ave Music and a stage at 37 Union Sq. featuring local musicians Kali Stoddard-Imari, Dioniso and Jessica Woodlee & Band
- Wicked Awesome Dancing Witches of Greater Boston
- A community Halloween parade led by the School of Honk



Continued on page 4 This years "Monster Mash" SomerStreets event takes place on Sunday, October 20.

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The views and opinions expressed in Newstalk do not necessarily reflect those of The Somerville Times, its publisher or staff. The column has many contributors.

Register to vote for the November 5 election, one of three ways: online at somerville-ma.gov/register tovote, in person at City Hall (93 Highland Ave.), or by calling the Elections Department (617-625-6600 ext. 4200) and requesting a voter registration form. The in-person registration deadline is Saturday, October 26, by 5:00 p.m. or online by midnight. Your registration can also be mailed and will be accepted with a postmark of October 26 or earlier.

Early Voting for the November 5 Presidential Election will take place at Somerville City Hall starting October 19. This week's dates and times: Saturday, October 19, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, October 20, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday, October 21, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 22, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Wednesday, October 23, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Happy birthday this week to several locals: We wish a special happy birthday to former Alderman Maryann Heuston. We hope she has a great birthday. We want to wish Somerville resident and Vietnam Veteran and Marine, Leo Mingace a happy birthday. We hope he has a great celebration. Happy birthday to one of our own, Harry Kane. We appreciate all he does for the paper and we wish him a great day. Happy birthday to Barry Rollins, who is celebrating this week. Happy birthday to Erin DiBenedetto from Medford, who grew up here in Winter Hill. We wish her a happy birthday. Happy birthday to Valarie Spinale-Bolduc. Happy *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of October 16 – October 22 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
Wednesday October 16	Partly Cloudy	56°/35°	6%	3%	W 13 mph
Thursday October 17	Sunny	58°/39°	8%	4%	N 8 mph
Friday October 18	Sunny	60°/39°	23%	12%	NE 10 mph
Saturday October 19	Sunny	69°/41°	7%	4%	NW 6 mph
Sunday October 20	Sunny	70°/47°	5%	2%	W 7 mph
Monday October 21	Sunny	73°/46°	2%	1%	NW 6 mph
Tuesday October 22	Sunny	72°/49°	8%	4%	SW 9 mph

NOTE: Conditions subject to change. Always check a daily forecast prior to activities that can be affected by the weather.

TheSomervilleTimes.com Comments of the Week

Response to: *Padres Latinos bridges gaps, lifts up Latino youth and moms, and advocates*

Akari Minami says:

Padres Latinos has greatly helped the community by supporting parents, sharing important resources, and fighting for education, showing the power of helping each other in tough times.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

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Northern lights in the northeast



Marylynn O'Malley of Boothbay, ME, snapped this photo of the northern lights last week.

Life in the  by Jimmy Del Ponte

Remember Cabot Farms?



While Jimmy is on hiatus, please enjoy this reprint of an article from September 11, 2010 that you may have missed or forgotten about.

Cabot Farms sits on Broadway just before the block of stores that includes an Asian restaurant, a caterer's headquarters, and the convenience store and Dunkin Donuts.

Outside is the rusty skeletal remains of what was once a colorful awning and entrance way. The facade of the building boasts of an era gone by, with colors very faded and fixtures in advanced decay. It sits beneath what looks like at least six rental units, as the building is huge. In real estate terms it is known as a gold mine. The family that has owned it for decades still owns it as far as I know. A couple of years ago when I spoke to the owner's son, (a well known local musician

back in the 70's who is around my age), they still owned it.

Cabot Farms used to be a hopping function hall, and a pretty swank one at that. It was where they held Rotary Club meetings, Boy Scout "communion breakfasts" and no doubt, a few chamber of commerce gatherings. I pass by it every day and wonder why something hasn't been done with the building. Actually, it was briefly re-opened years ago as a smoke free club called "On Broadway." I remember asking about it when I worked as a real estate agent for Jackie Veri. I believe there were several issues. One was that there was no parking. The other may have been the family's unwillingness to part with the huge property.

I'm thinking it would be a great spot for Tufts students and the cool people that flock to Davis Square to congregate. In this age of green awareness, folks could take the T, walk, bike or scooter to the place. But what would the theme be? If it were

my place it would feature 1960s and 70s music. It may be difficult to bands playing music in a residential area, so a DJ may have to spin. I accept the job thank you!

It could also be a country western theme club like Johnny D's used to be. I wonder if we could get John Penny and John Lincoln Wright to play! I will dig out my cowboy hat and give a big old "yee ha" to that!

Another place that used to be a hot spot in the city was the back room of the Rose Bud Diner known as The Surrey Room. I wore platform shoes and played in a live disco band there back in the day. The Stephen James Room was behind the Star Market off Elm Street and has also gone bye-bye.

And who can forget the lovely dungeon called The Jumbo Lounge in Teele Square? Every Villen has a Jumbo story. While we are on the subject of joints that are history, who can forget Kay and Chips late night breakfast eatery outside of Davis Square? The eggshells weren't the only

things that got broken in there. If you wanted late night entertainment, all you had to do was look around at the clientele at Kay and Chips. I was one of the afterhours crowd acting up there quite often. Studleys, The Embassy Lounge, The Brass Lantern, Khoury's and Jaspers are all gone. When it was "hotel, motel time" the popular place to hit for a late last call was The Pointer Post.

I walk by the old Cabot Farms and I think of the possibilities. Maybe we could just have a nice place for us old Somerville kids to go and sit and sip coffee and reminisce about the good old days. I remember being an eight year old cub scout in that building enjoying a scrambled eggs and bacon breakfast. Maybe it could re-open as "Villen-Haven." Maybe not. Any backers? Call me. I would like to get a hold of some of the furniture and fixtures that are gathering dust inside Cabot Farms. I bet there are a few choice collectibles in there.

Student Charlie Cards are back

All year. Every student in grades 7-12 received a free Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority (MBTA) pass from Somerville Public Schools to use during the 2024-2025 school year. (Students ages 11 and younger ride for free on MBTA buses and trains.) Learn more about the pass program and its features at: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-departments/somerville-family-learning-collaborative-sflc/free-mbta-cards>

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Somerville Fair Housing Commission Question of the week

Q: Is it against the law for the lease to require a tenant to shovel?

A: It is against the law. Here's what a local attorney told us: "For most properties with one common point of access, this clause is illegal. You can only do it if the unit has a separate point of access, and it does not apply to walkways or driveways which must be shoveled by the landlord. I am advising landlords not to make tenants responsible for any shoveling at all. Otherwise, it could even be a 93A violation for an illegal clause."



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Somerville launching VoteSomerville tool

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne is pleased to share that the City of Somerville has created a new web page where voters can look up their current address to verify their ward and polling place ahead of the November 2024 Presidential Election.

The portal is designed to provide Somerville voters with localized, precise ward and polling place information so you know where to go on Election Day. To use the portal, visit [somerville-ma.gov/votesomerville](https://www.somerville-ma.gov/votesomerville) and start typing your address into the search bar. Simply keep typing until you see a match, and then click on the correct matching address. The portal will then display your

ward, precinct, and polling place with address, as well as the names and contact information of your city, state, and federal officials.

You will also find helpful links with directions to your polling place, instructions on how to register to vote, vote-by-mail guidance, and ballot dropbox locations.

Under rare circumstances, such as new construction, your address may not appear in the search. If you don't find your address, you can also contact the Elections Department at 617-625-6600 ext. 4200 to verify your polling place or check with the Commonwealth's online tool for finding election information.

A complete list of polling places is available on the city's website: <https://www.somervillema.gov/pollingplaces>.

This tool was created as an enhancement to existing statewide tools, providing Somerville-specific information as well as additional translation options to meet the needs of the city's residents.

Translations: Somerville has made the text of each ballot question on the November ballot available online in 12 languages. You can find these translated ballots on the city's website. If you need help at your polling place, interpreters are available by phone on-demand. You can request an interpreter by asking

one of the poll workers at your polling place.

Accessibility: The State of Massachusetts and the City of Somerville work to ensure equal access to all for voting. Poll workers are trained to assist voters with disabilities, and all polling places include accessible parking, entrances, and ramps wherever there are stairs.

Early voting and all polling locations must have at least one accessible voting machine. AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminals are available at all Somerville polling locations for visually impaired voters and can also read your ballot to you before you print it out and submit it.

Capacity audience attends Davis Square Community Safety meeting

CONT. FROM PG 1

to recent incidents in the Davis Square area, including two stabbings in late September within a few days of each other. Each of the city officials provided brief presentations describing their roles in helping to address the safety concerns in the Davis Square. The theme of balancing options for the at-need population and enforcement to address public safety concerns was a recurring theme. The officials provided information while emphasizing that they were looking for community engagement and cooperation.

Highlights included Mayor Ballantyne's emphasis that her office is "fully focused" on the concerns of residents and that she visits the area daily at many different times of day. She said she has seen the positive effects of the city's efforts over the past weeks.

Deputy Chief Donovan presented some statistics on the rate of incidents and the increase in police presence. During the seven-week period during August and September, there were 674 Directed Patrols and 156 Park Walk and Talks (an effort by SPD to build trust and understanding with the unhoused population), almost tripled relative to 2023.

The increased patrols have contributed to 13 arrests over that same period. During the public discussion, one resident from the area talked about witnessing a Park Walk and Talk encounter and described it as a 30-to-35-minute discussion that was "received very well by the unhoused people".

In all, 21 Somerville residents presented comments and questions during the hour of public discussion that followed the presentations from city officials. The residents presented a variety of views during which their concern and passion was evident. In all cases the audience was respectful, and the applause received by often conflicting ideas indicated that a diverse cross-section of the community residents was present in the audience as well as among the speakers.

Some themes that were touched on multiple times across the questions, comments, and responses were:

- Residents do not feel safe or comfortable in the public areas of Davis Square and in the words of the final speaker "we're not coming here because we're happy". Several residents questioned why it seemed to have to get to this point before action was

taken. All participants recognize that this is a nationwide problem of housing and drug use and not specific to Somerville. However, there was a belief that the shift away from community policing has damaged the relationship between the community and the police force, and that tolerance of open drug use has contributed to making Davis Square particularly vulnerable to these problems. A 21-year Somerville resident who lives within a block of the bike path described it as "incredible to have our community police back" after letting the problem "lie fallow for so long".

- There is a clear struggle with choosing actions that can both provide more safety and can also be sustained to provide long-term solutions. Although some of the city's responses (e.g., a proposed Supervised Consumption Site) seemed to some residents to promote drug use, to others it represents the reliance on "evidence-based" approaches that minimize the impact of drug use to the community. One resident acknowledged that it takes "courage" to make commitments to these measures in preference to harsher enforcement.

- The city is struggling to cope with safety problems given the existing re-

sources. One resident questioned why the increase in police presence in Davis Square comes at the expense of police presence in other areas of the city. Mayor Ballantyne shared that the city is finding it difficult to fill the six unfilled positions at the SPD, meaning that officers are asked to work extra hours to meet the recent demands. This includes Chief Benford, who while recognizing it is part of his commitment to the job, has had to "buy [his] daughter off with ice cream" because of stretches like the 11 days before the meeting, which included working 8 16-hour days with no days off for.

Chief Benford closed the meeting by offering a "token of action" that he would be looking to work with community stakeholders and make them part of the solution to promote "buy-in" from the community as the city develops a plan specifically designed to meet the needs of Somerville. The meeting was taped by Somerville GovTV and is available for viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4PSyAXXQT0>. The community is encouraged to send e-mails with follow up questions and comments to cm@somervillema.gov.

Join SomerStreets Spooktacular 'Monster Mash'this Sunday

CONT. FROM PG 1

- Ghosts of Somerville Tour
- Pumpkin carving
- Magic and acrobatic shows
- Vintage vendors with Blue Bandana Relics and Tiny Turns Paperie

For more information, and a schedule of events, visit: [somervilleartscouncil.org/somerstreets/monster](https://www.somervilleartscouncil.org/somerstreets/monster)

Road Closures and Parking Restrictions
To ensure public safety at this SomerStreets event, the following road closures and parking bans will be in effect.

Somerville Ave. from School St to Warren Ave.: Closed to all vehicular traffic 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.; no parking 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Quincy St. and Church St. will become two-way streets between Summer St. and Somerville Ave. 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to allow access for abutters. Bow St. will also be two ways for abutters only.

HP spots will be assigned on Carlton St. and Church St.

MBTA buses will be rerouted from

11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. For locations of rerouted bus stops, visit [MBTA.com](https://www.mbta.com).

For more information, visit www.somervilleartscouncil.org. With questions about the festival or press inquiries, please contact Events Coordinator, Iaritz Menjivar imenjivar@somervillema.gov.

Public Information not finalized for city's Anti-Displacement Small Business Committee

By Jeffrey Shwom

It has been almost 18 months since the City of Somerville originally began seeking community members to join one of three Displacement Committees as part of the Anti-Displacement Task Force. While information concerning residential displacement, including rent stabilization listening sessions and consideration of a State Legislature petition, has been shared and efforts have been tracked more formally on the Task Forces website, information concerning the Small Business/Enterprise Displacement Committee's specific recommendations have yet to be updated publicly since May.

