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year

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in town

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Happy New Year

From the Publisher and Staff of
The Somerville Times



2024: The year in review



By The Times Staff

The past year was an issues-oriented one for many in the city. A national election took place, which included ballot measures of great importance to local residents. The city took on a number of matters concerning development and sustenance of both new and existing projects. Protests over the conflict in the Middle East took focus for a time, as did many other demonstrations in support of human rights and equality. The following events highlight some of the top stories of 2024:

In January, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) visited Somerville to celebrate the \$2.4 million in federal funding she *Continued on page 4*

Duck Duck Goofs, from basement to 'mom and pop' brick and mortar

By Jeffrey Shwom

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

From the street, three yellow duckies, one with Groucho Marx's mask, peered back as we awaited entrance to Somerville's newly opened Goofs Comedy Club. The gnome guarding the lacquered bar, boxes of Narragansett beer and highball glasses gave us a curious meet cute to the space that hosts the comedy show, Duck Duck Goofs. Founder and creative director Ryan Howe's grandfather had given a gnome to protect over the space but to be clear, this was only the tip of the iceberg for the personal decorations.

From their website, they proudly claim to be "the only comedy club funny enough to" *Continued on page 4*



Self-sustaining comedy club Goofs Comedy Club serves up lots of laughter at its 432 McGrath Highway venue. — Photos by Candice Commer, Instagram @bycandicecommer

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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.








City offices will be closed on **Wednesday January 1**, for **New Year's Day**. Trash, recycling, and yard waste collection will be delayed by one day. No street sweeping on Wednesday. All **Somerville Public Library** locations will be closed at 5 p.m. on **Tuesday, December 31**, and all day **Wednesday, January 1**, for the New Year's holiday. Regular hours will resume on **Thursday, January 2**.

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. A procession 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. 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.

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy birthday to a great guy, **Harry Agritha**. We wish him the very best on this his birthday week. Happy birthday to **Sophia** *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of January 1 – January 7 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday <i>January 1</i>	Rain	47°/37°	91%	81%	N 12 mph
 Thursday <i>January 2</i>	Partly Cloudy	39°/27°	4%	2%	NW 17 mph
 Friday <i>January 3</i>	Partly Cloudy	36°/25°	1%	1%	W 16 mph
 Saturday <i>January 4</i>	Partly Cloudy	34°/22°	2%	1%	NW 13 mph
 Sunday <i>January 5</i>	Partly Cloudy	31°/22°	4%	2%	NW 11 mph
 Monday <i>January 6</i>	Partly Cloudy	34°/20°	22%	15%	NW 9 mph
 Tuesday <i>January 7</i>	Partly Cloudy	28°/15°	16%	12%	NW 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: City residents weigh in on Arts at the Armory Master Plan

Marcia M Booth says:

I support leaving the armory as it is now so that artists can continue to produce their art.

Elizabeth A OConnor says:

I appreciate that the author, Lexi O'Neil, did such an in-depth description of the facts that both sides of this issue are facing. She shows there is so much of importance to both sides of this issue.

Response to: Anti-Displacement report delayed until January

Christopher Spicer says:

Black Business Network Offering Grant Opportunity \$5,000-15,000
Contact Nicola Williams, Cambridge Equity Fund
Grant Form:
<https://www.cognitoforms.com/SustainableBusinessNetworkOfMassachusetts/Application-ForTheEquityFundGrantGo>
Connect With Us

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

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Life in the

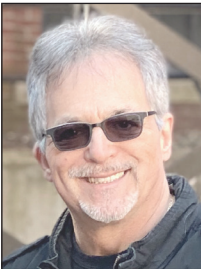
Massachusetts

VILLE

The Spirit of America

by Jimmy Del Ponte

A brand-new year



It's 2025. The older I get the more my head is packed with memories. There were a lot of resolutions, and a lot of playing in bands on New Year's Eve. Places like the DAV and Logan Post and American Legions along with private parties.

Those were fun days especially the '70's when most of the music was disco. I finally decided that I'd rather be a reveler than the band guy. One year we were playing at a party and we all took home a ton of Chinese food probably from Bobos or Ming Toy. The duck sauce we brought home was in gallon jugs.

Back then we would get a room at the Holiday Inn and fill the bathtub with beer and ice. This year I will be watching sports on TV.

I asked my friends if they were making any resolutions but seems most of us are set in our ways by now. I may give up dou-

ble stuff Oreos and go back to the regular ones. Here are some reader comments.

"Yes, I'm not going to let any of those losers hurt me anymore I'm all done and I'm taking care of myself."

"I'm thinking maybe I'll pursue my resolution this year. Which is to buy one gift every month for Christmas." (great idea)

"To bowl a 400 again."

"No, the only thing is to survive the first year of the poop show of four if it lasts that long."

"Happy New Year and hoping it really is for once. Every year at New Year's I think back to 1967 when I got married. We got our first apartment, a whole \$80 a month heated. Newbury Street Teele Square."

