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Merry Christmas

From the Publisher and Staff of The Somerville Times

City residents weigh in on Arts at the Armory Master Plan



Members of the community expressed their views on the city's proposed Arts at the Armory Master Plan at a meeting on December 10.

By Lexi O'Neil

Somerville residents have been waiting anxiously for the city council's proposal on how best to serve their community's voices when it comes to Arts at the Armory.

On December 10, residents and community members gathered to speak on behalf of the Master Plan that Somerville's council has worked on for the last three years. However, residents and creative arts members of the Armory were in opposition of the plan, stating "if it's not broken, don't fix it."

The Master Plan offers the idea *Continued on page 4*

Somerville Kiwanis Club host Toys For Tots luncheon

On Thursday, December 12, Somerville Kiwanis Club members were joined by our good friends from the Somerville Rotary Club and Somerville Lions Club for our annual Toys For Tots luncheon meeting. Three members of the Marine Corps joined us for this special tri-club meeting.

Everyone attending brought unwrapped toys for donating to the United States Marine Corps. Toys For Tots program. In addition to more than two hundred fifty new, unwrapped toys, the Marines were presented with a check for \$2000.00 from Middlesex Federal Savings Bank plus another \$50.00 from a bank employee. The check was presented to Marine Sgt. Guzman by member Adam Portney from Middlesex Federal Savings bank.

Our meeting began with as always with the pledge of allegiance and opening prayer, *Continued on page 4*



Last week, the Somerville Kiwanis Club joined forces with the Somerville Rotary Club and Somerville Lions Club to benefit the USMC Toys For Tots program.

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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.

The publishers, staff and everyone associated with *The Somerville Times* wish one and all a very Happy Holiday, Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah, as well as a prosperous and healthy New Year in 2025.

The *Somerville Times*' staff is taking a small holiday vacation from the print edition next week, the next issue coming out will be on January 1, 2025. Anything that comes in and is Somerville related through that period will be posted online to our website. We want to thank all our readers for your support this past year. Don't forget, you can go online to our website and register online for a free subscription of the paper.

Happy birthday for the next two weeks while we are on break: Happy birthday to **Zachary Atwell**, who is celebrating this week. Happy birthday to great person and great friend, **Monica Calvo**. We wish her a very happy birthday. Happy birthday to **Kristen Marie Butler** as well. We hope she has a great day. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Glenn DiMasse, Lori Courtney, Erica Voolich, Fallon Leigh O'Brien, Natalia Caliman, Caddy Villen, Liz-Mary Jelinek, Caroline C. Carafotes, Brian M. Conley, Richard Murphy, Bob Cammarata and Win Win** 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. *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of December 18 – December 24 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
Wednesday <i>December 18</i>	Partly Cloudy	51°/39°	25%	18%	SW 9 mph
Thursday <i>December 19</i>	Sunny	43°/30°	5%	2%	NW 14 mph
Friday <i>December 20</i>	Rain	38°/22°	57%	44%	NE 11 mph
Saturday <i>December 21</i>	Partly Cloudy	31°/14°	19%	11%	NW 13 mph
Sunday <i>December 22</i>	Sunny	23°/9°	2%	1%	NW 11 mph
Monday <i>December 23</i>	Sunny	26°/18°	2%	1%	NW 8 mph
Tuesday <i>December 24</i>	Cloudy	35°/22°	9%	5%	WSW 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: *Our Civic Backlog*

Hayward Zwerling says:

Dear Mayor Ballantyne,

The below opinion piece, written by Chris Dwan and appearing in this week's Somerville Times is a well-documented and rational set of complaints about the City of Somerville.

Around the country, citizens are frustrated that their government is not doing what it is supposed to do – efficiently fix societal problems when possible, and provide a lucid explanation and plan when the problems cannot be fixed by the government. As a result, we ended up with Trump.

If you can't put the city on a better trajectory (Davis Square's decline is another example of the city's numerous failures) then you should hire the people who have the ability to fix these problems and invest them with the power to do so.

No more excuses, as continued failures could bring MAGA to Somerville.

Tim K. says:

Chris,

Please keep posting. Keep hammering away and keep holding those in power accountable.

Happy holidays,

Tim

Response to: *City joins forces to regulate broker fees for renters*

Lauren Cortesi says:

I sure hope this passes! We had to pay 3 months before moving in: First, Last and full month broker fee, over \$20,000 to move in! How can anyone afford this? It's a travesty and owners should be required to pay the fee to get their places rented not tenants.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

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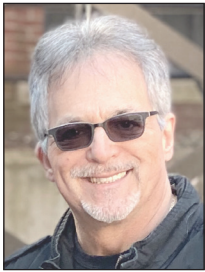
The Somerville Times is published every Wednesday

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Life in the **VILLE** by Jimmy Del Ponte

A Baby Boomer Christmas



This is my annual look back at those Christmas toys we got in the 60's 70s and 80's.

The best toy I ever got for Christmas was the year I got an

Aurora race car set. Me and my brother had it all set up before anyone else woke up. I asked our friends to share their memories of their favorite Christmas toy.

"A wind-up truck that you had to put together and then send it down the track that was up against the wall. It would explode and you couldn't wind it up again until you put it all back together. Loved that thing lol"

"Motorized fire truck with working aerial ladder and hose that squirted water cool!"

"A very cool Western belt. It had this really ornate buckle and when you pressed the little button on the side, a derringer cap gun would pop out!"

"My first set of real drums. Kent, blue sparkle drum set. We got Etch A Sketch,

Erector sets and talking dolls. I got a plastic army helmet that I loved."

Santa always had stockings for us. It was there you would find a Slinky, some Silly Putty and a squirt gun. Our stockings were always well stocked. There was usually a gift that was burned or singed. It came from The Bargain Center who sold fire damaged goods.

One year I got Elton John's Goodbye Yellow Brick Road and The Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour. I played the hell out of them.

I actually bought View Master and a Give a Show Projector on eBay with some other old toys and vintage lunchboxes. I still have my Mattel Fanner Fifty pistol that used greenie stick'em caps.

My first guitar will go down as one of my all-time favorite Christmas gifts.

My ride-on fire engine with a fireman's hat was a great gift even though I'm not smiling in the photo.

Let's not forget Erector Sets and Barbie Dolls, Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots or Mr. Potato Head. Merry Christmas!



Somerville community encouraged to prepare now for snow season

The City of Somerville is encouraging the community to get ready now for potential snowstorms by signing up for City Alerts and reviewing protocols for snow emergencies. Preparing now will help keep the community safe, as well as reduce ticketing or towing for snow emergency parking violations and ticketing for failure to follow shoveling requirements.

All information below can also be found

at somervillema.gov/snow.

Alerts

Snow emergencies are announced in various ways, including through phone, text, and email alerts. Those who live, work, or own a business or property in Somerville are urged to sign up for City Alerts. Alerts are also available in multiple languages. Sign up at somervillema.gov/alerts.

In addition to Somerville City Alerts,



snow emergencies are announced the following ways:

- City website: somervillema.gov
- City social media feeds: somervillema.gov/social
- City TV: somervillema.gov/somerville-city-tv
- Flashing blue lights at major intersec-

tions

- Information is shared with local media
- Street Parking

Because this winter begins in an even-numbered year, snow emergency parking is on the even side of the street all winter. There are a small number of exceptions to the park even

Continued on page 10



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Somerville opens overnight Warming Center for 2025 winter season

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, together with the Somerville Office of Health and Human Services (HHS), is announcing the opening of the 2025 Overnight Warming Center to support adults experiencing homelessness.

Since opening on December 9, the warming center has already welcomed almost 30 guests and is operating successfully. Clients are accessing hot meals, safe sleeping spaces, and essential services, ensuring they receive the care and support they need.

The Somerville Warming Center's operating hours for the 2024/2025 season are daily from 5 to 8 a.m. at the Cummings School (42 Prescott St.). The center will remain open through Sunday, April 13, 2025.

Community members interested in supporting the warming center can donate supplies. The center is currently in need of unused socks and cold-weather treats such as hot chocolate, assorted chocolates, and packaged cookies. To learn more, please email warmingcenter@somervillema.gov

warmingcenter@somervillema.gov

The warming center is only available to adults experiencing homelessness. Families or individuals with children seeking shelter should contact the Somerville Office of Housing Stability at 617-625-6600, Ext. 2581, for referrals to family-specific resources and shelters.

Community members interested in learning more about the Somerville Overnight Warming Center, visit somervillema.gov/warmingcenter or email warmingcenter@somervillema.gov.



The former Cummings Elementary School building will serve as a warming center for unhoused residents through the winter months.

City residents weigh in on Arts at the Armory Master Plan

CONT. FROM PG 1

for leasing spaces to residents despite its not-for-profit stance. By the government taking over, the people who have worked tirelessly with the Armory to produce art for the community would lose agency over their tenancy.

Some rental agreements may be too high compared to the funds that these projects bring in, causing stress among leaders about the longevity of their work in the community. Residents expressed their concern for losing what makes Somerville's downtown area a sought-after historical site while feeling as though their concerns are being dismissed by the council. These opinions span from residents of the neighborhood to leadership members whose only opportunity to share their visions is through the Armory.

A community based around dramat-

ic arts would be nothing if the people's power of creativity is taken away, and this leaves Somerville residents hanging in the balance between 'what if' and what will be.

Artists are pouring out from all corners of the community, and some have expressed viewing the council as looking to turn a quick dollar versus cherishing the shared space. Leases would force artists out of the building, thus taking projects away and creating a larger issue on a for-profit standpoint.

The council did propose means for renovations and upkeep on the building, especially if it were to continue standing as an ever-busy front, but this did not comfort residents due to where the power struggle would lie between their craft and the city's income.



The new year will bring the Master Plan closer to execution, and the council will have the finalized plans prepared for residents by December 31, 2024.

Somerville Kiwanis Club host Toys For Tots luncheon

CONT. FROM PG 1

after which everyone present sang the Marine Corps Hymn in honor of our Marine Corps guests.

At the end of the meeting, the members helped to load the Marine's van with the hundreds of donated toys which will make Christmas a little happier for children in need in our area.