In April 2023, the city, in response to pressing matters like historic high rents, displacement and affordability issues, convened a year-long Anti-Displacement Task Force to "research and recommend policies to prevent residential displacement (and) to advocate for a wider range of the Somerville community, including small business displacement and cultural displacement." The goal of this task force was to "develop programming and policy recommendations that aim to equitably reduce the rate of displacement of people who live in, have businesses in, or make up the cultural fabric of the city."

The Residential Displacement Committee has been in wide view and efforts at the local level have transitioned to focus on a 2023 Rent Stabilization Home Rule Petition titled "Authorizing the City of Somerville to Regulate Rent in Residential Dwelling Units," that was sent to State Legislators in late 2023/early 2024. The Small Business/Enterprise Committee has had less updates shared publicly to date.

This Committee includes dedicated community stakeholders like Committee Co-Chair and All She Wrote Books owner Christina Pascucci-Ciampa, La Brasa owner Daniel Bojorquez,

El Potro Mexican Grill owner Joe Carreiro, Senior Economic Development Planner Ted Fields, and Union Square Main Street Executive Director Jessica Eshleman.

At least two Items have been considered as part of this committee's feedback to and coordination with Economic Development: publishing a multilingual Commercial Tenant Toolkit, to increase knowledge about small business leasing commercial property, and a possible amendment to Somerville's Vacant Storefront Ordinance.

Luis Quizhpe, Strategic Planning and Equity Manager, told *The Times* that the city has engaged with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to create the Toolkit and that an "Amendment of Vacant Storefront Ordinance," similar to Arlington and Lowell ordinances, could help reduce the length of commercial vacancies by revising Somerville's current ordinance with stronger penalties to property owners with unused storefronts.

When asked about timing for finalizing these two recommendations, along with others, Quizhpe said that they are still in the drafting phase. "A full document won't likely be released until January 2025," 20 months after the initial formation of the committee. When asked why there has been a delay, Quizhpe indicated, "committees needed additional time to finalize recommendation drafting (and due to) staffing capacity" within Economic Development. The presentation of recommendations was originally scheduled for May 2024.

Quizhpe indicated that a public release of all of the Task Force's recommendations is waiting to be approved by the mayor, with hopes for a large November 2024 public meeting featuring "the screening of our displacement stories short film project, a presentation of our findings and



Reducing the length of commercial vacancies is but one of the goals of the city's Anti-Displacement Small Business Committee.

recommendations, and a roundtable discussion with committee members." A summary of findings with visual images is also hoped to be presented at this meeting as well.

According to the city's request for community members to serve back in April 2023, all committees would meet monthly and the whole Task Force would meet four times between May 2023 and May 2024. However, public videos do not continue past the February 15, 2024 meeting, where findings of students from the Harvard Kennedy School, John F. Kennedy School of Government's strategic study called "Mitigating Small Business Displacement in Somerville, MA" was presented.

On May 7, 2024, when updates were requested by Councilors Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Scott and Councilor Wilson, the city's Director of Economic Development, Rachel Nadkarni, acknowledged to the City Council "how little protection there is for commercial tenants, partly because of a lack of understanding of how to work with leases." Senior Planner Ted Fields updated the City Council that the Small Business Committee was continuing its work at that time.

The third committee under the

Anti-Displacement Task Force Displacement, like artists and was concerned with Cultural musicians.

LEGAL NOTICE

VOTER REGISTRATION



LAST DAY TO REGISTER FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024

The deadline for in person registration is Saturday, October 26, 2024, at 5:00pm at City Hall or online by midnight Saturday night, October 26, 2024

Election Department: Somerville City Hall Hours

MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY ----- 8:30 a.m. ----- 4:30 p.m.
THURSDAY ----- 8:30 a.m. ----- 7:30 p.m.
FRIDAY ----- 8:30 a.m. ----- 12:30 p.m.

To request a voter registration form

- CALL 617-625-6600 ext. 4200 for a Voter Mail-In Registration form
- Download a Mail-In Voter Registration form from the City Website and mail to the Election Department
- Register Online by visiting the City Website

All mail-in voter registration forms must be post-marked by 10/26/24.

The City of Somerville does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, national origin, sexual preference, disability, or any other protected category in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services or activities. Auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, reasonable modifications in policies and procedures will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request

Somerville School Construction Advisory Group holds first meeting

By Katherine Davis

On October 8, the new Construction Advisory Group (CAG), as requested by Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, held its first meeting to address the continued displacement of PK-8 grade students from the Winter Hill Community Innovation School (WHCIS). After the school temporarily closed in June 2023 after a chunk of concrete fell in a stairwell, and then indefinitely closed after the discovery of asbestos in August 2023, Winter Hill students have been attending the Edgerly Education Center and the Capuano School for over a year.

In December 2023, WHCIS was accepted by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) into the Eligibility Phase for a grant towards construction of, or the renovation of the school. The Benjamin G. Brown School is another school in the district that is in need of assistance to avoid any similar incidents as the aforementioned. While Brown was not selected by the MSBA program, the MSBA is willing to start one project that will accommodate both schools. The Construction Advisory Group was then formed as requested by the mayor, comprised of community members who, within the upcoming 13 months, will work together in the timeline provided by the MSBA to configure a recommendation for the mayor as to the location of the new Winter Hill Community Innovation School, and / or whether this construction will include the students at the Benjamin G. Brown School. Superintendent Rubén Carmona stated that the “end result [of this advisory group] is to make sure that our kids get the best option for them, and also that our community is kept at the center of the decision-making process”.

The objectives of the very first meeting were:

Objective one: To meet and get to know the Construction Advisory Group members

Parent Representatives from both affected schools, as well as from the Somerville Public School District were present. Other attendees included those from the City Council, the School Committee, Community Group Representatives, and Business Community Representatives. The Construction Advisory Group also has selected Student Representatives from Somerville High School who were unable to attend, and hopes to also fill Teach-

er Representative positions. Suggested possible Representatives by the CAG included those from the neighborhoods of the three proposed locations of the new school— WHCIS, Brown, or the Trum Field. Representative Marta Guerra Pastrian stated a need for representatives, specifically those in unique situations such as public housing and in special programs particular to WHCIS, asking “where the school is placed and whether it is bigger or smaller, in what ways will this affect these communities that probably have less voice than others?”

Objective two: To go over the purpose of the CAG

The purpose of the new Construction Advisory Group is to ensure that the community has a say in the decisions being made that directly impact current students, families, and teachers, as well as the future of these people and the community as a whole. The hope is that members of the community will feel represented by the CAG, and that all possible voices and concerns are heard and discussed by the city regarding this particular issue. The main overarching questions and concerns the CAG is working to address in the provided timeline are:

1. If we build a new school rather than renovate the old Winter Hill School, should the school be located at the WHCIS site at Sycamore Street, or elsewhere?
2. Will the Brown School be included in a joint school, or, if not, how should we plan for the future of Brown?
3. What do these choices mean for the Somerville Public Schools and city as a whole?

Objective three: To identify the principles for a successful outcome of the work

The main goal of the CAG is to be able to come together to make a decision that benefits the City of Somerville as a whole. The members of the Construction Advisory Group identified the following as what they would consider a successful outcome of their work over the next year:

- + All students will have access to the best school possible, including a climate friendly and climate resilient school building as soon as possible
- + No further displacement of families or students, and the prevention of further gentrification already being faced in the Winter Hill neighborhood
- + Decisions that are made alongside students and educators, overall commu-



The new Construction Advisory Group held its first meeting on Tuesday, October 8.

nity support

- + A permanent modern space for WHCIS students, and a long-term plan for all schools
- + A decision that works to restore trust within the community after the displacement that has occurred
- + That the mayor accepts the recommendation provided by the CAG
- + Success for the neighborhoods involved— economically, culturally, educationally, and politically
- + A decision that is justifiable, and makes sense to people beyond “this doesn’t directly benefit me”

An example of this would be the way the district is designed, where for some it may be less convenient to send students to the current Winter Hill location, however the original placement of this school was to encourage the under-served neighborhood to enroll students at the then, new, nearby school, increasing public access to education.

Civics teacher Megan Brady from the Winter Hill Community Innovation School was the only commentator during the public commentary portion of the meeting. Providing a very sound argument, she urged the CAG to look at the project done by her 8th grade civics students last year regarding the new WHCIS school. Students conducted over 600 interpersonal interviews with their peers and community members in four languages, collecting a remarkable amount of data and information as to what the community, and students in particular, thought of

as their “dream” school. The results were overwhelmingly hopeful for what may seem unexpected – working bathrooms, an auditorium, and more green space. Her “vision of success is that they get their dream school because it shows them that the adults in their community listen to them and center them.”

Objective four: To discuss the process and protocols of the meetings

Beyond the main goals of the Construction Advisory Group, the CAG also identified the following as their job within their meetings:

- + To include input from people with a broad range of perspectives and experiences from across the City of Somerville to make an informed decision.
- + To help build a shared understanding about what it is that the community wants, what Somerville and the Somerville Public School District needs, and what limitations and / or issues they face.
- + To follow through on outreach to Somerville residents and families, and listen to what the community thinks is important through the Broad Public Process
- + To develop a range of effective and achievable options to be presented that meet the needs of the community, city, and school, all while following the prescribed MSBA process.
- + To evaluate and narrow down options based on community input and thoughtful deliberation.
- + To align on a “best possible approach” to recommend to Mayor Ballantyne and the School Building

COMMENTARY

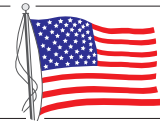
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Step right up folks, the shots are on the house.

Our View Of The Times



Who among us actually likes getting a shot of any kind? There are certainly a given number of masochistic types out there who don't mind taking a little jab in the arm or ... elsewhere.

But many of us put off or completely avoid the prickly deed for as long as we can push it, until the cold and flu season completely bypasses us altogether, or we fall victim to the merciless clutches of our mi-

crobiological nemeses. What's more, with the threat of COVID-19 still lingering, it's more important than ever to protect ourselves though the oncoming flu season.

And so, the City of Somerville comes to the rescue with its annual flu vaccine clinics, already in progress, offering free flu vaccines for Somerville residents ages 6 months and older at various times and locations throughout the city until the sup-

ply of vaccine is exhausted.

Go online right away to find out the times and locations of the scheduled clinics at: <https://www.somervillema.gov/vaccinations>.

The CDC recommends everyone six months or older get a flu and COVID-19 vaccine unless otherwise advised by their doctor. Both flu and COVID-19 vaccines are conveniently offered at multiple loca-

tions across Somerville.

One quick jab in the arm or ... you know where ... can make a difference between enjoying a happy, healthy fall and winter or facing a miserably bleak one. Let's face it, taking the time and effort to do this will be well worth it.

And your family, friends, coworkers, and everyone else you regularly come into contact with will thank you too.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

birthday to **Vicki Potaris**. We wish her a great day. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Courtney Nelson, Laurie Tierno Johnson, Bill McCarthy, Darell Lee Shanafelt, George Lally, Charlene Murphy** and **Jim Douthart** a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

On **Friday, October 18**, and **Saturday, October 19**, with doors at 6:30 p.m., **Boston Fuzzstival** returns for its 10th edition with 20 bands over two days at **The Armory** in Somerville. Fuzzstival is a cele-

bration of local and regional music hosted by **Illegally Blind**. More info on lineup and tickets available here: <https://events.humanitix.com/boston-fuzzstival-2024>.

Assembly Row celebrates their **10 Year Anniversary**. To celebrate they will host their first-ever **drone show** on **Saturday, October 19**. In 2014, Assembly Row opened its doors, debuting its first stores, restaurants, and apartments. Sponsored by **Capital One Café**, this public event kicks off at 3:00 p.m. Enjoy a variety of activities, including free play at **Club VoloLink** opens in a new window, live music on **The Lawn**, and drinks from the **Downeast Ci-**

derLink opens in a new window pop-up. The festivities will conclude with a 150-drone light show at 7:00 p.m.

Shoot Your Shot is the current exhibition at the at the **Somerville Armory's Rooted Cafe**. A **Community Photo Exhibition** presented by **Lumentation Photo Lab** on view at **Rooted Armory Café**, 191 Highland Ave, **from October 9 to November 13**.

Visit a strange and unusual **Small Mart** this **Saturday** at **The Crystal Ballroom** at the **Somerville Theatre**, 55 Davis Square from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Free

entry, 30+ local vendors, all ages, wheelchair accessible, full bar. 21+ to drink.

The second **Tavern Talk** hosted by the **Somerville Museum** at **Aeronaut Brewing** takes place on **Sunday, November 3**, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. **Tavern Talk: Vitamin B for Victory: How Beer Helped Win World War II**. In this special presentation by **Dan Breen, PhD**, we will follow the course of American beers from the Solomons to Bastogne, as the Greatest Generation marched towards victory with Lagers in hand. For tickets and more information visit <https://www.somervillemuseum.org/>.