I hope everyone stays healthy in the new year. I also hope you have lots of memorable times with your family and loved ones. For auld lang syne my dear for auld lang syne.

We'll take a cup of kindness yet for auld lang syne.



Somerville community invited to Three Kings Day celebration

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs, in collaboration with Saint Benedict Church, invite community members to a festive Three Kings Day celebration on Sunday, January 5, at the Prospect Hill Charter School cafeteria (17 Franklin St.) from noon to 3 p.m.

The celebration will offer a variety of fun activities for children, alongside city department and community partner resource tables to help residents learn more about available local services.

To learn more, visit somervillema.gov/calendar.



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JERRY KNIGHT

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SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS RING OF HONOR.

WHEN: FRIDAY JANUARY 10, 2025
TIME: 6:30PM
WHERE: SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL'S
BRUNE FIELD HOUSE

2024: The year in review CONT. FROM PG 1

secured to support the community-led transformation of the Clarendon Hill housing community, an ethnically, linguistically and economically diverse neighborhood in Somerville.

The federal dollars delivered by Rep. Pressley helped to increase safe and affordable housing, promote accessibility for residents with disabilities, and support the development of green and open community space for residents.

Union Square's first large-scale pop-up community center opened in January, a one-stop shop for community resources, diverse programming, events, workshops for all ages, and a gathering space for the community.

The goal of the Union Square community pop-up is to connect new and old residents and create a shared identity for the neighborhood, pilot a community-driven space, and create an operational framework for a long-term community space.

Also in January, members of the Somerville City Council sought action on displacement of small businesses. In April 2023, the city, in response to pressing matters like historic high rents,

displacement and affordability issues, convened a year-long Anti-Displacement Task Force to "research and recommend policies to prevent residential displacement and to advocate for a wider range of the Somerville community, including small business displacement and cultural displacement." The goal of this task force was to "develop programming and policy recommendations that aim to equitably reduce the rate of displacement of people who live in, have businesses in, or make up the cultural fabric of the city." The city has since stated that the Anti-Displacement Task Force report is now set to be released on February 4, along with 5 other reports.

Later in the month, the Somerville City Council voted overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution calling on the Biden administration to work toward an immediate and enduring ceasefire in Gaza. The 9 to 2 vote made Somerville the first city in Massachusetts to call for a ceasefire, following mere hours after the Minneapolis City Council passed their own ceasefire resolution.

In February, Mayor Ballantyne testified



to state legislators in support of Housing Affordable Homes Act. "As you know, the City of Somerville and other municipalities around the state face tremendous barriers in regard to the development and preservation of affordable housing given increasing construction and land costs and high interest rates. The City of Somerville and cities and towns throughout the state have recognized that a real estate transfer

fee is our greatest hope for a new local revenue tool to fund affordable housing," the mayor said in part.

Mayor Ballantyne announced in March that the City of Somerville's Office of Housing Stability's (OHS) new Municipal Voucher Program would offer needed local support to families historically underserved by broader government housing programs.

Continued on page 9

Duck Duck Goofs, from basement to 'mom and pop' brick and mortar

CONT. FROM PG 1

start in an abandoned classroom in the basement of a community center and then build its own venue. Made with love, focused on community, and above all, we're funny."

Ryan continued, "we are the only comedy club that has no funding from outside investors. We have bootstrapped from the success of our shows in Cambridge. And anyone who has ever worked with us has said, "How can I be more of a part of this?"

The love and community aspects mentioned above exude from Ryan, and from Isabel Thurston, Director of Community Engagement. Speaking of a mom-and-pop operation, recently engaged, the couple met through comedy. Isabel got a targeted ad on Instagram and asked herself, "How could something this good be in the basement of a community center?"

Prior to the October 2024 grand opening at 432 McGrath Highway, Duck Duck Goofs took the stage in a basement classroom at the Cambridge Community Center. Isabel, like other guests, kept showing up there and at the Cantab Lounge. "I went to shows like eight times in the basement, and I asked him out after one of the shows," beamed Isabel. "I went so much, I got to know Ryan." One nostalgic relic

from down under is the green chalkboard. That, the mixture of bench seats, and the lighting in the new performance space makes it feel like a nighttime classroom.

Our tour brought us by the bar (they have food too) and by the classroom-themed bathroom into the main room. We spotted at least one reclaimed piece of multicolored dot art found on the street and a Jeff Goldblum-headed T-Rex, gifted by a former student. Isabel revealed, "as far as decor, everything here has been thrifted or gifted." "Even the liquor license," Ryan quipped (though he immediately and jokingly walked the comment back).

Besides the comedy show, Goofs runs Study Hall, a six-session class with a maximum of 12 students that has the goal is to write a five-minute set. From the website, the classes help adults to create "a framework to write jokes, perform confidently on stage" and the knowledge "to continue developing stand-up comedy skills."

Isabel told us, "People take classes for a wide variety of reasons. Some people want to have more confidence in public speaking. Some just want to try something new. Some people genuinely want to be on stage and make it as a comic. The biggest thing



we do is plug them into the comedy scene."