President Tom Austin and Co-President Dawn Austin thanked the members and our Lions and Rotary Club friends for their support and special thanks to the Marine guests, Staff Sergeant Guzman, Lance Corporal Laub and Sergeant Abako for their service. Special thanks also to Program Chairman, Distinguished Past President Jay Lynch for another successful toy drive.



City touts progress at Chamber of Commerce awards dinner, encourages partnership with youth

By Harry Kane

Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne delivered an impactful speech about fostering stronger connections with youth during the 78th Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner and Powderhouse Awards event on December 5.

Awards were presented to recipients and speakers addressed the Chamber, mentioning their progress and plans for the future to enhance the relationships between the community and local businesses at the Somerville Holiday Inn.

“Our youth are our future,” said Mayor Ballantyne. “We have an opportunity to help their imagination soar when it comes to their futures.”

The city is exploring ways of helping kids connect with the business community through classroom visits, internships and work study programs.

“In the coming year, I ask that you also partner with us to expand our support of youth next year,” Mayor Ballantyne said. “Open your doors to student tours, join our youth job programs, offer internships or demos, get involved with youth initiatives, create student challenges and together we can open doors.”

The Chamber has been going through a transition period. Former Alderman Jack Connolly has been filling in as an interim President/CEO after former President Stephen Mackey retired following 29 years of service. Wendy Dalwin will be the Chamber’s incoming Executive Director.

“We are thrilled to have you at the helm,” said Mayor Ballantyne, pointing at Dalwin, as the crowd applauded.

The mayor acknowledged her economic development team, and then went on to thank the Holiday Inn for their contribution and hospitality. The Inn has been open for 50 years, and the city recognized their “significant contribution” with a Mayoral Citation. General Manager Sean Smith accepted the Mayoral Citation on behalf of the hotel and the Distinctive Hospitality Group.

“The city and our businesses are facing the headwinds of higher interest rates, supply chain issues and lingering pandemic impacts,” Mayor Ballantyne said.

Yet, the mayor said she is “bullish” on Somerville’s financial state for the coming year.

“We’ve got a thriving life science sector and a diverse and growing incubator

scene,” Mayor Ballantyne said. “We have a celebrated food scene that offers everything from pupusas and burgers to craft cocktails and celebrity chefs.”

Some 50 small businesses opened their doors in Somerville in the last 11 months, according to the city.

“Somerville is now a solid member of the biotech corridor. Lab buildings now dot our city, retail is expanding; we are the climate tech hub of the Northeast,” Mayor Ballantyne said.

The City of Somerville’s New Small Business Vitality Grant program, which is now finished, was a big success, the mayor explained. Over 90 grants were awarded to small businesses, offering rent support and technical assistance.

“Our arts scene continues to thrive and drive our economy,” the Mayor added.

The mayor raised a toast to the incredible businesses that make up Somerville. “Here’s to the continued success and collaboration.”

Chairperson Adam Portney said this year was unique because the Chamber was in transition.

“I want to thank Jack Connolly,” said Portney. “You came out of retirement, punching harder than Mike Tyson this year, buddy. Thank you for stepping back in our ring in the interim.”

The John W. Fitzgerald Lifetime Achievement Award went to Patrick Cain. He formed the Cooper-Cain Group, which is an internet security and technology consultancy based in Boston.

Portney thanked Cain for going above and beyond for the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Somerville.

“Pat, your contributions have shaped the Chamber and the community in ways that are immeasurable,” Portney said. “This lifetime achievement award is just a small token of our appreciation for everything you do.”

Keynote speaker Massachusetts State Auditor Diana DiZoglio congratulated the award recipients. “Thank you for whatever it is that you’ve contributed to this community. You are in the trenches every single day, making Somerville thrive, not just survive.”

Bunker Hill Community College and Verizon sponsored the event.

“It’s extremely noteworthy to mention the contribution the City of Somerville has had with Bunker Hill Community College,” said Jack Connolly. *Continued on page 23*



The 78th Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner and Powderhouse Awards event took place on Thursday, December 5.



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.

Beacon Hill Roll Call's research shows that there are several bills from the 2023-2024 session that have been approved unanimously by the Senate in 2023 but are languishing in the House Ways and Means Committee as of December 13, with only a few days left in the session. Bills not acted upon by the end of the session on January 1, 2025 die. With no opposition in the Senate, observers question why the bills have not yet been acted upon by the House Ways and Means committee and brought to the House floor for a vote.

Under House rules, any individual representative can move to discharge any and all of these bills from the Ways and Means Committee. There is a 7-day waiting period prior to the House considering the motion to discharge. The discharge motion must receive a majority vote of the members present. If the measure is discharged from the committee, the committee has four days within which to report out the measure for placement on the House's agenda for action.

A bill may also be discharged from the Ways and Means Committee by any representative by filing a petition signed by a majority of the House. The bill would then be discharged seven days later and go onto the House agenda for the next session.

A state representative who spoke on the condition of anonymity told *Beacon Hill Roll Call* that some bills are sometimes held up in committee because someone in a high position of power either inside or outside the Statehouse is opposed to it. "Rank and file members have little control over the bill if a powerful person wants the measure buried," said the legislator.

An ex-state representative who wished to remain anonymous said, "Although under House rules, every representative has the power to attempt to discharge a bill, hardly any attempt is made to do this out of fear of alienating the powerful speaker, his leadership team and committee chairs."

Beacon Hill Roll Call's archives show that motions to discharge a bill from a committee and bring it to the full House for debate and a vote was a common practice back in the 1970s and 1980s.

Beacon Hill Roll Call contacted the office of House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy) several times last week and asked why these bills are still in committee. No response has been received.

Beacon Hill Roll Call had also asked the speaker's office the same question back in February 2024 when these bills had been tied up in the Ways and Means Committee. At that time, Max Ratner, a spokesman for House Speaker Ron Mariano, responded, "Each of those bills are currently being reviewed by the House, with a continued focus on fiscal responsibility."

Here are three of the major bills that were approved unanimously by the Senate and are currently lingering in the House Ways and Means Committee:

MAKE OBTAINING ID CARDS EASIER FOR HOMELESS PERSONS (S 2251)

On July 27, 2023, the Senate 38-0, approved and sent to the House legislation that would make it easier for homeless youth and adults to secure free state ID cards.

Supporters said that currently a person experiencing homelessness faces prohibitive fees and documentation requirements when trying to obtain an ID card. They noted that this legislation removes those barriers by eliminating fees and only requiring that applicants present documentation showing that they are currently receiving services provided by the state, a homeless service provider or another service provider. They argued that ID cards are necessary for applying for jobs, enrolling in school, interacting with law enforcement, accessing government buildings, opening financial accounts and many other basic services that many take for granted.

"When we listen to our homeless youth about the challenges they face, there is a common denominator and that is access to identification," said Sen. Robyn Kennedy (D-Worcester), the Senate sponsor of the bill. "Having proper identification is foundation to accessing food, shelter and employment opportunities, while also breaking the cycle of poverty."

"Fees and documentation are not just barriers to identification," said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). "By extension, they are barriers to getting a job, accessing healthcare and applying for services—the most basic of necessities. These barriers harm the most vulnerable people in our commonwealth and eliminating them is a compassionate step that makes the path to stability a little bit easier."

(A "Yes" vote is for the bill.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS (S 2491)

On October 26, 2023, the Senate 38-0, approved and

sent to the House a bill that would require all prisons, homeless shelters and K-12 schools to maintain free menstrual products, including sanitary napkins, tampons and underwear liners in private and public restrooms and to make them available in a "convenient manner that does not stigmatize any persons seeking the products."

Supporters said that according to the Massachusetts Menstrual Equity Coalition, approximately one in seven children in Massachusetts is living in poverty and struggles to pay for menstrual products. They argued that research shows that the inability to access menstrual products affects students' class attendance.

They also noted that women facing homelessness or who are incarcerated face high barriers to access, with Massachusetts shelters reporting that menstrual products are among the least donated items. They argued that restricted access in shelters and correctional facilities means that products can be used as bargaining chips and tools of control for people in vulnerable circumstances.

"I learned about this issue from young people in Medford High School, Somerville High School and Cambridge Rindge and Latin who took leadership at the local level to make menstrual hygiene products available in their own communities," said sponsor Sen. Pat Jehlen (D-Somerville). "This is a true grassroots movement starting with girls talking about their experiences of missing valuable class time or feeling embarrassed to access products during the school day. These conversations have already started to change the culture and have motivated us to expand this across the state."

"Period products are not luxuries, but necessities required for people's basic needs, health and hygiene," said Sen. Julian Cyr (D-Truro), Senate Chair of the Committee on Public Health. "Today's passage of the ... bill affirms that women and all menstruating people deserve access to menstrual products. An inaccessibility of period products speaks to the longstanding and persistent misogyny in our society, a bias that intersects with inequalities in housing, education, socioeconomics and beyond. By ensuring better access to these products, we support further access to essential health needs regardless of our situation in life."

During floor debate, Cyr sarcastically commented, "I think it's pretty obvious that if most men could menstruate, these products would be as ubiquitous and free as toilet paper."

(A "Yes" vote is for the bill.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

Continued on page 16

COMMENTARY

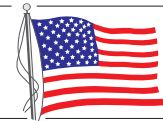
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Merry Christmas from all of us here at The Times.

Our View Of The Times



The shopping is done, the presents are (hopefully) wrapped, and the plans for the big day have been made. Now is the time to slow down, relax and enjoy the holiday and all the finer things that come with it.

Being with family, friends and loved ones and sharing warmth of the occasion is unquestionably at or near the top of the list of things we like most at this time of year.

Whatever faith one may adhere to, we can all agree that the spirit of the moment can be meaningful to one and all. Kindness, charity and camaraderie are ideals that we particularly embrace at this time, and wish to uphold throughout the year. If we can be firm enough in our convictions to see that through, then our world will be a better place for us all to share.

We try our best, and that is all that can

be asked of us.

Let us enjoy this holiday season to the fullest. Exchange our gifts, hug our loved ones, catch up on our big dramatic doings in life, and all the rest. But let us also give a little thought to extending that warmth and sense of solidarity into the year to come, no matter how contentious and troubling the times may be.

We may certainly face adversity from

time to time, but we can hold that spirit of tolerance and magnanimity in ourselves as we deal with it.