Continued on page 18

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#945

- Jennifer Garner and Bradley Cooper got their big breaks in which TV show?
- What current TV show is the longest-running live-action primetime show ever?
- The Atlantic hurricane season goes from when to when?
- On July 17, 1943, Joseph Duckworth made history by doing what?
- What is the fastest fish in the ocean?
- What fish is known as a poor man's lobster?
- Which condiment was used as medicine during the 1830s?
- Vodka is made from which vegetable?
- Who was the first female television news anchor in the United States?
- What 1960s TV show was set aboard the USS Seaview?
- Which continent is also an island?
- Which major city is located on two continents?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

- It's impossible for you to lick your own elbow.
- Cap'n Crunch's full name is Captain Horatio Magellan Crunch.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

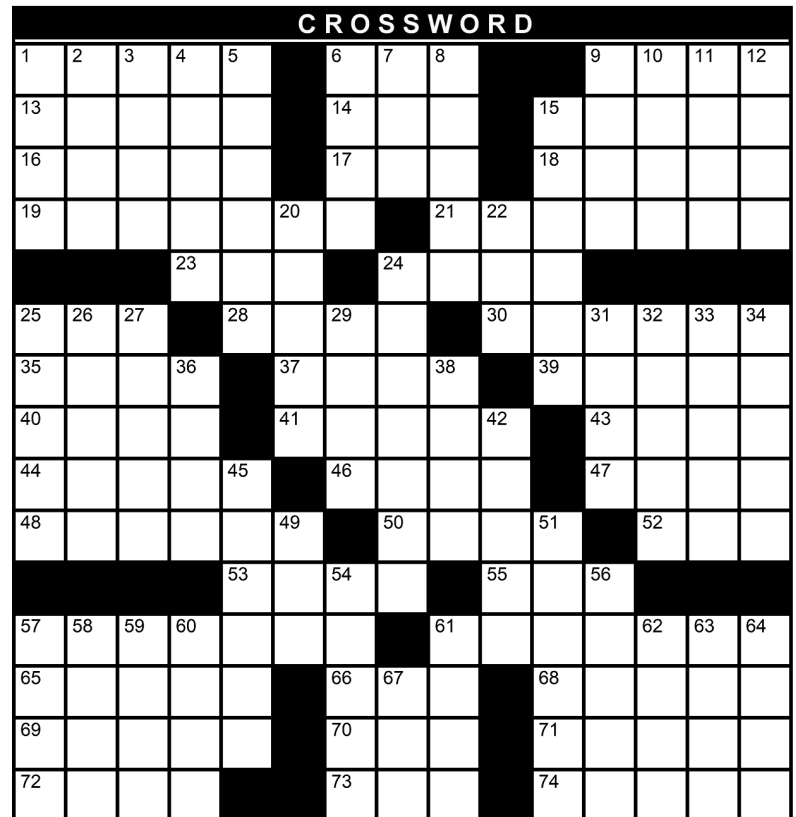
HALLOWEEN

ACROSS

- Cut of lamb
- Numbers, abbr.
- Friend from Down Under
- Jonas Salk's conquest
- Bingo!
- Secret storage
- Like a beaver?
- Sun, in Spain
- Knightly suit
- Can take the form of a certain flying mammal
- Spell casting
- Between E and NE
- Fisherman's fly
- Away's partner
- Biology lab supply
- Offspring of alumnus
- Month before Nisan
- Latte choice
- Filthy dough
- Sound on a scale
- Homeowner's Halloween option
- Subsequently
- A deadly sin?
- Competitive advantage
- Assigned theater spot
- Popular post
- Biblical firstborn
- What skeletons and skedaddlers have in common
- Tiresias in "Oedipus Rex", e.g.
- French vineyard
- Grisly
- Ghostly apparition
- Throat dangler
- "The Murders in the ___ Morgue"
- Actress Watts
- Relating to a lobe
- Songwriter Gershwin
- a.k.a. tangelos
- Pitcher
- Lt.'s inferior, in the Navy
- River clay deposits

DOWN

- Hightailed it
- Adjective for Merlin, hairwise
- Aquarium scum



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- "Unattractive" Munster relative
- Sl vakian monetary unit
- Project Apollo org.
- Exclamation of surprise
- Pico de gallo, e.g.
- Painter Chagall
- Pinnacle
- Chris Hemsworth's Marvel role
- Like decorated house on Halloween
- El Chapo's organization, e.g.
- MC Hammer's "Too ___ to Quit" album
- Black gold
- Puppy purveyor, often
- *Teeth of #19 Across
- Love intensely
- a.k.a. honey badger
- 0.405 hectare
- Blood and ___
- Partner of pains
- Spooky house sound
- "Fiddler on the Roof" gossipy character
- Coral barrier
- Gads, anagrammed
- Mold a mind
- Expel a lawyer
- Ever, to a poet
- Bluish planet
- #12 Down, alt. sp.
- Sushi option
- Stubborn beast
- Swear, not curse
- Type of hexahedron
- Having wings
- Black-eyed legumes
- Sound of a bell
- Fail to mention
- Magnolia State, abbr.
- R.I.P. container

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

Y	A	L	T	A	W	A	S	B	A	B	A		
E	L	I	O	T	A	M	T	B	O	N	E	S	
A	G	E	N	T	R	Y	E	E	R	O	S	E	
R	A	N	G	E	R	S	A	T	L	A	N	T	A
A	S	H	O	M	I	T							
O	W	L	T	E	E	M	S	E	A	G	E	R	
S	H	A	H	A	C	N	E	R	E	E	V	E	
C	A	P	O	S	H	I	R	T	O	N	E	S	
A	L	U	M	S	O	B	O	E	N	I	N	E	
R	E	P	E	A	T	U	S	S	R	E	S	T	
S	A	S	S	T	E	A							
C	L	A	S	S	I	C	J	A	C	K	S	O	N
E	A	G	L	E	A	L	E	E	R	O	D	E	
S	P	U	E	S	L	E	E	S	O	L	O	S	
S	P	E	W	P	A	R	S	N	O	R	T		

OBITUARY

Raymond Joseph



Raymond Joseph, born in Cayes, Hati, MA, on October 22, 1937, passed away on October 8, 2024 in Somerville, Massachusetts, after a long illness. He is survived by his children Robert Joseph, Magalie Joseph, Estelle Joseph, Emaze Joseph, Brunel Joseph, Leonel Joseph, his long-time partner Ermithe Joseph, his daughter-in-law Asselia Joseph, his brother Joseph Richeme, his grand-children Jonathan Bazile, Philemon Joseph, Magda Joseph, Marjorie Joseph, Mimose Joseph, Michelet Joseph, Byanka Joseph, Kenson Joseph, Anne Bruelle Joseph, Brunise Joseph, Berthonise Joseph,

Armelle Joseph, Davidson Joseph, his several nephews and nieces, including Baussuet Charles, Esther Richemond, Richemaille Richeme, and Jolicoeur Fanfan.

Raymond was a hard-working and dedicated individual who served his birth country and community for more than fifteen years as a police officer and also worked as a farmer. He immigrated to the United States in August 2007 and settled in Somerville where he remained until his passing. Raymond became a naturalized citizen in 2018. He was proud to become a U.S. citizen and voted regularly in all elections. He followed politics fervently. For many years, Raymond volunteered his time as a helper at the Elizabeth Peabody House food pantry. He was passionate about cooking and relished a good meal with his friends and family. He was also a fitness enthusiast who walked daily the various neigh-

borhood streets near and far from his Somerville residence. He was an outgoing individual who valued friendships and family gatherings. Raymond easily built connections and greeted everyone in and around the neighborhood and on the street. His ever-present smile and the warmth, depth and intelligence behind it will be sorely missed. We could not have asked for a better parent, grandparent, sibling, uncle and friend, and will miss Raymond every day. His memory will live on in the hearts of a11 those who loved him.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, NOVEMBER 2, 2024 at the Holy Bible Baptist Church, 64 College Ave, Somerville, beginning at 9:00AM.

Service will conclude with burial at St. Paul Cemetery, Arlington.

To plant Memorial Trees in memory of Raymond Joseph, please click here to visit our Sympathy Store.

Spooky individual in Somerville



While out for a walk, former Somerville Alderman Bob McWatters encountered a spooky individual in the Davis Square area

**The Somerville Times
Historical Fact of the Week**



Eagle feathers #315

This article first appeared in the October 17, 2012 edition of *The Somerville Times*

It was a Graveyard Smash

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

The “fiftieth” anniversary is also known as the Golden Anniversary. And if there ever was a golden song to come out of Somerville, it was *The Monster Mash* by Bobby “Boris” Pickett. It is now sixty-two years later and *The Monster Mash* has delighted those who enjoy celebrating Halloween and has become legendary, forever securing a spot in American pop culture.



Bobby Pickett was born on February 11, 1940, in Somerville, MA, and grew up in Winter Hill. He attended Somerville High School and was the captain of its basketball team. His father managed a movie theater and, as a result, Bobby developed a love for movies and dreamed of someday becoming a famous actor.

When he turned 21, he moved to Hollywood, CA, to pursue his dream. While his pursuit of acting never quite panned out, he did belong to a rock band. Ever since he was young, Bobby did a great Boris Karloff impression; and he would do this jokingly between songs they played.

His friends took his impression more seriously than Bobby did, and they convinced him to create a song that displayed his talent. They recorded *The Monster Mash* in one take and took it to numerous studios, getting rejected each time. Finally, they found an agent who was able to get one hundred copies of the record pressed and distributed.

The rest is history. It caught on immediately and the song reached #1 on the Billboard top 100 on October 20, 1962. It has since charted on the American Billboard 100 three more times, including December of

Continued on page 17

LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notices can also be viewed on our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com**NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE**

By virtue of and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage dated February 2, 2023 by Building Alliance Group LLC to Steven A. Ross, Trustee of QS Lending Three Trust u/d/t dated October 25, 2022 (recorded with Middlesex County (South) Registry of Deeds in Book 80884, Page 355), said mortgage recorded with the Middlesex County (South) Registry of Deed in Book 81222, Page 147, and which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction at **1:00 p.m. on the 4th day of November, 2024** on the premises at 30 Richdale Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage.

To wit:

Property Address: **30 Richdale Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts 02145**

The land in Somerville, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, with the buildings thereon, and bounded and described as follows:

Being the lot numbered 12 on a plan of land belonging to Heirs of Oliver Tufts, made by Chas. D. Elliot, E&S., dated March, 1885, and recorded with the Middlesex South District Deeds in Book of Plans 45, Plan 40, being described as follows:

NORTHEASTERLY by Richdale Avenue, forty (40) feet;

SOUTHEASTERLY by lot numbered 11 on said plan, eighty (80) feet;

SOUTHWESTERLY by land now or formerly of the Boston & Lowell Railroad, forty (40) feet;

NORTHWESTERLY by lot numbered 13 on said plan, eighty (80) feet.

Being the same premises conveyed to the herein named grantor(s) by deed recorded with the Middlesex Norfolk County Registry of Deeds herewith [Book 81222, Page 144].

Premises to be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens and rights of any tenants and parties in possession, if there be any, or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed. The successful bidder will pay all costs of recording the foreclosure deed and any other foreclosure documents including, without limitation, all state and county excise stamp fees, and shall also be responsible for any Title V inspection and repair requirements.

Terms of sale: A deposit of Twenty-Five Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$25,000.00) by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check to Baker, Braverman & Barbadoro, P.C., 1200 Crown Colony Drive, Suite 610, Quincy, MA 02169 within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. In the event of an error in this publication, the description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.

Steven A. Ross, Trustee of QS Lending Three Trust
u/d/t dated October 5, 2022
Present holder of said mortgage
By his Attorneys,
Baker, Braverman & Barbadoro, P.C.
1200 Crown Colony Drive, Suite 610
Quincy, MA 02169

10/9/24, 10/16/24 The Somerville Times



Section 00 11 13
ADVERTISEMENT TO BID
MGL c.149 Over \$150K

The **SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY**, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids from Contractors for the Facade Cleaning at Bryant Manor at Bryant Manor (667-4) in Somerville, Massachusetts, in accordance with the documents prepared by **REVERSE ARCHITECTURE**.

The Project consists of but not limited to: cleaning the concrete and brick masonry facade. Areas to be cleaned include all vertical brick and concrete surfaces, including both sides of concrete balcony walls. The contractor will supply lifts and equipment as required to reach all building surfaces.

Balcony access will be coordinated with the Awarding Authority in advance.

The work is estimated to cost **\$328,750.00**.

Bids are subject to M.G.L. c.149 §44A-J & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §526 to 27H inclusive.

THIS PROJECT IS BEING ELECTRONICALLY BID AND HARD COPY BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please review the instructions in the bid documents on how to register as an electronic bidder. All Bids shall be submitted online at www.biddocs.com and received no later than the date and time specified.

General bidders must be certified by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) in the following category of work, General Building Construction, and must submit a current DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility and signed DCAMM Prime/General Contractor Update Statement.

General Bids will be received until **24 October 2024 at 3:00PM EDT** and publicly opened online, forthwith.

General bids and sub-bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount (including all alternates), and made payable to the **SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY**. Note: A bid deposit is not required for Projects advertised under \$50,000.

Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available for review at www.biddocs.com (may be viewed and downloaded electronically at no cost).

PRE-BID CONFERENCE / SITE VISIT: Scheduled
Date and Time: 10/15/2024 at 2:00PM EDT
Address: 75 Myrtle St, Somerville, MA 02145
Instructions: Meet at front entrance

The hard copy Contract Documents may be seen at:

Nashoba Blue Inc.
433 Main Street
Hudson, MA 01749
978-568-1167

10/9/24, 10/16/24 The Somerville Times

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from our website:
www.TheSomervilleTimes.com



SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY
30 Memorial Road
Somerville, Massachusetts 02145
Telephone (617) 625-1152 Fax (617) 628-7057
TDD (617) 628-8889

Response for Proposals-Rooftop Antennas

Bryant Manor
75 Myrtle Street, Somerville Ma. 02143

1. INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposal is issued by the Somerville Housing Authority (herein after the "Authority") to solicit proposals for the lease of available rooftop and penthouse space. These spaces are available for the installation and operation of communication facilities. These facilities are not limited to, Cellular Telephone, Personal Communication Systems, Paging, Land Mobile Radio, and Internet Antenna's. The lease of these spaces will be on a nonexclusive basis.

2. PREMISES TO BE LEASED

The Authority has rooftop and penthouse space for lease at Bryant Manor located at 75 Myrtle Street in Somerville, Ma. Included in this document is a layout of the roof at this site.. Specific locations on the roof or penthouse for installation of equipment will be viewed in the field and negotiated as such.

3. LEASE TERM

Lease terms must be at least five years with extensions if desired.

4. LEASE RATES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULES

The monthly rent is due on the first of every month.
The monthly rent is subject to negotiation as is the yearly escalator.

There will be a walkthrough on October 30th, 2024 at 10:00 AM at 75 Myrtle Street Somerville. Any questions please contact Brian Langton at 617 625 1152 Ext.331 or email BrianL@sha-web.org

10/16//24 The Somerville Times



SOMERVILLE CITY COUNCIL
LICENSES AND PERMITS
PUBLIC HEARING

There will be a Public Hearing before the City Council's **Committee on Licenses and Permits** on **Wednesday, October 23, 2024** at 6:00 PM, on a petition for a New Garage License.

New Garage License, Building 2 Owner LLC, 808 Windsor St, 242 vehicles inside, 0 vehicles outside for storing vehicles only, 7 days a week 24 hours

This meeting will be held by remote participation, using the Zoom Webinar platform.

You have two ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. To attend and be heard, enter the link exactly as it appears below into your internet browser. You will then be asked to register for the meeting.

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NLi3BmWKQbCUQEEM4wxITw

2. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may email your comments to publiccomments@somervillema.gov, or send them by US mail to the City Clerk, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA, 02143. Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Council.

KIMBERLY M. WELLS
CITY CLERK

10/16/24 The Somerville Times

Be sure to visit us online at www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

Somerville School Construction Advisory Group holds first meeting

CONT. FROM PG 6

Committee, all within the MSBA timeline.

Objective five: To confirm future meeting dates and times

The very first Construction Advisory Group meeting was held in person at Somerville High School, however the group discussed the possibility of remote meetings or hybrid meetings to help meet the

needs of Group members. There has not been a decision at this time as to the format of next month's meeting, but heavy conversation over ensuring that all community members have access to attend and participate in future CAG meetings occurred. The proposal of standing meeting dates such as the 2nd Monday each month, excluding

November due to the holiday, was made. Tentative dates of the next two meetings are Tuesday November 12, and Monday December 9. At the moment these meetings are virtual. Updates on meeting dates and times will be made available on the Somerville Construction Advisory Group page on the Somerville website.

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB Rebid #25-25**

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department, Invites Bids for:

City Hall IT Data Center AC System Replacement

A bid package may be obtained online at: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/procurement-and-contracting-services> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, October 16th, 2024**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2:00 pm, Thursday, October 31st, 2024**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please email Sonia Castro scastro@somervillema.gov for more information.

Sonya Castro
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

10/16/24 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB Rebid #25-09**

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department, Invites Bids for:

On-Call Fleet Towing for DPW Vehicles and Equipment

A bid package may be obtained online at: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/procurement-and-contracting-services> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, October 16th, 2024**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2:00 pm, Monday, November 4th, 2024**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please email Sonia Castro scastro@somervillema.gov for more information.

Sonya Castro
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

10/16/24 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP 25-23**

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department, invites sealed proposals for:

Bank Account Verification Services for EFT Payments

A RFP package may be obtained online at <https://www.bidexpress.com/businesses/33100/home>, <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or from the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **Wednesday, October 16th, 2024**.

Sealed proposals will be received at the above office or via BidExpress until: **2:30 pm, Wednesday, November 6th, 2024**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please email Thupten Chukhatsang at procurement@somervillema.gov for more information.

Thupten Chukhatsang
Senior Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3400

10/16/24 The Somerville Times

Mayor Ballantyne announces new firefighter's union agreement

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne on behalf of the City of Somerville has reached an agreement with Local 76, the union representing Somerville firefighters, for a contract that will provide updated compensation and benefits and help modernize aspects of the department's operations.

The new contract provides competitive annual wage increases, expanded opportunities for incentive pay tied to specialty positions, advanced education, and training, and a new sick leave benefit.

The mayor and Local 76 leaders signed the new three-year contract on Wednesday, October 9. The contract will cover the city's 2024 fiscal year (FY24: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024), as well as FY2025 and FY2026.

"Our firefighters stand at the ready 24/7 to protect the safety of our community, willing and ready to run toward danger rather than away from it to keep every one of us safe. We owe them not just gratitude for taking on this awesome responsibility but also the fair wages and benefits they deserve," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "This new contract reflects our commitment to providing competitive compensation and benefits to our firefighters while ensuring they have the resources and support they need to do their jobs effectively."

"Local 76 is pleased to have come to an agreement through the collective bargaining process," Union President Mike Jefferson added.

Key features of the new contract include:

Competitive annual wage increases: Firefighters will receive a 9% cost of living increase (COLA) over the life of the contract (equaling a 3% cost of living increase each year of the contract retroactive to July 1, 2023).

Expanded education incentives: The contract seeks to keep pace with the increasing cost of higher education and reward firefighters for continuing their education via increased tuition reimbursement funding and increases to base pay for those with advanced degrees.

Increased training incentives: Firefighters who take on additional training and certifications will be rewarded for doing so with higher stipends for specialty positions and training, which allows the city and the department to keep pace with modern firefighting techniques and respond to emergencies in the larger, more complex buildings being developed throughout the city.

New specialty positions to meet evolving city needs: The contract establishes new stipends for a Dedicated Infection Control Officer (DICO) and an Assistant DICO, positions needed in a post-pandemic environment.

More dynamic, skills-based assessment for leadership positions: The contract provides for the city's integration of assessment centers, a skills-based assessment process utilized in unison with a civil service promotional examination, when selecting candidates for District Chief and Deputy Chief positions.

Local 76's membership has voted to ratify the new contract, and the union leadership and Mayor have signed the contract, leaving only the City Council to fund the cost of the contract before it takes effect.

The City of Somerville has recently reached union agreements with three other unions including unions representing the city's crossing guards, fire alarm, and emergency telecommunications/police dispatchers.



Book review – ‘Strong Poison’ by Dorothy L. Sayers

By Dennis Fischman

If you’ve read any detective fiction at all, you’ve heard of Sherlock Holmes. You’ve probably made the acquaintance of Hercule Poirot. But do you know Lord Peter Wimsey? If not, you are in for a treat.

Picture a foppish looking British aristocrat, sporting a monocle. He’s the younger son of the late Duke of Denver, so he has not inherited any great responsibilities: only all the money he needs to drive a fast car, go to nightclubs, and compile a fabulous collection of rare books and manuscripts.

You would think he’s a blithering idiot, at first glance, but that’s his disguise. As author Dorothy Sayers remarks, Lord Peter knows that the easiest way to be smarter than you look is to appear a bit more stupid than you are. (“If anybody ever marries you, it will be for the pleasure of hearing you talk piffle,” he is aptly told.)

Underneath that façade is a

man who wants to know everything, from how the drains work to what women really think and feel. Unlike the sleuth of Baker Street, Peter Wimsey understands the emotional life. He went through the horrors of WW I and came out of it with shell shock (what we today would call PTSD). With the aid of his former comrade in arms, now valet, Mervyn Bunter, Wimsey brings murderers to justice partly to heal himself, partly to restore a sense of order in a world gone mad.

Where should you start this series? If you’re a completist, you could meet Lord Peter plus Bunter and some of the other recurring characters at the very beginning, in *Whose Body?* [1] If you’re interested in his family dynamics, you can see him save his brother Gerald in *Unnatural Death* [2]. For a stand-alone novel that casts light on the modern advertising industry decades before *Mad Men*, read *Murder Must Advertise* [3].

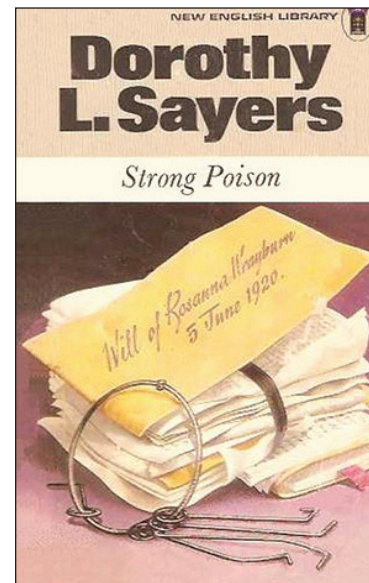
My own recommendation is to

start with *Strong Poison* [4], the first of the books that pair Peter Wimsey with mystery writer Harriet Vane. In this book, she is on trial for allegedly murdering her lover. In 1920’s Britain, that would be scandalous enough. What especially puts her under suspicion is that the murder was committed using a poison that featured in one of her own books!

Peter is convinced that Harriet didn’t do it. What’s more, he’s sure that she’s the woman he’s meant to marry. “What I mean to say is, when all this is over, I want to marry you, if you can put up with me and all that,” he says awkwardly.

But getting them together is going to be ticklish: first he has to make sure she isn’t hanged, and then, the two of them have to figure out whether owing her life to him is going to keep her from ever being free to love him, just for himself.

All that is on top of the differences in class and wealth between a lordling and a wom-



“Strong Poison” by Dorothy L. Sayers. HarperCollins, 1987, 240 pages (originally published 1930).

an making her own living as an author – to say nothing of the notoriety that’s going to follow her the rest of her life. “I intend to marry the prisoner.” “What?” said the Duke. “Good lord what, what?” “If she’ll have me,” said Lord Peter Wimsey”.

This is one of my favorite series of British mysteries, and it is a classic. Pick it up soon!



Dennis Fischman is a member of the Somerville Public Library’s Mystery Book Club and an inveterate reader.

Links:

- [1] https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/192893.Wholes_Body_
- [2] https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/192892.Unnatural_Death
- [3] https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/351559.Murder_Must_Advertise
- [4] https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/246225.Strong_Poison

Annual vigil honoring victims of domestic violence

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, the Somerville Commission for Women, RESPOND, Inc., the Somerville Public Library, and the Department of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) invite residents to attend the city’s annual Domestic Violence Vigil on Wednesday, October 30. This annual vigil is dedicated to commemorating the lives lost to domestic violence in the past year, recognizing the strength of survivors, and renewing our community’s dedication to eradicating domestic violence.

“As a community, we must come together to support those impacted by domestic violence and stand in solidarity with survivors and victims, said Mayor Ballantyne. This vigil is a time for us to reflect, to remember, and to reaffirm our commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone in Somerville.”

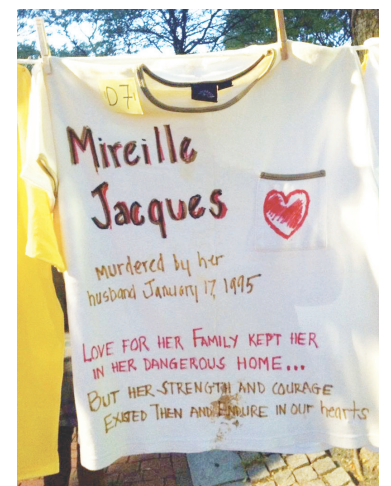
The 2024 Somerville Domestic Violence Vigil will begin at 6:00 p.m. at the East Somerville Library (115 Broadway). If there is rain, the vigil will move indoors to Connexion, 149 Broadway. The event is free and open to the public. Light food and refreshments will be provided. There will be American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation at the event. If you would like to attend, please consider RSVPing in advance here.

Attendees will be invited to raise a candle in remembrance of domestic violence victims and participate in the Clothesline Project – an interactive community art project that raises awareness about domestic violence. A display will be presented from attendees who participated in the Clothesline Project at last year’s vigil and this year’s attendees will be invited to again participate in the community art project.