We are only human, and often fall short of it. But it is well worth the effort to try.

We here at *The Times* wish all of our readers the warmest and happiest of the holiday season and the coming new year. May peace and prosperity bless you and yours throughout the years to come.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Somerville High School proudly presents the 2024 Music & Art Winter Showcase on Thursday, December 19, at SHS's Centennial Auditorium. Check out the art exhibit at 5:00 p.m., then watch the concert at 6:00 p.m. Enjoy music performed by the Somerville High School Chorus, Orchestra, Band, World Percussion Ensemble, Jazz Band, and Guitar Class. Artwork from current high school art students will be on display and select ceramics pieces will also be available for purchase. All staff, family, and friends of the Somerville Public Schools community are invited to enjoy an evening celebrating the arts.

 On Thursday, December 19, at 7 p.m., the Boston Festival of New Jewish Music presents The Somerville Chanukah Party. This year, they are delighted to present, for the first time in history, as far as they can tell, a complete live concert performance of the best Chanukah album ever recorded: *The Moishe Oysher Chanukah Party*. Featuring a klezmer orchestra drawn from the top klezmer bands in the world and an all-star cast of vocalists standing in for the great cantor. If you've never heard The Moishe Oysher Chanukah Party before, now is literally your only chance. Visit [\[thearmory.org/\]\(https://thearmory.org/\).](https://artsat-</p>
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 On December 21, The Crystal Ballroom at The Somerville Theatre, Small Mart will be putting on their holiday market, featuring 40+ vendors with vintage, art, handmade goods and more. Free entry, all ages, wheelchair accessible, and a full bar (for those that are 21+).

 All city offices are closed on December 25. Trash and recycling pickup will be delayed by one day. All Somerville Public Library locations will be closed at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24, and all day Wednesday, December 25, for the

Christmas holiday. Regular hours will resume on Thursday, December 26.

 The community is invited to see the creativity and holiday spirit of their neighbors by embarking on a self-guided Illuminations Tour through January 2025. The Illuminations map is available to take a self-guided tour: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/illuminationstour>.

 Ring in the new year on Wednesday, January 1, 2025, as they raise the Grand Union Flag on Prospect Hill to commemorate the 249th anniversary of the first flag rising. *Continued on page 21*

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#954

- Which three reindeer have a name starting with D?
- Which U.S. state has a town named Santa Claus?
- When is National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day?
- Which fruit used to be a popular stocking stuffer?
- What is it about Christmas that upsets Charlie Brown in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*?
- Which Christmas decoration was once made of real silver?
- Who wrote and recorded the song *Wonderful Christmastime*?
- What type of calendar is used to count down to the days leading to Christmas?
- How many candles are lit on the first night of Hanukkah?
- What is the meaning of the "shamash" candle?
- What is the name of the nine-branched menorah used during Hanukkah?
- What is the name of the book in the Talmud that contains the story of Hanukkah?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

- The stomach produces a new layer of mucus every two weeks.
- Right handed people live nine years longer than lefties.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

AT THE RESTAURANT

ACROSS

- Be's predecessor
- Ogre-like creature
- Attorney's bargain
- Old but in
- Restaurant waiting area?
- Located near crannies?
- List of Catholic saints
- Down Under runner
- White heron
- ___ meal, or staff meal
- Meat and fish, in Italian restaurant
- Singer/songwriter Yoko
- What appetizers do to appetite
- *Deuce
- Like a reliable move
- Not a desktop
- "My bad!"
- Painter Chagall
- Beyond suburban
- Wisecrack
- Nigiri, e.g.
- Middle Eastern bread
- Of an arm bone
- That time
- Let it stand, to proofreader
- Swellings
- Chancy
- Between E and NE
- Stomach reflex
- Fish eggs
- Second C in CDC
- ___ d'hotel
- Not mainstream, as in art
- "To His ___ Mistress"
- Bracelet add-on
- Covers with gold
- Stiff grass bristle
- Irving of Dallas Mavericks
- Eyelid affliction
- Fairytale princess test
- Winter driving hazard

DOWN

- Curved one
- Table extender
- Sicilian erupter
- Movie trailer, e.g.
- Perfecting, as in skill
- Toe the line
- Popular pickup
- Puppy love
- Jumping stick
- Forsaken
- Barely got by
- Spumante-producing town
- Greek god's libation
- Rumpelstiltskin's machine, pl.
- Freshwater staple in sushi restaurant
- Idolize
- Chef's hat
- Modified "will"
- Offer two cents
- Drawn tight
- Baby porcupines
- Commonplace
- Like Cheerios
- Blue-___ special
- Unsubscriber's focus
- ___ de partie, or line cook
- ___ structure or ___ red
- Cujo's disease
- Ray shooter
- Foxhunter's call to hounds
- Short version
- C2H5
- Marlboros or Camels, slangily
- Army group
- Lazily
- Complimentary dish
- Asian starling
- *Steak choice
- Great Lake
- Be in the red
- Were introduced

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

H	A	D	E	S		L	O	P		P	A	P	A	
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Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Clarity Tattoo Removal opens in Somerville

Clarity Tattoo Removal, a new tenant in 259 Elm St., lower level held their official Grand Opening event on December 12. They are excited to bring the newest laser technology for tattoo removal to Davis Square and the rest of Somerville. Check them out online to learn more about what they do and the technology they utilize: <http://www.claritytattooremoval.com>.



Dorothy's Corner BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Sourdough Eggnog French Toast

Leftovers, it's what's for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. But in this case, breakfast! When I went to fetch the eggs and milk for the French toast, I stumbled upon the eggnog and decided to use it instead. Let's just say the final result did not disappoint. The combination with the sliced almonds and syrup are a match made in heaven. Give it a try.

- 3 large sourdough rolls, sliced into 3 pieces from side to side or 6 pieces of sourdough bread slices
- 2 large eggs
- 3/4 - 1 cup eggnog
- 1/4 cup toasted sliced almonds
- 1 tablespoon butter, divided

Pure maple syrup – and not the fake stuff!

In a shallow, wide bottomed bowl, scramble two eggs, then add the eggnog and blend well. Dip the bread into the mixture and coat all sides. Preheat a griddle or non-stick pan and add a 1/2 tablespoon butter if the pan or griddle isn't big enough to cook all the French toast at the same time. Use the full tablespoon if your griddle can accommodate all 6 slices of bread. Cook over medium heat for about 3 minutes per side until golden brown. Serve with the sliced almonds and maple syrup. Serves 2.

Visit Dorothy's website at <http://ddimarzo2002.wix>.



LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notices can also be viewed on our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
IFB #25-29**

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

Urban Horticultural Management Program

An Invitation for Bid (IFB) may be obtained online at www.bidexpress.com, www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/purchasing/bids, or from the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **Wednesday, December 18th, 2024**. Sealed bids will be received at above office until: **1:00PM Thursday, January 23rd, 2025**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves right to reject any or all bids if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please contact Felisa Gárate at fgarate@somervillema.gov for more information.

Felisa Gárate
Procurement Analyst
617-625-6600 x3406

12/18/24 The Somerville Times

Legal Notices can be downloaded
from our website:
www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

Notice of Self Storage Sale

Please take notice Prime Storage - Somerville located at 39R Medford St., Somerville, MA 02143 intends to hold an auction to sell the goods stored by the following tenants at the storage facility. The sale will occur as an online auction via www.storage-treasures.com on 1/14/2025 at 12:00PM. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Amery Burnham unit #0961; Folakemi Alalade/Alafia Institute Inc unit #372A1; Dennis J Mahoney unit #4502. All property is being stored at the above self-storage facility. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Certain terms and conditions apply. See manager for details.

12/18/24 The Somerville Times

Notice is hereby given that:

The Annual Meeting of the Somerville YMCA will be held in the Association Building, 101 Highland Avenue, Somerville on **Tuesday, January 21, 2025**.

Article 2 Section III

At a regular meeting of the Board of Directors, or at least thirty (30) days preceding the Annual election, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three voting members to nominate members for election to the Board of Directors. At least twenty-one (21) days before the annual meeting, the Nominating Committee shall publish in the Somerville Times notice of the Annual Meeting, together with this section of the By-Laws. Twenty-five (25) voting members of the Association may present in writing to the Nominating Committee, not later than ten (10) days before the Annual Meeting, the name of any voting member for election. Such names shall then be posted immediately in a conspicuous place in the Association Building. No person shall be eligible for nomination for election as Director unless her or his name shall thus have been submitted to or nominated by said Nominating Committee.

12/18/24 The Somerville Times

Notice of Intent

The following vehicles will be sold
Pursuit to M.G.L. 255 S.39A

2010 Mercedes Benz Vin# WDDGF8BB4AR131753
2008 Honda Fit Vin# JHMGD38618S050711
2004 Toyota Camry Vin# 4T1BE32K04U289319
2012 Mercedes Benz Vin# WDDGF8BB0CR199020
2012 Kia Optima Vin# KNAGM4A70C5282862

To satisfy the debt owed to
Cityside Enterprises Inc.
617-776-6111

12/18/24 The Somerville Times

Notice of Intent

The following vehicles will be sold
Pursuit to M.G.L. 255 S.39A

2000 Toyota Camry Vin# 4T1BG22K9YU010041
2006 Subaru Forester Vin# JF1SG67626H727237
2001 Volkswagen Golf Vin# 9BWBT21J914025238
2002 Honda Odyssey Vin# 2HKRL18922H553679
2005 Toyota Rav4 Vin# JTEHD20V950062725
2012 Chevy Impala Vin# 2G1WVG5E3XC1132450
2020 Chevy Trax Vin# KL7CJLSB7LB019550
2010 Kia Rio Vin# KNADH4A35A6667426
2010 Ford Fusion Vin# 3FAHP0HAXAR185905
2008 Ford Escape Vin# 1FMCU93178KA87594

To satisfy the debt owed to
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12/4/24, 12/11/24, 12/18/24 The Somerville Times

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Somerville community encouraged to prepare now for snow season

CONT. FROM PG 3

rule, which will be noted by signs on that street.

Once a snow emergency is declared, everyone has four hours to move their car to the even-numbered side of the street, or to municipal lots that are available for use during a snow emergency. Parking is not allowed in school lots during snow emergencies.

Parking is allowed at meters on the even-numbered side of the street during a snow emergency, as long as there is no sign stating otherwise. Meters and time-parking rules are not enforced during snow emergencies. The city does not enforce an ordinance prohibiting cars from being parked in the same spot for more than 48 hours during snow emergencies.

Vehicles may be ticketed and towed if in violation of snow emergency parking rules.

Municipal Lot Parking

Municipal lots are available for parking during snow emergencies. Once the emergency is lifted, all cars must be moved from the lots within two hours.

For the 2024-2025 snow season the following lots are available for parking:

Municipal Buildings

- + City Hall Concourse (93 Highland Ave.)
- + All metered municipal parking lots
- + Municipal Parking Lots
- + Buena Vista Lot, Buena Vista Road (via Holland St. or Meacham Rd.)
- + Cutter Square Lot (Elm St./Summer St. at Cutter Ave.)
- + Day Street Lot (Day St.)
- + Dilboyl Pool Lot (110 Alewife Brook Pkwy.)
- + Foss Park Lot (Foss Park at Broadway)
- + Grove Street Lot A (Grove St. at Highland Ave., referred to as "Rite Aid Lot")
- + Grove Street Lot B (Grove St. east side, between Highland Ave. and Elm St., "Grove Street Lot")
- + Magoun Square Lot (Broadway at Medford St.)
- + Mount Vernon St. Lot (Broadway between Mount Vernon St. and Mt. Pleasant St.)
- + Union Square Lot (off Washington

St., entrance at Washington St./Bonner Ave.)

- + Founder's Ice Arena (Rear - 581 Somerville Ave.)
- + Winter Hill Lot A (Broadway, north side between Fellsway West and Wheatland St.)
- + Winter Hill Lot B (Broadway, north side)

Again, parking is not allowed in school lots during snow emergencies.

Snow Shoveling Support Program

The Somerville Youth Shoveling program returns for the 2024-2025 snow season. This is a paid opportunity for youth to help local seniors and homeowners with disabilities or medical conditions after a snowstorm.

Seniors interested in signing up to receive the service can contact Debby Higgins at the Somerville Council on Aging by emailing dhiggins@somervillema.gov or calling 617-625-6600 ext. 2321. Youth looking to sign up can contact Youth Services Coordinator Dan Harris by emailing dharris@somervillema.gov or calling 617-

625-6600 ext. 2406.

Snow Shoveling Requirements

Property owners are responsible for removing ice and snow from sidewalks and accessible ramps that abut their property. The City places buckets of sand where possible in neighborhoods, which may be used to prevent slipping on your public walkways.

To comply with all city shoveling rules:

- + Sidewalks need to be cleared within six daylight hours after the snow stops.
- + Shovel a path at least 36 inches wide and down to the pavement on sidewalks and ramps.

+ Do not shovel snow onto city streets unless the temperature is 40 degrees or higher, it is during daylight hours, and snow and ice are broken up and spread evenly on the street so they will melt quickly.

These rules apply to all snowfall, not just when a snow emergency is declared. Failure to comply with the above rules may result in increasing fines issued daily until the walkway is clear.

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

The Neighborhood Marketplace

Advertising your business brings the community together and helps grow positive connections



YOUR AD HERE

YOUR AD HERE

We are starting a new feature for the new year. As of January 1, 2025 we will be running a Neighborhood Marketplace page to give businesses a place to come together to advertise to new customers for a great price.

To advertise or for further information, email bobbietoner@aol.com

The Somerville Times Best of Somerville 2024

Cast your vote!

You have until December 20 to vote for your favorites in each category. To cast your vote, email us at thebestofsomerville@yahoo.com. The winners will be announced on in our January 1 edition. If you don't see your favorite category here, simply add it to this list.

Foods & Restaurants

- Best Breakfast
- Best Combination Breakfast & Lunch
- Best Italian Food
- Best Chinese Food
- Best Mexican Food
- Best Portuguese Food
- Best Local Deli
- Best Variety and all around Restaurant
- Best Seafood
- Best Irish Pub
- Best Local Bar
- Best Thai Food
- Best Hamburger
- Best Mac & Cheese
- Best Hot-Dog
- Best Roast Beef Sandwich
- Best Pizza
- Best Bakery
- Best Sub Shop

Best Coffee Shop Franchise

- Best Coffee Shop local
- Best Bar Food

Best of Somerville Services

- Best Electrician
- Best Plumber
- Best Attorney
- Best Teacher
- Best Politician
- Best City Worker
- Best Receptionist
- Best Real Estate Agent/Realtor
- Best Real Estate Rental Agent
- Best Bank Teller
- Best Bank Employee
- Best Waitstaff
- Best Bartender
- Best Cook
- Best Caterer

Best Barber

- Best Hair Salon
- Best Doctor
- Best Nurse
- Best Coach
- Best Police Officer
- Best Fire Fighter
- Best Photographer
- Best Somerville Historian
- Best Eye Doctor
- Best Orthodontist
- Best Mortgage Officer
- Best Somerville Artist
- Best Somerville Poet
- Best Somerville Writer
- Best Somerville Celebrity
- Best City Elected Politician
- Best City Employee DPW
- Best City Employee City Hall/Annex

Best of Somerville Businesses

- Best Somerville Bank
- Best Real Estate Company
- Best Insurance Agency
- Best Creative Business in 2024
- Best Florist
- Best Laundromat
- Best Liquor Store
- Best Gas Station
- Best Auto Body Shop
- Best Tow Company
- Best Law Firm
- Best Pest Exterminator
- Best Convenient/Neighborhood Store
- Best Somerville Non Profit Agency
- Best Bar For Bands

Best Idea in 2024

Worst Idea in 2024

2024 Jingle Bell Run

The 45th Anniversary of the Bill Rodgers Somerville Jingle Bell Run & Walk took place this past Sunday. The 5k run/walk started in Davis Square, made its way through the Teele and Ball square areas ending back in Davis Square. Runners were encouraged to wear their best costumes.

The top Ten male and female finishers:

Place	Male Finisher	Age	Gun Time	Diff
1	Gilmar Silvestre	35	14:45	+:00 / +:00
2	Brian Harvey	37	14:56	+:12 / +:12
3	Jeff Candell	24	15:38	+:41 / +:53
4	Henry Bowman	23	15:42	+:04 / +:57
5	Alex Sharp	24	16:19	+:37 / + 1:34
6	Seabiscuits Horseman	32	16:39	+:20 / + 1:54
7	Jeffrey Okerman	32	16:41	+:01 / + 1:55
8	Dan Fleming	38	16:53	+:09 / + 2:04
9	Eric Sofen	39	16:49	+:00 / + 2:04
10	Chris Marino	34	17:00	+:09 / + 2:13

Place	Female Finisher	Age	Gun Time	Diff
1	Molly Kiley	20	17:54	+:00 / +:00
2	Lindsay Walsh	32	17:57	+:05 / +:05
3	Antonia Pagliuca	28	18:09	+:09 / +:14
4	Allyson Casey	46	18:39	+:21 / +:35
5	Barbara Anagnos	43	27:16	+:12 / +:47
6	Rachel Hall	24	19:10	+:30 / + 1:17
7	Morgan Blevins	27	19:13	+:00 / + 1:17
8	Jessica Gimbel	35	19:22	+:06 / + 1:23
9	Olivia Vallone	24	19:24	+:05 / + 1:28
10	Maura Donovan	27	19:27	+:02 / + 1:30

For the overall results, go to: <http://www.iresultslive.com/?op=overall&eid=6249>



Men's top finisher Gilmar Silvestre.



First place women's finisher Molly Kiley.





Photos by Bobbie Toner



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Ms. Cam's

From page 8

Olio

Answers

1. Dasher, Dancer and Donner
2. Indiana
3. The third Friday of December
4. An orange
5. The commercialization of Christmas
6. Tinsel
7. Paul McCartney
8. An Advent calendar
9. Two candles: the "shamash" and the first Hanukkah candle
10. The "shamash" candle is the helper candle, used to light the other Hanukkah candles
11. A hanukkah
12. The story of Hanukkah is found in the "Shabbat" section of the Talmud

Anti-Displacement report delayed until January

By Jeffrey Shwom

The city is now stating that the Anti-Displacement Task Force report is now set to be released in January, along with 5 other reports. The Times had reached out to the city as a follow up from our October 2024 article, Public Information not finalized for city's Anti-Displacement Small Business Committee, in which the city had "indicated that a public release of all of the Task Force's recommendations (was) waiting to be approved by the mayor, with hopes for a large November 2024 public meeting" with visuals and meet and greet.

From the City of Somerville in terms of an update for the Anti-Displacement Task Force report, "the goal is to release it, along with all recommendations, in Spring 2025. A release event will be scheduled for shortly after the report's publication. The report will be released in January, with additional materials following through early spring. The planning team is working diligently and using the coming weeks to get the report ready for public release."

When asked for clarification as to the

previously suggested deadlines, the Communications department suggested a busy end and start to this and next year, respectively, as the culprit. There are three Public Safety for All reports (from the Department of Racial and Social Justice), the recently released Armory Master Plan (November 2024), and a forthcoming Cultural Capacity Plan (from the Somerville Arts Council, which has had no public update on its website since November 2023).

"It's unusual and sometimes frustrating for the public if we issue summaries rather than full reports," remarked Victoria MacGregor, Public Information Officer, "especially if there is risk of confusion with other releases in a short timeframe. So, at the staff and interdepartmental level, it was determined that it would be most useful to the public to release the full Anti-displacement reports and visuals together rather than separately. The mayor's staff were among multiple staff that gave this advice including OSPCD leadership overseeing this work."

The City seems keen to share information at a right time and the right place. "We're looking forward to sharing all three



complete Anti-displacement reports in January as well as gathering with the community thereafter to discuss and begin taking steps forward."

The Anti-Displacement Task Force began in April 2023 and had an objective to release the report Summer 2024.

About the Anti-Displacement Task Force

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."

Janice Pousland retirement party

A retirement party for Janice Pousland, who worked for the Somerville Public Schools after school program for 30 years, took place on Thursday, December 12, at the TAB building, 167 Holland St. Many who worked the After-School Program over the years were also invited.

— Photos by Claudia Ferro



A retirement party was held for Janice Pousland (second from the right) last Thursday.



Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 6

HIV PREVENTION DRUGS (S 2480)

On October 26, 2023, the Senate 38-0, approved and sent to the House a bill that would allow pharmacists to prescribe, dispense and administer a short-term supply (60-days once in a two-year period) of HIV prevention drugs, known as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), to a patient without a prescription.

The bill requires pharmacists to provide counseling to the patient regarding the use of PrEP, to inform the patient's primary care doctor that the pharmacist has prescribed the drug and to connect patients without a primary care provider with a health care provider for ongoing care and to obtain a prescription for PrEP.

Under the bill, pharmacists could only prescribe PrEP to patients who have tested negative for HIV within the past seven days, do not have HIV symptoms and are not taking medications that are not safe to use with PrEP.

Supporters say that PrEP is a life-saving medication that is nearly 100 percent effective in stopping the transmission of HIV. They note that under current law, individuals who take PrEP must make an appointment and go through their doctor, a barrier that can stand in the way for people who need the medication on short notice, cannot make an appointment or cannot access medical care.

"PrEP is a game changer in HIV prevention. Yet, while this life-saving medication reduces the risk of transmission by 99 percent, it remains inaccessible for too many," said sponsor Public Health Care chair Sen. Julian Cyr. "Allowing pharmacists to prescribe and dispense PrEP on a short-term basis, similar to what's already allowed for contraceptives, would significantly increase the accessibility of this essential HIV prevention tool. With greater access to PrEP we can narrow the gap in PrEP utilization among LGBTQ+ people of color. I am someone who uses PrEP and most of my gay, bisexual and queer friends rely on it too. With this legislation, we are once again putting people at the center of our public health policy. I'm thrilled it has passed the Senate."

"When someone is ready to begin PrEP, it is crucial that they are able to [do so] as soon as possible," said Carrie Richgels, Manager of Policy and Advocacy at Fenway Health. "At Fenway Health, we regularly work to overcome barriers that patients face due to trauma, stigma and discrimination. We know from experience that to overcome these obstacles we must meet people where they are and build trust. Trust is essential to getting people on PrEP, and a local pharmacy can provide a lower threshold of access and can be a trusted access point for those who may face discrimination in traditional healthcare settings."

(A "Yes" vote is for the bill.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION - BACK TO SCHOOL – Twenty-two newly elected state legislators, including 19 representatives-elect and three senators-elect, attended the biennial New Legislator Academy at UMass Amherst, which Senate President Karen Spilka's office has described as "an opportunity for newly elected legislators to become familiar with experiences that they will encounter in the Legislature."

According to the State House News Service, the agenda included nearly a dozen panels, speeches and sessions, covering topics such as the budgeting process, ethics and the cadence of legislative sessions.

According to Politico, a session on the media included "the recommendation that if a reporter calls, let it go to voicemail, or wait for them to send a text; find out what they're calling about before you answer; and let leadership know what's up – their office may be fielding the same questions."

COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES (H 5139) – The House approved and sent to the Senate a new version of legislation, originally sponsored by Gov. Maura Healey, that would prevent commercial drivers from losing their licenses due to passenger vehicle offenses they committed prior to September 30, 2005.

The Registry of Motor Vehicles recently notified hundreds of bus and truck drivers that they were ineligible for commercial licenses due to at least two past major offenses, blindsiding many motorists who for years thought their infractions were behind them.

"Over time, the relevance and predictive value of these older offenses has diminished, particularly for those drivers who have remained offense-free since," said Healey. "In most circumstances, a commercial driver who meets the safety requirements of federal law should not be disqualified from driving due solely to passenger vehicle offenses that occurred 19 or more years ago. She noted her bill would remove consideration of pre-September 30, 2005 passenger vehicle offenses from our disqualification law, except for multiple instances of operating under the influence.

\$3.2 MILLION FOR MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL COMMUNITIES – The Healey Administration announced the awarding of \$3.2 million in grants for projects that proponents say will support the economic vitality, tourism and ecosystem health of the Bay State's waterfront and harbors, while helping the state reach its ambitious climate resiliency goals.

"Coastal communities play a critical role in our economy," said Gov. Healey. "The Grants help cities and towns make infrastructure improvements to prepare for extreme weather caused by climate change while also investing in important blue economy businesses, commercial fishing operations and tourist and recre-

ational enterprises."

"These investments will support a range of critical initiatives, from coastal resilience and dredging projects to pier infrastructure enhancements that protect our shorelines," said Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao. "By funding these efforts, we're ensuring a safer and more enduring future for our coasts from the North Shore to the Cape and Islands."

"Maritime communities are important centers of economic activity, drawing many visitors each year and supporting the coastal industries that have been integral to our state's economy," said Undersecretary of Economic Foundations Ashley Stolba. "We are proud to fund these projects and look forward to their lasting impact on the future generations of these towns."

BAY STATE TO GET MORE THAN \$55 MILLION FOR ZERO EMISSION VEHICLES – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that Massachusetts will receive more than \$55 million to purchase more than 200 zero-emission vehicles through its first-ever Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program.

The program will replace existing internal combustion engine heavy-duty vehicles with zero-emission vehicles, while also supporting the build out of clean vehicle infrastructure, as well as the training of workers to deploy these new zero-emission technologies.

Recipients of the funds to replace current school buses with zero-emission vehicles include four school districts: \$35 million for Boston; \$6.6 million for Springfield; \$2.9 million for Hingham; and \$4.9 million for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources will receive \$5.8 million to replace some vehicles with battery electric vehicles and install 16 Level 2 charging stations and eight direct current fast charger stations at eight sites.

"Everyone deserves clean air and a healthy environment, and the ... program is another step toward making that a reality," said EPA Regional Administrator David Cash. "By replacing older, polluting vehicles, like school buses and box trucks, with zero-emission alternatives, this program is driving innovation in clean transportation, reducing harmful air pollution in Massachusetts communities and creating good-paying jobs. These grants are an investment in healthier communities, cutting-edge technology and a cleaner, more sustainable future for our children."

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Expanding our mountain biking trail system will create destinations that connect visitors to our rural communities and the mountains and forests that surround them. It is without a doubt, that investing in

Continued on page 17

Jake Wilson announces candidacy for Somerville mayor

Councilor-At-Large Jake Wilson is launching a campaign for mayor in the 2025 Somerville municipal election. A two-term Councilor-At-Large, Wilson is looking to bring accessible, collaborative, and decisive leadership to the job.

With a focus on innovative problem solving and communication, Wilson's time on the City Council has seen him serve as the chair of the Finance Committee since 2022. As Finance chair, he has overseen and overhauled the annual budget review and introduced a new process for the council to identify its top shared budget priorities. Prior to his election to the City Council, Wilson worked in journalism and communications before moving into community non-profit administration in 2017.

"I have a proven track record of inclusive, transformative leadership and bringing Somerville organizations forward with revamped communications, operations, and governance," Wilson said. "As your mayor, I will be engaged with the public and available to my constitu-

ents. My door is always open and I'll hold regular Thursday evening office hours to meet with the public. I'm constantly listening and asking questions from a drive to know everything possible about what's going on in the organization. We should always be looking to improve. Whether we're struggling or doing well at a particular thing, we can always do better."

"With the right leadership, I believe Somerville can be a model municipal government. I want the City of Somerville to be an employer where top talent wants to come work – and keep working. By recruiting and retaining skilled workers and using data-informed approaches to work smarter, faster, and more efficiently, I know we can better deliver programs and services that improve the lives of Somerville residents of all ages, small business owners, and local workers," commented Wilson.

"It's critical for people to know what's happening in their city, and I see a great opportunity to transform how we communicate and engage with the public. The

City needs to have two-way communication with constituents in their preferred medium and language," says Wilson. "I also intend to launch a map-based information portal with up-to-date information on all public and private construction projects, including project details, plans, benefits, any permits, and costs and the anticipated completion date for public projects. We know the public wants this information and we need to make it readily available in one place."

Wilson's mayoral campaign will focus on improving operations and communications while pursuing equitable policies that address the housing affordability and stability crises, implement proven effective public health and public safety strategies, invest in our youth, support working families, value our seniors and allow them to age in place, do better on accessibility, and meet our climate goals.

A resident of Somerville for over two decades, Wilson lives in Winter Hill with his wife, Catherine, a biotech me-



Councilor-At-Large Jake Wilson

dicinal chemist, and their children: Ingrid (age 13) and Margot (age 10), who attend the Healey School.

For more information about Jake Wilson's campaign for mayor in 2025 or to donate, please visit <https://www.jakeforsomerville.org>.

Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 16

accessible outdoor recreation is beneficial not only for our state's regional economies but also for our health. — Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation Director Paul Jahnige on the announcement of \$300,000 in grants to build and maintain destination mountain biking trail systems that include accessibility features, offer scenic routes and stimulate rural economies.

"In Middlesex County we have had multiple businesses and municipalities impacted by cyberattacks and data breaches. These incidents erode our sense of safety and security and can cost victims millions to get their systems back up and running." — District Attorney Marian Ryan speaking at her Ransomware Response Conference for more than 100 industry leaders at hospitals, schools, municipalities and businesses.

"We actively solicit input from attorneys and other court users, as well as court employees, about what we can do better. In addition, we seek public comments on rule changes. And we recently resumed our Judicial Performance Evaluation program by sending out surveys about judges in selected courts to over 10,000 lawyers and over 1,000 court employees, as well as to jurors." — Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly Budd giving her fourth annual address

on the state of the judiciary to the legal community.

"This year's Climate Ready Housing funding will enable energy retrofit improvements of nearly 1,000 homes across the state. This funding will lower costs for low- and moderate-income residents, improve indoor air quality for our residents and reduce greenhouse gas emissions ... and will put us on the path to achieving the commonwealth's net zero emissions goal while creating more resilient homes." — Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus on the Healey Administration awarding \$16 Million to decarbonize affordable housing.

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 December 9-13, the House and Senate each met for a total of two hours and 31 minutes.