“This annual candlelight vigil provides a space for us to honor the women, men, and children whose lives were tragically taken by acts of domestic violence this year. By coming together as a community, we show solidarity to our neighbors in need and reaffirm personal commitments to breaking the cycle of violence. We invite everyone to join us in this powerful evening of remembrance as we work towards a future where every person can live free from fear and abuse,” shared Kimberly Sheridan, Somerville Commission for Women Co-Chair.

Victoria Helberg, Chief Executive Officer of Respond INC., shared that “Domestic violence continues to affect far too many lives, leaving a devastating impact on individuals, families, and communities. We gather to honor those whose lives have been tragically lost and to stand united as a community with a shared commitment to end domestic violence. Together, we have the strength to drive meaningful change; it’s through our collective efforts that we can break the cycle and create a safer future for everyone.”

For more information about the vigil, please contact Latoya Saulters, Commissions Coordinator, at lsaulters@somervillema.gov or (857) 274-2719.



Safety protocols under scrutiny after Green Line derailment

By Harry Kane

City Councilors upset by the Green Line's recent trolley derailment voiced their concerns at their bi-weekly meeting on October 10, calling on MBTA officials to implement revised safety protocols during responses to accidents.

Ward 3 City Councilor and President Ben Ewen-Campen condemned the MBTA's response to the derailment on October 1, saying there was a failure in addressing the needs of the passengers in the aftermath of the accident, which occurred on the Red Bridge during a track switch on the way to Union Square from Lechmere Station at 5:00 p.m.

"This was a truly terrifying event, completely unacceptable," said City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen. "All of us are incredibly grateful and relieved that it was not worse."

After hearing the harrowing account of the derailment from Somerville resident Maggie Norcross-Devin, a commuter on the streetcar, Councilor Ewen-Campen was upset.

"When I heard this story, it made my blood boil," Councilor Ewen-Campen said.

Councilor Willie Burnley, Jr. said that he was greatly thankful for the Green Line, however, he said, "I share the deep concerns from my colleague in Ward 3 that what happened was unacceptable."

A number of individuals, including

Somerville residents, were injured in the derailment, said Councilor Burnley Jr.

"When they were told to get off of the train and to walk on tracks to safety, there was no one there to say, 'are you okay,' there was no one there to check them, there was no one there to make sure that we were not sending our constituents into a potentially life-threatening situation," said Councilor Burnley, Jr.

Councilor Burnley, Jr. said that while the partnership with the State of Massachusetts supersedes the city, there needs to be accountability.

"If you are harming our residents, we are going to demand transparency and action from you to ensure that when people step on public transit in Somerville, we know there are safety precautions, protocols and policies that make sure they get home safe to their families."

Somerville resident Maggie Norcross-Devin recounted the harrowing accident in front of the City Council. "Very shortly after we left the station, there was a very big bump, enough to startle everyone," she said. "Then there were a succession of very very violent bumps."

Passengers were screaming, and the 50 commuters were trapped in the lead trolley car.

"There was black smoke filling the front of the car," she recalled.



The Green Line car derailment on Tuesday, October 1, caused a temporary shut-down of part of the line until Thursday of that week. — Photo by Bobbie Toner

The door to the trolley opened shortly afterwards and the passengers exited and waited on the bridge for approximately ten minutes.

"One thing that struck me was that the operators of the train stayed with the train ... they never came to check on the passengers, to my recollection," Norcross-Devin said.

Passengers were apparently told they could use shuttles to get to their destination. Seven riders were transported to local medical centers for evaluation, accord-

ing to officials.

Norcross-Devin says that the MBTA didn't assist passengers with proper safety protocols following the accident.

"In my mind the MBTA failed the passengers," she said. "I understand that accidents happen; we can't avoid accidents, but we can have policies and procedures in place to ensure passenger safety in the immediate aftermath of the accident. That's what was lacking."

Somerville to release updated plans for West Broadway

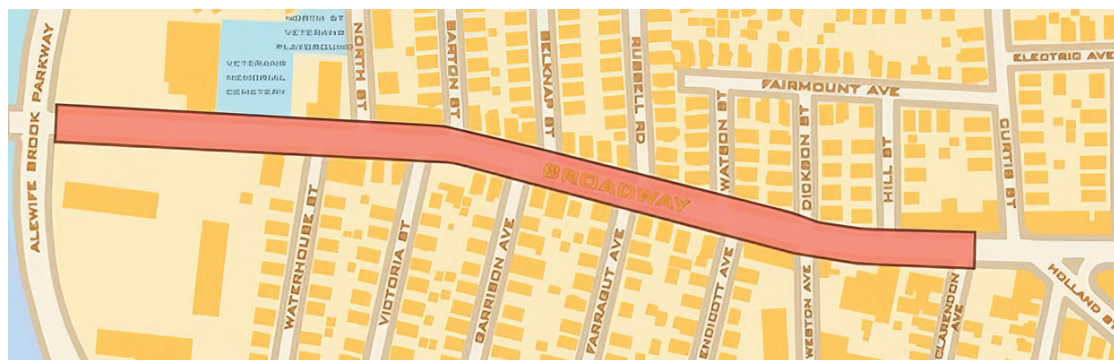
Most people are well aware of the speed limit on the streets they use, but three other important numbers that define each street are driving road safety efforts in Somerville: the number of crashes, the number of vehicles and pedestrians, and the average vehicle speed. This data helped make clear the need for the new West Broadway Reconstruction safety project.

In Somerville, Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, the City Council, and community members have rallied to prioritize transportation improvements on streets with high crash and injury risks as well busy pedestrian areas or crossings. West Broadway fits that bill, and all are invited to learn more about and discuss the West Broadway Reconstruction safety project at an upcoming community open house.

The open house, hosted by Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Ward 7 Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld, and City staff welcomes all community members to learn about this effort, review an updated design, and share their feedback on Tuesday, October 22, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the West Somerville Neighborhood School, at 177 Powder House Boulevard.

Broadway is one of the most used main streets in Somerville, crossing the entire city from east to west. Unfortunately, it has seen more than 200 crashes between 2018 and 2022. The westernmost segment of Broadway, the focus of this project, serves as a gateway to the city, connecting Somerville to Arlington, North Cambridge, Alewife Brook Parkway, and the Greenway Bike Path. It is heavily used by people walking, rolling, riding bikes, driving, or taking the bus.

The West Broadway Reconstruction project aims to dramatically reduce the number of crashes and increase safety by providing new and improved crossings, protected bike lanes in both directions, and traffic calming to reduce speeding. In addition, the city aims to improve the experience of traveling along the street with more trees for shade coverage, floating bus stops with dedicated waiting areas for bus riders, and all new sidewalks as well as a repaved roadway.



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Answers

From page 8

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| 2. Law & Order: SVU | 8. Potato |
| 3. June 1 to November 30 | 9. Dorothy Fuldheim |
| 4. Flying into the eye of a hurricane | 10. Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea |
| 5. Sailfish | 11. Australia |
| 6. Monkfish | 12. Istanbul, Turkey |

COMMENTARY

The views and opinions expressed in the commentaries and letters to the Editor of The Somerville Times do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of The Somerville Times, its publishers or staff.

Tax Amnesty is Good Policy, But Leaves Out Some Distressed Taxpayers

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) announced a tax amnesty program that will run from November 1 to December 30, 2024. The program will forgive penalties for some taxpayers who are able to pay in full their tax balances and interest. When the Legislature included the amnesty in the state budget it projected raising \$100 million in revenue. The program will also resolve the tax burdens of those who can make amends within the limited time window. A win-win, it seems. Except for those distressed taxpayers who cannot quickly come up with a lump sum to pay off their outstanding debts.

Amnesties targeting a class of individuals who can pay up do not take into account the individual circumstances of a taxpayer who can't. Though not well known, Massachusetts law includes an Offer in Final Settlement program that has been on the books since 1998. These individual settlements are akin to personalized amnesties. In our practice, however, tax debtors with very limited resources have a much better chance at negotiating their troubles away with the IRS than with the State. The IRS Offer in Compromise program is not perfect, and it is definitely not as easy as late-night infomercials or scam artists make it seem, but tax practitioners know that the federal program is much more accessible

and transparent than the state version. Unsurprisingly, the state accepts vanishingly few offers and taxpayers are often reluctant to even try. Thus, we propose that the IRS model be adopted in Massachusetts.

The program will also resolve the tax burdens of those who can make amends within the limited time window

There is a pending bill that if passed would update our state Offer program making it accessible and more equitable. "An Act Providing for Settlement in Tax Liability" received a favorable review from the Committee on Revenue and is currently pending (languishing?) in the Ways and Means Committee. It would give more guidance to the DOR, eliminate high minimum payments that are out of reach of many residents, and it would demand as a condition that taxpayers granted this relief remain in compliance with their tax obligations for three years or the deal is rescinded. By rehabilitating taxpayers who are suffering undue hardship and for

whom it is impossible to repay the entire debt, we would actually increase the tax rolls and foster future compliance. By taking into account their particular circumstances we can create a more humane tax system. Taxpayers who cashed their retirement savings due to a job loss or a disabling illness are among those who would benefit from a fair settlement offer.

The DOR has developed a strong financial hardship program that can put a hold on collections, such as levying bank accounts or garnishing wages, but it does not abate any penalties or interest. It keeps thousands of taxpayers in limbo and uncollectable debts on the state books. There are administrative costs associated with overseeing accounts on hardship status, subjecting taxpayers to periodic reviews of income and status renewals, resources that could instead go toward screening viable offers. As with any amnesty, the DOR will receive a partial payment, and the taxpayer gets precious peace of mind.

One-shot tax amnesties are not directed at low to moderate income residents. Our current law has not served these taxpayers either. By adopting the IRS model, the legislature would increase revenue as well as make "fresh starts" accessible to more low- to middle-income taxpayers who are suffering. The stress associated with tax debt

cannot be overstated. The DOR Commissioner has enormous collection powers, among them bank account garnishment, suspension of driver's and professional licenses, or issuances of liens on property. Many taxpayers honestly trying to resolve their debts are often disheartened to find that the accumulated penalties and interest may be as large as the original tax owed. By settling in appropriate cases, more taxpayers will be encouraged to come into compliance, bringing in revenue to the Commonwealth, and the DOR saves administrative resources better used elsewhere. Rather than pushing struggling residents deeper into hardship, we can strive toward a tax system that works for more working-class households and small business owners who have fallen on hard times. While we are glad for those taxpayers who will be able to sleep better after taking advantage of the upcoming amnesty, we would like to see more residents helped going forward by improving the Offer in Final Settlement program. That would be a long-term win-win for both taxpayers and the Commonwealth.

Luz Arevalo, Esq. and Angela Divaris, Esq.
Greater Boston Legal Services
Low Income Taxpayer Clinic

Somerville to release updated plans for West Broadway CONT. FROM PG 13

"Not all crashes include injuries, but every crash creates a risk of serious injury or death, so we are steadily working to end traffic fatalities and serious injuries in our city. That's our clear Vision Zero goal, and we are making progress with projects like West Broadway among other efforts," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne.

"Serious crash injuries in Somerville are down 54 percent between 2013 and 2023. Last year, for the first time since 2018, we had no fatal crashes," contin-

ued Mayor Ballantyne. "But I share this progress solemnly with those who we have lost in mind. Our work is far from done. The West Broadway Reconstruction Project is an opportunity to take a significant step forward, and it must be one of many."

Building off the city's Vision Zero Action Plan, Bicycle Network plan, and community input gathered since Fall 2023, City staff have worked with engineering consultants to develop an updated design.

At the open house, community members can explore different aspects of the design and talk directly to the project team about their questions and comments. If community members cannot attend, there will be multiple other ways to share feedback such as through an online feedback survey, street outreach pop-ups and more. Visit somervillema.gov/westbroadway for more details.

"Our residents want and need safer streets – and we need this as quickly as possible.

We've shown that smart, community-driven, reconstruction projects can not only increase safety. We can increase the number of people who feel comfortable walking, biking, and rolling. We can improve public transit access and reliability. And we can strategically manage parking and vehicle traffic so all people can access our streets and businesses. This type of project is how Somerville moves forward on our safety and climate goals," said Brad Rawson, Director of Mobility.

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The Ultimate AIDS Physician and the Virus that Hijacks T-Cells



By Ian Halim

In 1979, Dr. Linda Laubenstein began seeing patients in New York City with a rare cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma. Because the cancer was so rare, she knew there had to be an explanation for the growing cluster of cases with their telltale purple skin lesions.

Her first patient with Kaposi's was a 33-year-old schoolteacher who had noticed raised purple lesions behind his ears. A biopsy of a skin lesion revealed the normally-rare cancer. The lesions spread and multiplied until he had 75 on his "head, neck, trunk, and arms." At first, he responded to anti-cancer chemotherapy agents. Then his disease came roaring back. Four different chemotherapy agents failed to control the infection. 18 months after his first lesions had appeared, he died.

Laubenstein became known for her dedication to New Yorkers with Kaposi's sarcoma. Other doctors hesitated, out of fear of the new infection, or out of prejudice. Laubenstein did not. She predicted a terrible epidemic. And Kaposi's sarcoma came to be known as a manifestation of AIDS. But why do people with AIDS develop Kaposi's sarcoma? The aim of this essay is to explain that, and to honor Laubenstein's role in the early response to the crisis.

Laubenstein published papers on the new disease and developed new treatments. She made house calls. She invited patients to her home. After her untimely death in 1992, her colleague, Dr. Jeffrey Greene, described her as, "the ultimate AIDS physician." The AIDS activist and writer Larry

Kramer penned a play about the early days of the AIDS crisis in New York, *The Normal Heart*. The physician character was based on Laubenstein.

The key to why AIDS causes Kaposi's sarcoma is a special group of cells known as T-cells. The human immunodeficiency virus – better known as HIV – attacks these cells. T-cells are white blood cells, and like other white blood cells, they are part of our immune system. It's the job of T-cells to protect the human body against infectious diseases and cancers. So when HIV attacks these cells, it's breaking down the immune system.

HIV causes AIDS, but HIV and AIDS are different. HIV is the virus. AIDS – the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome – is the disease caused by the virus. AIDS arises when HIV infects a person and replicates out of control, killing off that person's T-cells. As the T-cell numbers drop, a key prong of the immune system gets knocked out, and opportunistic diseases—like Kaposi's sarcoma with its purple lesions – emerge.

The T-cells are so crucial to the body's immune system that clinicians use the T-cell count from a blood sample to rank the severity of AIDS. The fewer the T-cells in a sample, the weaker the immune system, and the more vulnerable the body becomes to infection. A healthy immune system would knock out opportunistic bacteria or viruses before an infection could take hold, but in a person with AIDS, there are too few T-cells to do this.

Through the 1980's, Dr. Laubenstein and her colleague Dr. Jeffrey Greene saw first-hand how patients with AIDS suffered, often stricken with a kind of double-injury – first by the illness, and then by those who discriminated against them for having it. At the time, homophobia was even more widespread than it is today.

In 1982 and 1984, when ques-

tioned about AIDS, President Ronald Reagan's White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes laughed, teased the reporter, and appeared to regard the questions as a joke. Laubenstein's colleague and friend Jeffrey Greene later recalled that he was, "advised by many of my fellow physicians not to become known as an AIDS doctor." He ignored the advice.

Greene took care of a man who had a case of AIDS pneumonia (another opportunistic infection) that seemed mild. He learned that his patient had a good job in the fashion industry. He expected him to recover.

But after getting a pink slip delivered to his hospital room, the man became depressed and soon died. Laubenstein blamed his death on the employer who had sent the pink slip. Greene and Laubenstein then teamed up and co-founded an organization called Multitasking in 1989, helping to find work for people with HIV.

Behind HIV and AIDS lies an intricate biology. The T-cells, whose destruction by HIV causes AIDS, are part of our adaptive immune system. This means that when our body encounters a new infectious agent like a virus or bacteria, the T-cells learn to recognize it. Each pathogen has a kind of unique three-dimensional key that acts as a kind of fingerprint, allowing the adaptive immune system to learn to recognize that specific pathogen. This key is known as an antigen. And once the body learns to recognize that antigen, it can defend against the virus, bacteria, or other infectious agent that has that unique antigen.

T-cells are an important part of this learned defense. A T-cell develops a specialized receptor akin to a lock or keyhole that matches the key-like antigen of a specific infectious agent. When a human cell is infected, the infected cell displays the key-like antigen of whatever has infected it. When a cell in the liver is infected

with the hepatitis B virus, for instance, the infected cell displays a key-like antigen that is unique to the hepatitis B virus. That "key" projects from the infected cell's surface, like a beacon.

If the body is already familiar with the infectious agent, the specially-trained T-cell receptor will interlock with the antigen, like two puzzle pieces snapping together, or like a keyhole fitting a key. It can then kill off the infected cell, helping control the progress of the infection.

This allows the body to stave off many infections. But HIV evades T-cells' powers of surveillance by covering its antigen or "key" with sugar-like molecules—masking itself and making it harder to find. And HIV not only hides from T-cells, it also attacks them, infects them, and destroys them (as described earlier).

Once inside a T-cell, HIV hijacks the cellular machinery, using each T-cell to make more HIV virions. These virions then spill out, ready to attack and infect the next cell. Without treatment, HIV progressively destroys more and more T-cells, leaving our immune defense weakened and ripe for opportunistic diseases—like Kaposi's.

In 1981, Laubenstein co-authored a case series describing eight men with Kaposi's sarcoma – a cluster that already seemed too large to be random for such a normally-rare cancer. These eight cases were all men who had sex with men. Early on, Laubenstein and her co-authors suspected some form of sexual transmission – although they weren't certain and also considered other possible explanations.

HIV isn't just a disease that affects men who have sex with men, of course. In the years following these cases, it eventually became clear that HIV can be transmitted through vaginal sex, anal sex, or blood-to-blood transmission.

Bloodborne transmission includes infection by injecting drugs with a shared syringe. If

someone who is infected with HIV injects drugs, the needle can become contaminated with residual virus from that person's blood, making it a dangerous vector of infection for the next person who injects with it. Before the first commercial HIV test became available in 1985, those with bleeding disorders known as hemophilia, or who lost blood in surgery or needed transfusion for another reason, were also at risk of infection from blood transfusion with donor blood that sometimes harbored HIV.

In 1984, Linda Laubenstein co-organized a conference about AIDS and Kaposi's sarcoma, and co-edited a volume of collected papers based upon that conference. She also helped develop one of the first therapies to treat Kaposi's in patients with AIDS. That therapy was a cocktail of anti-cancer chemotherapy drugs more potent than any single drug on its own.

Kaposi's sarcoma is a cancer, often occurring in people with AIDS, but it's actually itself caused by a virus called human herpesvirus 8 (HHV8). Certain viruses—like HHV8—damage the cells they infect, and make those cells more prone to become cancers—like Kaposi's sarcoma. AIDS impairs the immune system's ability both to control HHV8 and Kaposi's sarcoma itself.

Today, a combination of different drugs targeting HIV can prevent or reverse the immune suppression found in AIDS, limiting viral replication, protecting our T-cells, and preventing Kaposi's sarcoma before it appears. So the purple lesions that alarmed Laubenstein in 1979 are much rarer now in the United States. But not everyone is tested for HIV, has health insurance, or can manage taking medications regularly.

When Laubenstein was a child, she was infected with polio and became paralyzed in her legs. She was *Continued on page 17*

Somerville Police Dept Crime Log October 1 – 7

Attempted Robbery

24062359: On 10/6/24 at approximately 11:54 p.m. Somerville Police responded to Walnut St. for report of a robbery. Upon arrival, officers spoke with two victims who stated they were sitting in their car at Leathers Park and were approached by two males who demanded their money and car. The victims stated they saw a black object resembling a handgun in one of the suspects waistbands. The victims then fled the area. Shortly after, officers spoke with two more victims who stated while they were walking home near Walnut St & Gilman St, two males approached them and demanded their money. The victims both fled the area to their home.

Bomb Threat

24062011: On 10/5/24 at approximately 3:58 p.m., Somerville Police took a report regarding a bomb threat at Somerville Central Park and Library. Officers evacuated the library then began to search the building and surrounding area for explosives. No explosives were located and the area was deemed safe.

Threat

24062255: On 10/6/24 at approximately 2:36 p.m., Somerville Police responded to the Central Library for report of someone possibly on the roof with a firearm. Upon arrival, officers conducted a search of the roof and did not locate anyone or anything suspicious. Officers also searched the East and West libraries and did not locate anyone.

Other Crimes: 7 Bike thefts + 3 Car breaks + 4 MV vandalisms + 1 MV theft + 3 Vandalisms + 1 Package theft

— Somerville Police Department



Crime Tip Hotline: 617-776-7210

Do your part - Leave a message on our tip hotline answering machine – All calls are confidential –Your Privacy is Assured. If you choose, you can leave your name and phone number and your call will be returned (not required). Also, if you prefer you may e-mail directly with your crime tip. We will follow up on all information provided to the best of our ability.

Thank you for your assistance.

Help Keep Somerville Safe!

Historical Fact CONT. FROM PG 9

1962, May of 1963, August of 1970, and hit #60 on the British charts as recently as November of 2008.

These days, the song can be found on YouTube in many different versions because it has been covered by such prominent artists as The Beach Boys, Boris Karloff, Vincent Price, The Misfits, Mannheim Steamroller and The Smashing Pumpkins.

So, while Bobby Pickett never made a smash in the movie business, he mashed his way into the annals of both Somerville and American history.



SCAM ALERT from the SPD

The Somerville Police Department would like to warn residents of a new spyware sextortion scam that is targeting users via email. It involves the emailing of Google Maps Street View photos of addresses to blackmail victims by saying their computer has been recording them and to send money via QR code to keep the information private.

Recipients should not click any links or scan the QR code and instead file a police report. This article explains the new scam: <https://krebsonsecurity.com/2024/09/sextortion-scams-now-include-photos-of-your-home/>

— Somerville Police Department

The Ultimate AIDS Physician and the Virus that Hijacks T-Cells CONT. FROM PG 16

thereafter unable to walk and used a wheelchair throughout most of her childhood and all of her adult life. Larry Kramer—who wrote *The Normal Heart*—said that he modeled the physician character in his play after Laubenstein because her paraplegia would create a parallel between her bravery and that of the men he depicted facing AIDS.

In other contexts, some with disabilities have objected to being called brave, as a kind of condescension that treats any achieve-

ment by a person with a disability as surprising and exceptional. It's not clear what Laubenstein thought, but she never saw the play, even when the producer offered to send a limousine.

Later, in 1990, Laubenstein had a serious illness and had to go to the intensive care unit. She was placed in an iron lung to help her breathe, a device that encases the entire body, leaving just the head poking out. The iron lung respirator sucks air into the lungs by lowering the pressure with-

in the chamber that surrounds the body. She had used an iron lung as a child as well, for many months, when she was first affected by polio.

In 1992, Laubenstein died unexpectedly of heart disease. Later, Julia Roberts would play the doctor character inspired by her in the film version of *The Normal Heart*, which premiered on HBO in 2014.

The writer Hallie Ephron, who attended Barnard College with Laubenstein, later recalled first

meeting her in 1965, and finding her: "...attractive and slim with straight brown hair cut in bangs, and big features- large, expressive brown eyes and a toothy smile that took over her face."

After she died, Dr. Linda Laubenstein's colleague and fellow AIDS-physician Dr. Jeffrey Greene took care of many of her patients with AIDS, finding they had, "trouble speaking of her care for them without breaking down in tears of admiration and loss." A patient of hers named Bill wrote

that she gave him, "a sense of security with my own HIV status that will never be equaled."

Physician-scribe and Bagel-Bard-at-large Ian Halim writes essays that aim to make medicine accessible to the widest possible audience – drawing on storytelling, history, and connections with everything from ethics to botany. Ian earned his PhD in Greek & Latin literature and his MD, both at Columbia University in The City of New York. He now lives in Pittsburgh.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

Local Somerville non-profit arts organization **Around Hear** is holding a **fall concert** in partnership with the **Somerville Housing Authority** on **Saturday, October 26, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**,

Mystic Activity Center, 530 Mystic Ave. Somerville. Free, open to the public, listeners of all ages are welcome, refreshments served. Write, draw, move while you listen, after-concert pizza party.

Arts at the Armory will present a screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* on **Monday, October 28**. Dive in to this classic musical-horror flick once again this year in the **Performance Hall**, 191 Highland Ave. Costumes and call backs are highly encouraged. The **Teseracte Players** will lead the charge and make sure you don't miss a moment of the raucous ride. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. The viewing starts at 8:00 p.m. Come early and enjoy wine, beer, and a new food menu from the **Hall bar**. Visit <https://artsatthearmory.org/>.

The **Somerville Community Growing Center** will be holding their **Salvage Sale and Markers' Market** on **October 19, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**, 22 Vinal Ave. An innovative yard sale in two parts: the first a curated, seasonally-themed sale featuring salvaged housewares, clothing, jewelry, books and decorative items; the second, a craft/artisan fair offering everything from locally-designed clothing, original artwork and prints, to handmade jewelry and other treasures. More about the event at www.thegrowingcenter.org/yard-sale. To find out more about donating to the "Salvage Sale" portion, visit bit.ly/sss-give-24. To Volunteer, go to bit.ly/scgc-volunteer. To become a craft/art vendor, visit bit.ly/sss-sell-24 to register.

On **Tuesday October 22**, **Flatbread** in Davis Square will be donating a portion of their sales to **Vernon Street Studios** to help support their **50th Anniversary Open Studios celebration** on **December 7 and 8**, and their retrospective **artist showcase** at the **Nave Gallery** from **December to January**. Join in for a casual meet and greet from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. and meet some fellow artists, participate in a 50/50 raffle and of course enjoy some delicious pizza.

Are you an **emerging artist** looking to share your artistic skills with your com-

munity? **The City of Somerville**, through the **Somerville Arts Council (SAC)**, invites emerging artists (or a group of artists working as a team) to submit project concepts to be considered for a commission to create a temporary public artwork. This opportunity is funded in partnership with the **New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)**, making it public program. \$750 for Finalists. \$15,000 Selected Project budget. Applications are due on **October 31**, by 11:59 p.m. Apply here: www.somervilleartscouncil.org/TemporaryPublicArt.