Mon Dec. 9	House 11:01 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Senate 11:01 a.m. to 1:09 p.m.
Tues. Dec. 10	No House session No Senate session
Wed. Dec. 11	No House session No Senate session
Thurs. Dec. 12	House 10:05 a.m. to 11:22 a.m. Senate 11:12 a.m. to 11:35 a.m.
Fri. Dec. 13	No House session No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

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MBTA commemorates Phase One of the Bus Network Redesign

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) hosted a Route 104 ride along Monday to celebrate the launch of the Bus Network Redesign (BNR) Phase One, which officially went into effect December 15. The MBTA's Bus Network Redesign is a major initiative of the Better Bus Project aimed at improving bus service reliability, frequency, and connectivity throughout the region.

Bus Route 104 was one of five key bus routes enhanced during Phase One of the redesign. All changes are leading to a 60% increase in service frequency. Four of the routes are Frequent Bus Routes, including the 104, meaning they will operate every 15 minutes or faster, all day, every day, benefiting communities across Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Malden, Somerville, Cambridge, Allston, Brighton, and East Boston.

"The launch of Bus Network Redesign demonstrates that we continue to make progress in creating a transportation system that is safe, reliable, equitable, and resilient," said Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbits-Nutt. "Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll have challenged all public

transportation operators to improve service, expand routes, and take steps to help everyone travel more efficiently, and the MBTA is delivering. More frequent bus service makes taking public transportation easier than driving and encourages people to use the bus more often."

"Bus Network Redesign was the result of dedication and communication from our MBTA's BNR team, supporting T departments, and our community and municipal partners, who have worked with a shared goal to improve connectivity and service. Our bus network is a key component of our system and with the leadership of Governor Healey and the support of the Legislature, we are rebuilding our workforce allowing us to restore and enhance bus service. As part of this initial launch, we're working hard to inform riders of the improvements coming from these changes.

I thank our staff and the many volunteers that have devoted time to meeting directly with riders to prepare for this launch," said General Manager and CEO Phillip Eng. "Boston communities and surrounding cities deserve more reliable and accessible transportation, and we are committed to deliver that for them."



General Manager Eng congratulates team on a successful rollout along with other supporters by riding the upgraded Route 104 bus.



"I want to thank General Manager Eng and his team, as well as the elected officials and advocates, for this newly designed bus route," said Massport CEO Rich Davy. "Nearly 2,000 Logan employees live within walking distance of this new route. With direct access to Airport Station, it's a terrific opportunity for those folks to have an easier commute, as well as airline passengers who live nearby. I look forward to working with General Manager Eng on even more projects in the future."

MBTA officials, state and municipal leaders, and other supporters of the Bus Network Redesign marked the launch by riding the Route 104 route from 2nd Street to Airport Station and connecting with riders. They rode along a portion of new bus lanes on 2nd Street that support the 104's Frequent Bus Route. This Route is the first local MBTA bus route making

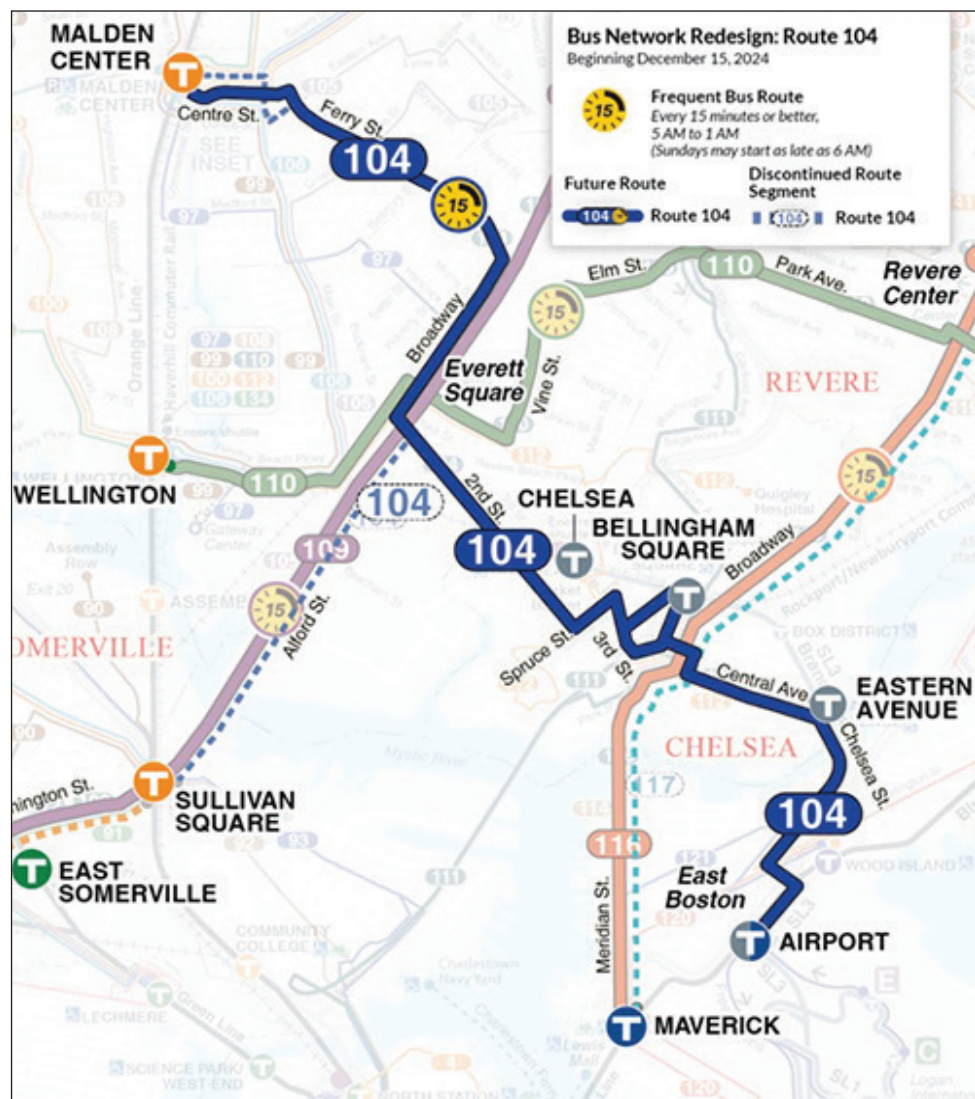
regular stops at Airport Station, and it fills in a missing link in today's bus network, connecting Everett and Malden riders to the Blue Line and Airport Station. Route 104 previously ended in Sullivan Square.

MBTA staff will continue to be available at key bus stops through December 20 to assist riders with the bus route changes and answer questions.

To stay informed about the progress of the Better Bus Project and its initiatives in the meantime, visit mbta.com/BetterBus and sign up for emails here. To learn more about Bus Network Redesign, please visit mbta.com/BNR.

For more information, visit mbta.com/Phase1 or connect with the T on X @ MBTA, Facebook /TheMBTA, Instagram @theMBTA, Threads @thembta, or TikTok @thembta.

— MBTA



Union Comedy: fostering community to grow into a new space

By Jeffrey Shwom

This is the second of three articles in a series titled "Laughing around town: Somerville's comedy scene"

A gray, partly cloudy afternoon meet-up with Union Comedy co-founders Ben Scurria and Pat Kearnan turned out just the way we wanted ... a meet-up at Forge Baking Co first (such tempting pastries) with an informal invitation to Union Comedy's current space across the street at 593 Somerville Ave. Ben and Pat were excited to show and share their post-pandemic success story in building a strong enough community to move onward and upward within Somerville.

Per Emily Holland, marketing director, Union Comedy's mission is "to provide the highest quality local improv comedy shows, as well as the training, resources, and opportunities necessary for artists to thrive, both creatively and professionally." We have heard informally from multiple community folks that Union Comedy boasts some of the best long form improv around.

Pat and Ben met, like many folks within the scene, at ImprovBoston in Cambridge (closed December 2023). Pat told me, "We started looking for a spot in 2017. It is hard to find a theatre space. (Local cities and towns) are taking down spaces that would be great for the arts and turning them into housing," which he agreed was a valid use. "There is an art space and housing crisis, for sure."

The current space is a cozy black box theatre where every square inch is used. They built a vestibule a year ago to create a separate entry way. Ben shared that the 563 Somerville Ave. space "used to be a psychic. Even here, we have limitations. We only do shows Fridays through Sundays and we have to be done by 10 p.m." Pat chipped in that after most shows, "we have to kick people out on the street," literally.

Enter 73 Bow Street (above Hot Tomatoes) and the possibilities of a richer, more comfortable spot. Union Comedy recently signed a new lease and are

using Kickstarter (https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/unioncomedy/next-stage-for-laughs-union-comedy-new-home?ref=project_build) to fund their new theater build in Union Square, with "a larger audience capacity, a green room for performers to gather pre-show, and bar and lounge." It also means operating up to seven days a week and later at night. Pat has been happier with the city and how they have made things easier with the regulations. "They did some meet and greet (with) people who were interested in recovering. They asked, 'What is the situation and what can we do to help?' They put the effort into listening and adjusted the permitting and zoning and liquor stuff."

The most resounding story we heard was the progression of building community pre-, during and post-pandemic. Ben explained, "we did ... the Union Improv Festival at The Rockwell. Deby (Xiadani, Artistic Director & General Manager) is awesome. It's coming back in November 2025. It is the fifth year doing ... (but it's the) first year where we have a true community. Not just people taking classes. Not just people performing and leaving. Most have come through our classes. A couple of anchor performers have been around for a while. There is a mix of those (performers, amateur and professional) that have saturated to a place where it is 'I did this before the pandemic and now I am doing this after.' It took a while for everything to mix together again."

From Pat, "improv, it is new every time. It rewards experimentation and stretching yourself out, your limits. My college buddy started taking classes ... that is what he loves. People do it for a lot of different reasons. He does it for the hang." Ben met his wife doing improv. Whatever the reason, the new space will offer more shows, more classes, and more chances for theatre and connection.

"We are doing our thing. The Nova Comedy Collective is doing their thing... People are doing art and that is the most exciting thing. All good art is done in a community because you are surrounded by art," Ben eloquently remarked.



The Pickle, Every Saturday at 9 pm. Someone in the audience will go home with a free jar of pickles at the end of the night!



As hope abounded, Pat brought us back to the reality of building out a new space with municipal, state and federal building codes and permitting. Pat relayed, "Any space that is alive is blood, sweat and tears. I have respect for anyone doing art stuff. It is not easy. It is the love of the game."