East Somerville Main Streets is gearing up for their **Fall Clean-Up** on **Saturday, November 2**, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Join them at 115 Broadway, **East Branch Library**, as they clean and beautify the neighborhood. Pastries and coffee will be provided.

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the **Somerville Arts Council (SAC)** are inviting the community to join the final **SomerStreets** festival of the year, the spooky and fun "**Monster Mash**" on **Sunday, October 20**, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. (rain date October 27) on Somerville Ave. between School St. and Warren Ave. For more information, and a schedule of events, visit: somervilleartscouncil.org/somerstreets/monster.

On **October 20**, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., during **SomerStreets: Monster Mash**, visit **Milk Row Cemetery** to learn about our city's history from those who lived it. Friendly ghosts will share their stories from the early days of Somerville during this free event, which includes an activity for kids. The **Somerville Museum** is looking for a few more "ghosts" to participate in the event. The role involves wearing period clothing (provided) and using a basic script to play an 18th or 19th-century character. Volunteers should be comfortable standing for several hours and interacting with community members. Contact **Grace Bryan, Historic Events Manager**, at grace@somervillemuseum.org.

The **2024 Halloween Block Party Pet Spooktacular** takes place **October 26**, at **Chuckie Harris Park**, 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. Dress up your pet in their most creative costume and join in for a day of Halloween fun like no other. Watch cute pets and their owners in a costume contest, play

fun games, take great photos, and enjoy tasty food. Don't forget to check out local artisans and vendors.

Ward-based City Hall Community Meetings are back this fall. Hear from **Mayor Katjana Ballantyne** and **city staff** to find out what's happening in your neighborhood, how to get involved, and ask questions about issues that are important to you. All ward meetings are in-person and will begin at 6:30 p.m. **Ward 2** (S. Union Sq., Perry and Lincoln Park neighborhoods, Beacon St. area, and more). **Wednesday, October 16, Argenziano School Cafeteria**, 290 Washington St. **Ward 6** (Greater Davis Sq. neighborhood and more). **Monday, October 21, Somerville Community Baptist Church**, 31 College Ave. **All Ward Virtual Meeting: Tuesday, October 22**, online via Zoom with interpretation into Spanish and Portuguese, as well as other languages by request. For sign-in information, please visit www.somervillema.gov/communitymeetings or call 311 at 617-666-3311. For additional accommodations, please call 311 (617-666-3311).

Halloween costume party at the **Central Library, October 19, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**, 79 Highland Ave. Celebrate Halloween at this special all-ages after-hours costume party. Dress up and swing by for a haunted house, music and dancing, face painting, a photo booth, crafts, karaoke, refreshments, a costume parade and more.

The **Elections Department** is looking to hire multiple **inspectors** for the upcoming **November 5 Presidential Election**. The hours the polls are open to voters are 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 5**. If you would like to learn more, please call the **Elections Office** at 617-625-6600 ext. 4200. <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/elections>.

Somerville Public Schools are now in session for the **2024/2025 school year**. Visit the **SPS district website calendar** for more information: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/events/calendar>. Visit the **2024/2025 School Year Calendar page** for an English, Spanish, Portuguese, or Haitian Creole calendar to print: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/schoolyearcalendar>. Visit the **Food and Nutrition Services Department** page for school meal menus. Breakfast and lunch are free for all students: [https://](https://somerville.k12.ma.us/fnsd)

somerville.k12.ma.us/fnsd.

Somerville Public Schools is hiring **substitute teachers** for all of our PK-12 schools. For more information or to apply visit <https://somerville.tedk12.com/hire>.

Did you know that **SNAP and WIC benefits** do not cover **diapers**? This leaves many families to make difficult decisions between food, diapers, and other needs. The annual **Metro-Boston Diaper Drive, from October 6 to 19**, gives all donated diapers to the **Somerville WIC office**, which serves Cambridge, Somerville, Arlington, Watertown, Lexington, Bedford, Lincoln and Belmont. Please visit mbdiapers.org to make a donation. In addition, drop off donated diapers to any of the **Somerville Library Children's rooms through October 19**.

All Wednesdays during the school year are now **early release days**. You may talk to your child's teacher or school administrators if you have any questions about drop-off and pickup. **Prekindergarten:** 12:00 p.m., Grades K–8 (except Next Wave): 1:00 p.m., **Next Wave/Full Circle:** 12:10 p.m., **Somerville High School:** 1:33 p.m.

The **Council on Aging Flu and COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Dates** at the **Holland St. Senior Center**, 167 Holland St. **Senior Only Clinics**, please register by calling the COA directly at 617-625-6600, ext. 2300. For clinics open to the **general public**, please register via the **City of Somerville website, October 21** (ages 19+) noon- 2:00 p.m., **November 18** (ages 19+) noon – 2:00 p.m., **December 12** (ages 19+) 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Both flu and COVID-19 vaccines are conveniently offered at multiple locations across Somerville, improving access for all residents. Both vaccines are available with no out-of-pocket costs, and we accept those without health insurance. If you do have health insurance, please bring proof of coverage. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Walk-in appointments are limited.

Don't forget, if you would like to subscribe to receive a **digital edition** of our paper, go directly online to our website over to the right side and fill out your email address to receive a free, full PDF copy of the paper.

Beacon Hill Roll Call



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Beacon Hill Roll Call can also be viewed on our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com

THE HOUSE AND SENATE: There were no roll calls in the House or Senate last week. This week, *Beacon Hill Roll Call* looks at Question 2, one of the five questions on the ballot that will be decided directly by the voters in November.

The question asks voters if they approve of a proposed law that would eliminate the current requirement that in order to get a high school diploma, a student must pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests in mathematics, science, technology and English. This requirement would be replaced by a requirement that the student complete coursework certified by the student's district as demonstrating mastery of the competencies contained in the state academic standards in mathematics, science and technology and English, as well as any additional areas determined by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

WHAT SUPPORTERS SAY: "The Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) and the other supporters of Question 2 were certainly pleased to see polling indicative of strong public support for replacing the MCAS graduation requirement with a more authentic assessment of students' academic work and achievement," MTA President Max Page and Vice President Deb McCarthy told Beacon Hill Roll Call last week. "Between now and election day, we will just keep doing what we have been doing all year: talking to voters. Thousands of classroom educators have knocked on doors and made phone calls, explaining what Question 2 does and listening to stories from people adversely affected by the MCAS graduation requirement."

"Opponents of Question 2 are attempting to mislead the public into thinking the ballot measure eliminates the MCAS altogether or dismantles our state's high academic standards," said Page and McCarthy. "Both claims are false. MCAS exams fulfill a federal requirement, and the ballot question does not seek to end their use. MCAS exams will continue to be given just as they are now, and the tests will yield the same data."

The pair continued, "The state's uniform academic standards exist independently of the assessment tool. In fact, educators will be able to more fully immerse students in standards-based content once [they are] free to better diversify teaching strategies that accommodate all learning styles. Public education needs to focus on preparing students for the workforce, higher education and career training. Our partners in the business world and from colleges and universities tell us we accomplish those goals by developing students' abilities to be critical thinkers, problem solvers and team players. The standardized MCAS exams do not focus on those skills and should not be a tool used

to hold back students."

WHAT OPPONENTS SAY: "Having a single, state-wide standard for graduation has raised expectations in ways that have resulted in greater equity and achievement for all students," Dom Slowey, spokesman for the Vote No on 2 campaign told Beacon Hill Roll Call last week. "Massachusetts has risen in the national rankings to first in the nation in student achievement. Graduation rates have risen and dropout rates have fallen. Question 2 would remove our only statewide graduation standard. Nothing will replace it. The only statewide requirement left will be that students participate in four years of gym, and that districts offer - but students are not required to pass - history and civics. Massachusetts would have less rigorous high school graduation requirements than Mississippi and Alabama."

Slowey continued, "If we remove this key graduation requirement, it will result in more than 300 different and unequal standards for high school graduation across the commonwealth leading to haphazard assessments of student readiness for college and careers and even wider inequities in student achievement and opportunities. Some school districts will just adopt lower standards so students 'graduate' even if they haven't learned the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. It's not fair to kids to grant diplomas when they aren't yet ready to graduate."

"If students cannot pass basic assessments in math, English or science, the answer is not to eliminate the standard. Rather than lowering the academic standard for all students, the focus should be on ensuring students who are struggling get the help they need. The vast majority of students pass the 10th grade assessment and are awarded diplomas. Annually, the number of students who don't graduate is about 700 out of more than 70,000 graduates. Put differently, only 1 percent of high school graduates do not graduate on time because they have not passed the MCAS. High school students have several chances to pass the test between 10th and 12th grade. The state also provides numerous accommodations for students with disabilities, English learners and other students who need them, so they are not disadvantaged."

OFFICIAL ARGUMENTS: Here are the official arguments, gathered by the secretary of state, for each side of the question.

IN FAVOR: Written by Shelley Scuggs, Parents Volunteer of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, <https://massteacher.org/>

"A 'Yes' on Question 2 gives all students the opportunity

to thrive and reach their full potential. We all agree that high standards help keep our public schools great, and assessments are needed to ensure that students master the knowledge and skills to succeed in life after high school. However, the MCAS is a one-size-fits-all exam that fails to measure other student achievement measures such as GPA, coursework and teacher assessments in determining if a student is allowed to graduate.

Replacing the MCAS graduation requirement with more comprehensive measures will allow teachers to stop teaching to a test and unburden students from a make-or-break standardized test. Voting 'Yes' will allow schools and teachers, together with parents and students, to focus on the most important skills and knowledge to help students succeed in life, rather than having to focus on only those skills that can be measured on a standardized test."

AGAINST: Written by Protect Our Kids' Future: Vote 'No' on 2, www.protectourkidsfuture.com

"Question 2 is unfair to kids and will increase inequality. Some school districts will just adopt lower standards so students 'graduate' even if they haven't learned the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. It's not fair to grant diplomas to kids who aren't yet ready to graduate. If students cannot pass basic assessments in math, English or science, we adults should do the hard work to get them up to speed. Instead of supporting kids, Question 2 would abandon them.

Question 2 would remove our only statewide graduation standard. Massachusetts would have less rigorous high school graduation requirements than Mississippi and Alabama. Question 2 is a radical and untested proposal and should be rejected. Significant changes to our education system should be carefully studied, designed and implemented by experts to ensure these policies are actually better for our kids."

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

CHANGE COLUMBUS DAY TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY (S 1976 and H 2989) – Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) is urging the Legislature to take further action on her bill that would change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day in Massachusetts. The measure would require that the day be "observed by the people, with appropriate exercises in the schools and otherwise, to acknowledge the history of genocide and discrimination against Indigenous peoples, and to recognize and celebrate the thriving cultures and continued resistance and resilience of Indigenous peoples and their tribal nations." Rep. Christine Barber *Continued on page 23*

Ghost of City Hall



The Ghost of City Hall haunted the City Council meeting on October 10 to ask permission for a public event license for the annual Truck O' Treat event that will take place on October 24. The item was approved. The Ghost of City Hall also mentioned that SomerStreets Monster Mash will take place on October 20.

— Harry Kane

Somerville through the eyes of Denise



For Fall, this tree turned into a wreath ...

— Photo by Denise Provost

Playgroups and Parent Support Groups

Sign up now. Be sure to check out the fall line-up of playgroups and parent support groups hosted by the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC), our family engagement department. Groups are free, open to Somerville residents, and offered in several languages. There are still spots available in several groups. The fall session runs through December 13.

Please visit the website for a complete list of groups and for the registration link: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-departments/somerville-family-learning-collaborative-sflc/playgroups-and-parent-support>

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



What is the best car to drive in October?
An autumn-mobile.

On This Day in History

October 16

1555 – The Protestant martyrs Bishop Hugh Latimer and Bishop Nicholas Ridley are burned at the stake for heresy in England.

1701 – Yale University is founded as The Collegiate School of Kilingworth, Connecticut by Congregationalists who consider Harvard too liberal.

1793 – Queen Marie Antoinette is beheaded by guillotine during the French Revolution.

1846 – Ether was first administered in public at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston

1859 – Abolitionist John Brown seizes the U.S. Armory at Harpers Ferry, Va.

1901 – President Theodore Roosevelt incites controversy by inviting black leader Booker T. Washington to the White House.

1940 – Benjamin O. Davis becomes the U.S. Army's first African American Brigadier General.

1995 – The Million Man March for "A Day of Atonement" takes place in Washington, D.C.

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Somerville Parks and Recreation free programs currently available

Morning Walk Program

Morning Walk Program is now available at Dilboy Stadium. Enjoy wonderful morning walks along the Dilboy Track from 7:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Monday through Thursday.

Adult Programs

Adult Pickup Basketball for Women

An opportunity for women in the community to get together and play some pick-up basketball. Fall Session at the Argenziano School Gym, Monday, 11/18, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. Program Registration Link: https://somervillema.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=30503.

Teen Programs

LGBTQIA+ Art Club

Powderhouse Teen Space open on Thursdays after school from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Each week, Teen Art Mentor will have an activity planned and supplies available for teens. This program will allow for teens to express themselves, showcase their art, and possibly learn some new creative outlets. We are excited to officially bring back an LGBTQIA+ specific art program. Snacks will be available, drinks, and a safe space to hangout with your friends, and make some new ones!



Mindfulness for Teens 13-18yrs old

This will be a 6-week program on Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m., from October 10 to November 14.

Each week we will offer free catered dinner from the Neighborhood Restaurant from 4:30 – 5:00 p.m. Location: Founders Rink (570 Somerville Ave Somerville MA 02143) This program will focus on learning and practicing mindfulness strategies and activities, including decorating and using your own journal, meditation, body scans, mindful movement, outdoor activities and practices, and more! They will offer snacks each week, and as always, the opportunity to hang out with your friends, and meet new ones, while practicing mindfulness – a tool that could benefit all of our lives! Program Registration Link: Somerville, MA Parks & Recreation: Mindfulness for Teens 13-18 (myrec.com).

Teen Volunteer Program

Teens 13-18 years old, Wednesdays October 18 – November 20, 3-4:30 p.m.

Program Registration Link: Somerville, MA Parks & Recreation: Teen Volunteer Program (myrec.com)

Fall Volo Volleyball Clinic

Teens 12-18 years old

Fridays, September 20-October 25, 3:30-5 p.m. Grab and Go Sandwiches provided

Program Registration Link: Somerville, MA Parks & Recreation: Fall Volo Volleyball Clinic for Teens (myrec.com)

Learn To Play Pickleball for Teens

Teens 12-18 years old, Founders Rink, 370 Somerville Ave, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

October 9–October 29

Program Registration Link: Somerville, MA Parks and Recreation: Learn-to-Play Pickleball for Teens 12-18 (myrec.com) Free pilot 4-week program, Learn-to-Play Pickleball for Teens 12-18. They will have an amazing coach present each week to teach rules, run skills and drills, and help facilitate games. Already know how to play. Show up, practice, and play with other teens. They have the courts, staff, paddles, balls, nets, and snacks! Come by, have fun, and check out their facility.

Youth Programs:

Basketball Clinic Grades 4-8, East Somerville Community School.

Program Registration Link: Somerville, MA Parks and Recreation: Pride Girls Basketball Clinic (myrec.com) This program focuses on teaching the fundamentals of basketball and fine tuning the skills that they already have. They will learn dribbling skills, shooting skills, and many other basketball basics.

Middle School Intramural Flag Football

Tuesdays and Thursdays, Healey School Soccer Field, September 17 – November 7, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., Grade 6-8. The middle school intramural sports leagues are school-based teams that compete with other Somerville Public schools in a recreational setting. Teams work on skills and sportsmanship in a fun, structured environment, overseen by Parks and Recreation staff.

Flag Football

Joe Mackey Field (Healey School Playground), September 17 - November 7, Tuesdays and/or Thursdays, 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Program Registration Link: Somerville, MA Parks and Recreation: Middle School Intramural Flag Football (myrec.com).

Visit us online at www.TheSomervilleTimes.com
Facebook at www.facebook.com/somerville.times.1



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Poet Elizabeth Lund is 'Un-Silenced'

Recently, I caught up with poet Elizabeth Lund to talk about her recent collection of poetry *Un-Silenced* (Cervena Barva Press). It seemed fitting because this month is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Poet Michael S. Glaser, Poet Laureate of Maryland 2004-2009, wrote of this book: "Poetry is one of the few art forms that enables us to approach extremely difficult and complex human experiences without having to turn to didacticism or preaching. Lund's poems do this exquisitely as they grapple with the intense emotions of a woman trapped in an abusive relationship. Each poem is a compelling piece of a much larger puzzle – one that explores the effects of toxic masculinity and the debilitating fallacy that a woman can free her abuser from his own darkness."

With the concision of Emily Dickinson who taught us to "tell all the truth but tell it slant -," and a stream of consciousness narrative, Lund creates the perfect modality to convey an intense and painful journey that generations of women have experienced.

The result, *Un-Silenced*, is an absolutely stunning, heart-rattling read that implores us to open our hearts and minds.

Doug Holder: This book deals with domestic violence. It has been said great pain brings great writing. Was it the pain of your aunt's murder by her husband that drove you to write this collection?

Elizabeth Lund: The short answer to that question is yes. The longer answer is that I never planned to write about my aunt's death because I didn't want people to think I was exploiting a family tragedy or dredging up painful memories that should fade into the past. Yet a few months after her murder, I was still so upset about what had happened and the fact that her life story had been reduced to "murder victim" in the press, that I wrote one poem. The act of writing made me feel better for a while because poetry allows us to address troubling topics and transform them in some way. I penned another poem a few months later, and another after that. Each time I wrote, I felt that I was challenging the silence that paralyzes so many victims of domestic violence and contributes to their pain.

DH: I know when my wife died, I looked to birds for her presence. We had decided that she would communicate through a bird after she died. You use animals, nature, as stunning metaphors for your aunt – and your world. Is it natural for you to pick up on these vibes, or has it been more of a long meditative process?

EL: I'm glad that birds allowed you to feel your wife's presence. I can definitely relate to that because I have always felt "vibes" from the natural world that



remind me to look beyond the surface level of life and to examine the thoughts, feelings, and unseen currents that shape and underpin what we experience.

Once I realized that I was writing a series of poems – it felt like I was compelled to write them – birds and other animals appeared effortlessly, as if they wanted me to pay attention to the symbolic messages they were delivering. Birds, of course, can rise above us, migrate, and travel places we humans cannot go. Lion cubs represent strength and power that hasn't been realized. I didn't think about those meanings as I wrote, but once a poem was finished, the message became clear.

As the series expanded, I started to consider how the poems were connected. One group dealt with my aunt's death; a second group presented the voices of other women who have been impacted by domestic violence; and a third group allowed me to grapple with my feelings about what had happened and try to find some sense of redemption.

For months those groups seemed disjointed because there was no connecting thread. Then an owl unexpectedly appeared in a poem I was revising. The raptor said what the humans couldn't, or wouldn't, see or articulate.

As I continued to revise, owls appeared in several other poems as well, acting like heavenly guides who were trying to nudge, direct, or rouse the struggling humans.

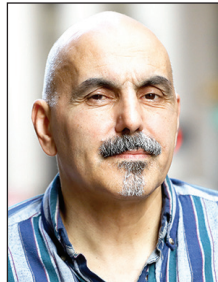
DH: In an interview you speak *Continued on page 23*

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

George Kalogeris's most recent book of poems is *Winthropos*, (Louisiana State University, 2021). He is also the author of *Guide to Greece* (LSU, 2018), a book of paired poems in translation, *Dialogos*, and poems based on the notebooks of Albert Camus, *Camus: Carnets*. He is the winner of the James Dickey Poetry Prize, the Stephen J. Meringoff Award, and the Sheila Margaret Motton Prize.



THE EVENING STAR

I boarded the Blue Line at Aquarium station.
The only empty seat was the one by that young,
Head back, eyes closed, exhausted-looking father
Holding his sleeping child in his folded arms.
It was already suppertime, and the Evening Star,
As Sappho sings, was calling all of the creatures
Home to their mother, through the rush-hour traffic.
The subway was coming out of the tunnel's mouth
And I was sixty when I suddenly felt
A tiny hand start pulling at my sleeve.
In his sleep the child I never had was reaching
Out for me, while the father I never became
Kept his eyes shut. And all the way to my stop
At Orient Heights, nothing disturbed our dream.

— George A. Kalogeris

Previously published in Issue number 58 of the *Harvard Review*.

To have your work considered for the *Lyrical* send it to:
Doug Holder, 25 School St., Somerville, MA 02143. dougholder@post.harvard.edu

Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 19

Barber (D-Somerville) sponsored the same proposal in the House.

The bill was given a favorable report by the Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight on June 24 and added to the House calendar agenda on July 29 – where it has remained without further action. The same piece of legislation also died in the House during the 2021-2022 session.

“Christopher Columbus did not discover the Americas,” said Comerford. “That myth — steeped in racism and violence — has allowed generations to credit a European man with discovering a land already teeming with societies. Indigenous communities and tribal nations in the commonwealth and across the United States call us to act. It is thanks to their courageous truth telling that we recognize the legacy of colonization, in the name of Columbus, as one not worthy of memorialization or celebration. Massachusetts is one of only 16 remaining states to still observe the second Monday in October officially as Co-

lumbus Day. Currently 34 states and territories recognize the day in a different way or not at all, with some observing Native American or Indigenous Peoples Day in addition to or in replacement of Columbus Day.

HOW LONG WAS LAST WEEK’S SESSION?

Beacon Hill Roll Call tracks the length of time that the House and Senate were in session each week. Many legislators say that legislative sessions are only one aspect of the Legislature’s job and that a lot of important work is done outside of the House and Senate chambers. They note that their jobs also involve committee work, research, constituent work and other matters that are important to their districts. Critics say that the Legislature does not meet regularly or long enough to debate and vote in public view on the thousands of pieces of legislation that have been filed. They note that the infrequency and brief length of sessions are misguided and lead to irresponsible late-night sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding the end of an annual session.

During the week of October 7-11, the House met for a total of 29 minutes and the Senate met for a total of 32 minutes.

Mon. Oct. 7 House 11:01 a.m. to 11:21 a.m.
Senate 11:06 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.

Tues. Oct. 8 No House session
No Senate session

Wed. Oct. 9 No House session
No Senate session

Thurs. Oct. 10 House 11:00 a.m. to 11:09 a.m.
Senate 11:07 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.

Fri. Oct. 11 No House session
No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 22

of silence as being a killer? How does it kill, and what does it kill?

EL: I love what Laurie Halse Anderson once said about silence: “When people don’t express themselves, they die one piece at a time.”

That’s very true. Silence can seem like protection when you are dealing with someone who is angry or controlling. Yet over time, it erodes your confidence and your ability to speak up about situations that need to be changed.

When silence becomes a habit – a form of avoidance – it reinforces the idea that you must resign yourself to a small life, a life that’s defined or conscribed by fear. That view makes it extremely difficult to make life-changing choices, such as leaving an abusive situation, or even reclaiming your voice.

I learned this firsthand when I was engaged to someone in my early 20s. My fiancé often told me how worthless I was and how lucky I was that he loved me. As months passed, I became quieter and more passive, and my posture changed. I looked down constantly, both literally and figuratively. Deciding to leave was the most frightening thing I have ever done; people who intimidate or abuse others don’t like to lose control.

DH: I remember years ago interviewing Lois Ames, who wrote the introduction to *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath. Plath was abused by her husband Ted Hughes, and it led to her suicide. Ames told me in the 50s and 60s it was a revolutionary act for a woman to step out of the kitchen. Things have changed, and things haven’t changed. What is your take on this?

EL: Many women experienced domestic violence in the 50s and 60s, yet despite the gains women have made in many areas since then, violence is still pervasive today. The US Department of Justice estimates that 1.3 million women (and 835,000 men) are victims of physical violence by a partner every year.

As #DomesticViolenceAwareness notes, abuse often

begins with a partner putting you down, acting jealous or possessive – i.e., constantly checking up on your whereabouts and wanting to know who you’ve been with. Abusers “attack your intelligence, looks, mental health, or capabilities. They blame you for all of their violent outbursts and tell you nobody will want you if you leave.”

As the site also states, abusive behavior leads to the self-esteem of victims being “totally destroyed,” which makes it difficult to even consider escaping. When someone does leave, that’s the most dangerous time. “Women are 70 times more likely to be killed in the weeks after leaving their abusive partner than at any other time in the relationship,” according to the Domestic Violence Intervention program.

DH: Why should we read your collection?

EL: Domestic violence is so pervasive that many of us will have a friend or family member who deals with abuse at some point in their lives. My book shines a literary spotlight on that struggle and the devastating impact that abuse can have on everyone involved. To put it another way, the poems provide a series of snapshots -- rather than statistics – which allows readers to understand viscerally both the warning signs of violence and the pain that victims feel.

I’ve been told by several women who escaped abusive relationships that my book beautifully captured their experience and helped them realize how strong and wise they really were. Others have told me that the poems helped them release any lingering doubts about their self-worth or the idea that they somehow deserved what happened.

Still other readers have said that they appreciate how the book moves from darkness toward light and reminds them that no one deserves to be silenced or afraid. I’m deeply touched by such comments.

Thank you, Doug, for your thoughtful comments about my poems, especially since National Domestic Violence Awareness Month is coming up in October.

Remembering Elaine

One great blue heron
punctuates the shore,
huddling in first snow.

What keeps this steel-eyed
juvenile here, weeks after
the others have flown?

Gray on gray she stands
like a wrought-iron
question mark.

What does she read
in the tinfoil sky,
its indecipherable script?

Does she stand, like me,
awaiting a sign, has she
hunkered too far down?

How do winged creatures
lose their lift, their bold
exclamation point?

One could say the sky
turns a deaf ear, that some
stories are meant to trail off.

She stands ramrod straight,
like a stubborn suicide
or a righteous sacrifice.

But I’m not ready to let
her go, as the season’s
first storm spits and swirls.

— Elizabeth Lund

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