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Somerville Fair Housing Commission
Question of the week



Q: What kinds of questions CAN a landlord ask you if you are looking to rent from him or her?

A: You can be asked questions that will show whether you meet the requirements all applicants must meet. For example:

- Show that you will be able to pay the rent, including whether they have a Section 8 subsidy
- Show that you have a positive credit history
- Give prior landlord references
- In housing that is specifically reserved for persons with disabilities, verify your disability.

Somerville Fair Housing Commission generally meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 3 p.m. online. Call 617-625-6600 ext. 2578 for the login information.

Somerville Police Department promotions

The Somerville Police Department would like to congratulate three officers who were promoted on December 12. We wish (from left to right) Sergeant Ducasse, Lieutenant Anderson, and Captain Sheehan the best of luck in their new positions.



— Somerville Police Department

Want to write local Somerville stories?
Call **857-488-5138** and speak to the Assignment Editor

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



How does Santa take pictures?
Yes, with his Pole-aroid camera

The "Original"
All Types Vent Cleaning
Restaurant Hood Cleaning
Dryer Vent/ HVAC Cleaning
Power Washing
Licensed and Insured
in Massachusetts
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Massachusetts
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Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Don't let the monsters get you!...

— Photo by Denise Provost

On This Day in History

December 18

- 1118 – Afonso the Battler, the Christian King of Aragon captures Saragossa, Spain, causing a major blow to Muslim Spain.
- 1812 – Napoleon Bonaparte arrives in Paris after his disastrous campaign in Russia.
- 1865 – Slavery is abolished in the United States.
- 1916 – The Battle of Verdun ends with the French and Germans each having suffered more than 330,000 killed and wounded in 10 months.
- 1925 – Soviet leaders Lev Kamenev and Grigori Zinoviev break with Joseph Stalin.
- 1940 – Adolf Hitler issues his secret plans for the invasion of the Soviet Union, Operation Barbarossa.
- 1956 – Japan is admitted to the United Nations.
- 1965 – U.S. Marines attack VC units in the Que Son Valley during Operation Harvest Moon.
- 1970 – An atomic leak in Nevada forces hundreds of citizens to flee the test site.
- 2008 – United Arab Emirates holds its first-ever elections.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

A processional will leave from **City Hall** (93 Highland Ave.) at 11:30 a.m. followed by a ceremony at **Prospect Hill Park**. Every New Year's Day the **City of Somerville** commemorates an important moment of the **American Revolution, The First Flag Raising**. The event re-enacts the one that took place on Prospect Hill on January 1, 1776. **General Washington** raised a new American flag on that day over the highest point in the land, Prospect Hill in Somerville. The event starts at Somerville City Hall and proceeds to Prospect Hill. Numerous city officials, the **Ancient & Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts** based out of **Faneuil Hall** (Boston), and re-enactors participate in the ceremony and parade. This year, we are excited to welcome **Phillis Wheatley** and **Martha Washington** to the event.

On **Thursday, December 26**, the **Menorah Lighting** takes place on the **City Hall Concourse** (93 Highland Ave.) at 6 p.m. Traditional songs and sing-alongs will be sung. Special gifts will be available for children. Light refreshments will be served.

Low-income households may be eligible to receive help with winter heating costs through the **Fuel Assistance Program**. This program is part of the **Home Energy Assistance program (HEAP)** and serves residents of **Somerville** and **Cambridge**. Participants receive assistance with their heating costs between November 1 and April 30. Learn more about the program, check if you qualify, and apply for assistance today at somerville-ma.gov/heatingassistance.

The **Somerville Arts Council** and the **Inside-Out Gallery** present **Vernon Street Studios 50th Anniversary Retrospective Exhibit**, curated by **Steven Cabral**. This showcase was a part of Steven's community benefit project as a **Somerville Arts Council LCC 2024 Visual Arts Fellowship Awardee**. 1 Davis Square, Somerville. Learn more about the participating artists here: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/insideout/vernonstreet50>.

Comedy Showcase, Upstairs at Bow Market, 1 Bow Market Way, **Friday, December 20**, 8 - 9:30 p.m., doors at 7:30 p.m. Enjoy a night of laughter and fun. Get ready to enjoy some hilarious stand-

up acts in a cozy setting. The lineup is stacked with a bunch of the best Boston comics, including their special guest from out of town, **Alex Temple** from way of Maine and **Matt Vita** from Vermont. They also encouraging guests to bring a gift for the **Freedom Fighters Toy Drive**. <https://www.bowmarketsomerville.com/new-events/comedy-showcase-upstairs-at-bow-jnkg3-7rarx>.

Somerville High School students are invited to bring their **SHS ID** to the **Somerville YMCA on Fridays** from 7 to 9 p.m. and **Sunday** from 2 to 4 p.m. for free. There are free movie nights. On **Sundays**, students will have access to the basketball and exercise areas (including the weight room). Visit their website to learn more. <https://somervilleymca.org/news/somerville-teens-after-hours/>. Somerville YMCA asks that students go to their website to register before visiting and this program is for ages 14 to 17 years.

This month, the **Somerville Public Library**, 79 Highland Ave., is pleased to display the artwork of local artist **John Ruymann** in the **Gallery @ SPL** with their exhibition: **Narrative Spaces**. Join them for a reception celebrating the exhibit. To learn more about the gallery <https://www.somervillepubliclibrary.org/adults/gallery-spl>.

Children and families are invited to join **Jules Murray** for songs, electric ukulele music, and dancing with shakers and scarves. **Monday December 23**, 10:30 a.m., **Central Library**, 79 Highland Ave.

Vernon Street Studios 50th Anniversary retrospective exhibit has opened at the **Nave Gallery**. This exhibit features over 50 artists. Celebrate artist both past and present. Exhibit open **Saturday and Sunday**, 1 - 5 p.m. **Closes January 9**, 6 - 8 p.m. Nave Gallery, 155 Powerhouse Blvd, Somerville.

The **Somerville Theatre** is hosting their annual performance of **The Slutcracker through January 5, 2025**. Based on **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's** famed 1890s ballet **The Nutcracker**, it combines high culture with burlesque tradition and gathers together local ballet dancers, strippers, belly dancers, pole performers, hula-hoopers, acrobats, plus other eccentric and exotic dancers. For more information and tickets visit www.somervilletheatre.com.

City Alerts are a great way for those who live, work, or own a business in Somerville to receive important city information that affects your neighborhood. City Alerts provide information about emergencies (including snow emergencies), construction and road closures, water service interruptions, community news, and more. To sign up, visit somerville-ma.gov/alerts and click on the button for your preferred language. Step-by-step sign-up instructions are available at: somervillema.gov/alerts. Having trouble signing up? You can call 3-1-1 (617-666-3311) for assistance.

With the days growing shorter and temperatures dipping colder, the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** is in critical need of new or lightly used jackets for their clients currently living outside. If you have any adult sized coats hanging in your closet that you don't wear, please consider dropping them off at the Somerville Homeless Coalition admin office located at 255 Elm Street, Suite 204 during the hours listed below. Drop Off Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., 2 - 5 p.m. Each coat donated provides warmth, dignity, and safety for our neighbors having to face the harsh New England winter conditions.

Feeling fatigued from holiday festivities? Want a quiet activity to do with one or more of your friends and/or relatives? Why not a **puzzle**. Bring your gently used puzzles to the **West Branch library** and pick up a new to you puzzle from our supply. No puzzles to drop off? That's fine too. No registration required.

If you want to adopt-a-drain in Somerville, perform light maintenance as needed, and give it a creative name. Sign up for the **Adopt-a-Drain program** today by visiting Somerville.mysticdrains.org.

SomerViva: Office of Immigrant Affairs, in collaboration with **Saint Benedict Church**, warmly invites you to a festive **Three Kings Celebration on Sunday, January 5, 2025**, 12 p.m., 17 Franklin St. Immerse yourself in the spirit of community, culture, and goodwill as they come together to celebrate this cherished tradition. You'll have the opportunity to explore a variety of community partner and city department resource tables offering valuable information and services to support and empower our communi-

ty. Indulge in delightful refreshments as you mingle and share in the festive atmosphere. Bring your family and friends to join us in the festivities, fostering connections and building a stronger, more vibrant community together.

The holidays are just around the corner which means the **Somerville Homeless Coalition's Holiday Gift Drive** is now in full swing. This time of year can be especially difficult for their clients and their families which is why they host this drive each year to help spread the joy of the holidays to our less fortunate neighbors. At the moment, they still have 114 clients without a matched sponsor which is why they are asking for your help to make sure that everyone gets to be a part of this year's festivities. If you are interested in providing a gift for a client(s) contact 617-623-6111.

The **Somerville Winter Farmers Market** is back at the **Arts at the Armory**, 191 Highland Ave. on **Saturdays**, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. **from November 2 to April 12**, (except November 30 and December 28). The Center for the Arts at the Armory is proud to offer a weekly winter market with 71+ local food vendors with the best locally grown and regionally produced foods, including fresh produce, cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, tamales, pastries, chocolate, skincare products, and more. The market accepts SNAP/EBT and HIP benefits. They also offer a \$15 SNAP match to customers each week. More info available on their website: <https://www.somwintermarket.org/>.

Is your teen looking to make some extra money? The city's **Snow Shoveling Program** is hiring youth to assist shoveling seniors and homeowners with disabilities out after snowstorms this winter. Teens and homeowners are paired for the season. After each storm, the homeowner will contact their assigned youth to request shoveling services. Somerville teens ages 14 to 19 are welcome to apply. Looking for snow shoveling services? Apply online or contact **Debby Higgins** at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Through the generosity of the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**, and from the direction of **Mayor Ballantyne**, the **Council on Aging** can provide **Durable Medical Equipment** at no cost to Somerville residents. *Continued on page 23*



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Somerville Artist Michael Silverman: A consummate coffee-doodler

Recently I caught up with Michael Silverman, one of the many artists in our creative burg. He writes, "My wife and I are both artists in Somerville in that we try to draw something every day at a coffee place. Over the last 6 years or so we have a stockpile of thousands of drawings. The whole thesis we have is to have fun with it."

Doug Holder: How is it being an artist in Somerville?

Michael Silverman: It's a treat. Love the atmosphere and the city is beautiful. Also, it's nice to be able to walk everywhere or take the T. We don't have a car and don't have to worry about parking/gas prices etc. Walking the bike path or down to Harvard and so on is a nice way to relax.

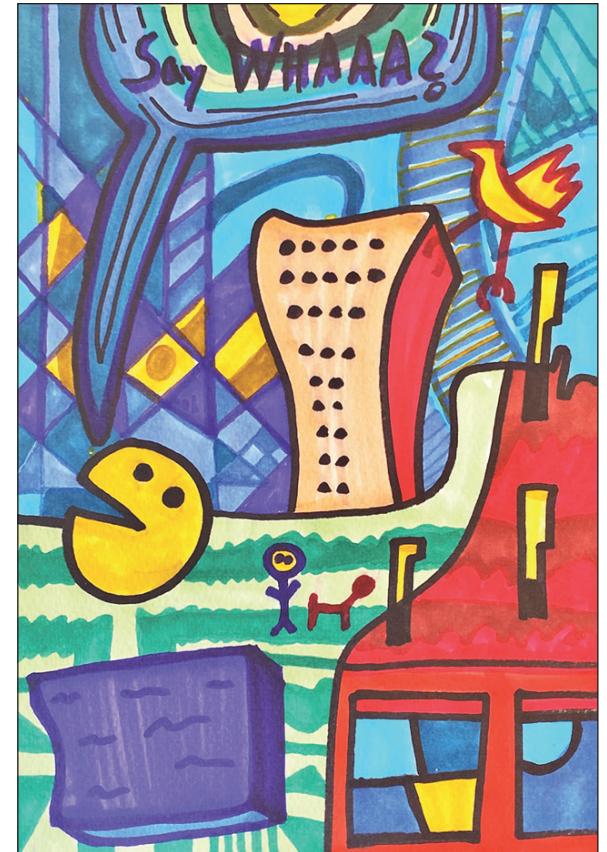
I haven't cracked into the artistic community here that much as I'm not too social and tend to get hung up on minutiae that distracts from more meaningful discussion at the meetings. We did a few of the Summer Streets festivals but I think maybe our art wasn't the best fit for that kind of event. Mostly we just sold some pins and stickers.

I'm now thinking of that scene in Star Wars where the death star designer says "It's a peaceful life." lol.

DH: You say the most important thing in creating is to have fun. Can having fun with your work, instead of wrestling with your work or struggling with it. Can it bring serious work?

MS: We all know the horrible artist who was obsessed with "My Struggle!" I did some political game stuff a while back that was fun to make and also a bit more ... I wouldn't say serious, but perhaps a bit more socially topical? It's not my favorite project looking back.

My "fun" approach isn't for everyone ... or even the path to making the "best" art. The serious stuff is something I don't know how to tackle rather than something bad to make. Obsessing over somber and dark work and focusing on making that your life ... I'm not sure I could stay sane. Or, to make a serious piece that deals with heavy feelings, do you just fake it? Does art reflect the feelings of the artist, or change them? Emotions are challenging for me, I'm not so sure I could look at the whole spectrum of human emotion in the mirror without a lot of support and hand holding and it feels like I already need a lot of



support just to make my goofy wacky fun stuff.

So the direct answer is: I don't know. I would love to crack it ... Serious fun!

The reason I make art is that feeling of freedom: it can be anything, there aren't any rules (despite what people may argue), so I can just pour my soul onto the page and it's thrilling to get my heart and mind out there. So maybe my art belongs hung on the refrigerator with the kid's stuff? I wouldn't be offended at that!

DH: What was the germ of the idea to pair coffee with your art?

MS: So I would go get coffee every day, people watch, sit there and do basically nothing while I got breakfast or whatever. Also, I had some of those adult coloring books where I was deliberately not coloring in the lines and making my own pattern on top of the mandala that was there. It was kind of serendipitous to just combine the two, so I went to that "Blick" art store down near Central and bought a bunch of sharpies and a sketchbook and the "Coffee Doodle" was born.

Continued on page 23

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Meg Smith is a writer, journalist, dancer and events producer living in Lowell, Mass., and who spent part of her childhood in Somerville. In addition to *The Somerville Times' Lyrical Somerville*, her poetry has appeared recently in *The Cafe Review*, *The Lowell Review*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Poetry Bay*, *Acropolis Review*, and many more. She is creator of *Poe in Lowell*, honoring Edgar Allan Poe's three visits to Lowell, and a board member of *Lowell Celebrates Kerouac*. She is author of six poetry books and a short fiction collection, *The Plague Confessor*. She welcomes visits to megsmithwriter.com.



O Blue Vega

I am blessed by light, the oldest light,
collecting nothing in years of thousands
but the dust of suns. In the dust,
we will revel, this star and I, something
ordinary for two beings unraveled in time.

The Shifting Hours: Night

In a world without sleep
I drift along the stairs,
and the hall I repainted
after my husband vanished from sparks
to smoke, and ever praying:
what a privilege, a hall.
What a privilege, a home, with
windows and stairs, and two doors.
Windows and doors will always free me.
I will rise to the net of bare trees.
I know nothing of cold.
I know nothing of waking times,
only moving within, without,
in my silence, created in my own true space.

Summer of Green Hills

For Douglas Bishop

You will always draw strands
of a warm day on a stony ridge,

heavy with sun;
child of the conifer woods, rising
due north, threading earth, sky
with bright words.

— Meg Smith

2024 Music & Art Winter Showcase at SHS

December 19. Somerville High School proudly presents the 2024 Music & Art Winter Showcase on Thursday, December 19.

Check out the art exhibit at 5:00 p.m., then watch the concert at 6:00 p.m. Enjoy music performed by the Somerville High School Chorus, Orchestra, Band, World Percussion Ensemble, Jazz Band, and Guitar Class.

Artwork from current high school art students will be on display and select ceramics pieces will also be available for purchase.

All staff, family, and friends of the Somerville Public Schools community are invited to join us for an evening celebrating the arts!



City touts progress at Chamber of Commerce awards dinner, encourages partnership with youth

CONT. FROM PG 5

Connolly. "There are many success stories."

This year Bunker Hill Community College is focused on teaching English to non-native speakers and getting them ready for the workplace, said Kristen McKenna, Dean of Development at Bunker Hill Community College.

"I think that is going to be a very positive addition to our program," said McKenna. "We're doing it from the very beginning level, so if you just barely speak English, we are still infusing the

career readiness and workforce piece into the program all the way up to the higher levels."

Connolly later introduced Cathleen Finn, a co-sponsor from Verizon, and said she had been a "great community partner here in the city and here at the Chamber."

"At Verizon we love small business," Finn said. "I would like to thank the Chamber for its resilience."

Powderhouse Award Recipients

Ms. Jess Willis

Distinguished Service to the Somerville Chamber

Riverside Community Care Corp.

Distinguished Service to Greater Somerville

The Center for Teen Empowerment

Non-Profit of the Year

Josephine

Excellence in Dining and Nightlife

Diesel Café

Business Neighbor of the Year

Stepwise

Green Business of the Year

Davis Squared

Small Business of the Year

Somerville Police Chief (Ret.) Charles

Femino

Excellence in Public Service

Triumvirate Environmental

Excellence in Economic Development

Mr. Patrick Cain

John W. Fitzgerald Lifetime Achievement Award

Off The Shelf

CONT. FROM PG 22

Actually, I consider the coffee shop patrons my collaborators. Sometimes the antics of people getting a coffee or making some noises or having a conversation will change the direction I move in my drawing. There is a stream of consciousness element to the drawings, and having a bit of a kinetic element changes the work.

DH: What coffee shop do you frequent to work on your art?

MS: We have three major places that are near Davis Square, the Starbucks there, Diesel (I actually bought one of their T-Shirts) and the Bagel Place down by Rosebud, which makes a lox and bagel sandwich that competes with the real thing in NYC. The choice of place depends on the crowds, mood, and how hungry I am!

DH: From looking at your work it seems to be mostly colorful abstract paintings. Do you work in other genres?

MS: Sometimes I will do a black and white piece when I am in a more serious mood. Those can be tougher days. As I was saying, when the art gets serious, so does my whole life, and then I start to get a bit down. I also sometimes do more representational stuff, or try to draw a cartoon. I would say about 90% of the drawings are

abstract stuff. Actually, some of my abstracts have been deemed "too representational" for some of the true Abstract aficionados.

DH: What artists influence your work?

MS: Obviously Picasso is the big guy, can't go wrong with him. I love cubism, though I wouldn't say I really am capable of doing it properly. Andy Warhol's sarcastic post-modern "I want to make fun of the entire art world and make a ton of bank doing it" is admirable and cool. I think Paul Klee said something about wanting to be able to paint like a kid, which I have mastered, lol. I also like Mondrian, just because he is famously a boring person but his art is so impactful.

I also listen to a lot of pop music when I work that has a big impact on the mood of the pieces. I have a playlist of over a thousand songs and they all had their part in my work, lots of 60s, 70s, and 80s hits in there. Occasionally I will literally write down the song lyrics on the canvas, but only rarely.

DH: Are you formally trained as an artist?

MS: I went to an MFA program out in LA and dropped out. So ... No. To me, the more formal art stuff goes into a miserable *Game of Thrones* style, "who will get

to show their art to the world?" This is a crazy thing that I cannot stand and can even be traumatic to deal with. I don't consider my lack of formality to be something good: I would love to make my work more professional. But sometimes if you polish a gem too much you end up ruining the stone.

In my high school days I was called "outstanding" and to be clear my school considered that a bad thing. I'm somewhat inconsistent, and sometimes really basic stuff I mess up, vs sometimes extremely complex things I just do easily.

I'm told my art is "Outsider Art" which is either art made by people without formal training, or the art of insane people. Pretty much the same thing, lol.

DH: Why should we view your work?

MS: When I say my art is about fun, I mean both for the artist and the audience. I'm trying to make the whole loop fun for all parties. For my work, I've tried to focus on the desert instead of the veggies, and I'm hoping that's also what it feels like when people view the stuff. Even if you want to goof on my stuff or critique it, just have fun with that too!

For more info go to: <https://coffeedoodle.art>.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 21

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