Ryan shared that, "Comedy can be mean, unhealthy" so the question was "how do we serve students in a way. Doing that helps them build connections and relationships." Unlike many clubs who use classes to find talent, "we try not to use it as a pathway onto our stage – we try to use it as an entry into our community."

The club will even target younger folks, as Ryan and Isabel revealed youth programming with the City of Somerville's

Parks and Recreation Department starting in January 2025. Isabel, who came on as head of education a few months after attending Ryan's shows, has a background in middle school, secondary and adult English language learning education.

From an old gas station and a used car lot to a multi-purpose housing and mixed use building only 10-minutes-walk from the East Somerville Green Line, Goofs Comedy is already bringing laughter and community to Prospect Hill.

HONK! musician awarded citation for promoting social justice

By Harry Kane

Musician and activist Reebee Garofalo was given a citation for his 80th birthday and commended for his community involvement by the Somerville City Council at the December 12 meeting.

Garofalo spent years organizing and performing in progressive street festivals, benefit concerts and cultural events. He was born on November 18, 1944.

“He is somebody who has dedicated his entire life to building community and promoting social justice,” said Councilor-at-Large Wilfred N. Mbah.

Councilor Mbah said that Garofalo is a legend in the area. Garofalo serves on the organizing committee for the annual HONK! Festival of activist street bands, and plays drums in the Good Trouble Brass Band. He is a Professor Emeritus at UMASS Boston, where he taught music history for some 33 years.

“If you have ever heard one of the HONK! bands, the Good Trouble Brass Band, chances are you have seen Reebee playing drums,” said Councilor President Ben Ewen-Campen.

Councilor Ewen-Campen said that Garofalo is a “treasure,” and echoed an appreciation for the musician’s community activism that can be traced back to the Freedom Summer in the American civil rights movement.

The citation reads: “Reebee has dedicated his life to fostering cultural understanding, community building and the promotion of social justice through his work as an educator, author and an advocate.”

“There’s something that feels special about being recognized by the people who

know you best,” Garofalo said after receiving the citation.

The HONK! Festival has been part of Garofalo’s life for the past 19 years. The 20th anniversary is coming up, and plans for something special are in the works, he said.

“Music has always been that kind of a powerful tool,” said Garofalo. “Brass bands are a particularly useful tool for the kinds of demonstrations we’ve been witnessing.”

“Brass bands are a particularly useful tool for the kinds of demonstrations we’ve been witnessing”

Brass bands are large, acoustic and mobile. They can play anywhere and can follow a parade or a demonstration.

“When people are involved in things like chanting, the brass band can lend a significant amount of support,” said Garofalo.

During demonstrations, when the chant leaders of a particular group want to go into a “chanting mode,” the Good Trouble Brass Band will begin performing a tune from their repertoire and then will drop out the melody instruments, leaving the percussion section and the low brass as a rhythm that the group can chant over.

“The chanting then becomes part of the performance of the song,” he says. “It enhances the demonstration, it makes everything louder and when the chant is finished, we just pick back up where



Reebee Garofalo, recipient of a citation for his 80th birthday, at the December 12 City Council meeting with Councilors Wilfred N. Mbah and Ben Ewen-Campen. — Photo courtesy of the City of Somerville

we left off in the song, so that the whole chanting and song together becomes part of a single performance.”

In the coming months, Garofalo says more demonstrations will occur to promote social justice and bring awareness to important issues.

“I think it’s important for people who are looking for a just society to get out in the street and make their voices heard,” Garofalo said. “As a member of the Good Trouble Brass Band, I feel proud to be part of something that can help amplify that message.”

Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne delivering ‘State of the City’ Address on Monday, January 6

Join the City of Somerville for its Mid-Term Ceremonies and Addresses featuring Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, the incoming City Council President, and the incoming Chairperson of the Somerville School Committee. Speeches begin at approximately 5:30 p.m. on Monday, January 6, 2025, City Council Chamber, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.).

Mayor Ballantyne will deliver her Mayoral Mid-Term State of the City Address, reflecting on her second term, recent community initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. The incoming leaders of the City Council and School Committee will also share their priorities.

Organizational meetings of the City Council and School Committee will begin at 5 p.m., with addresses to follow, starting at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Community members are encouraged to attend in person or tune in live through the city’s cable and educational access channels, online at somer villema.gov, or on-demand afterward on CityTV’s YouTube channel at youtube.com/SomervilleCityTV.



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.

The 2024 legislative session ends on January 1. There was a flurry of activity on Beacon Hill last week as sponsors of dozens of bills attempted to get final approval on the measures from the House and Senate and have the bill sent to Gov. Maura Healey for her signature.

This week's report includes several key bills that were acted on last week. None of the proposals have yet received final approval from both branches. The ones that do so before January 1 will be sent to Healey for her consideration. Any measures that don't receive approval in both branches by January 1 are dead and would have to be refiled by their sponsors for consideration in 2025.

PROTECT CATS AND DOGS (S 2908) – The House approved legislation that would prohibit the sale or transfer of any puppies and kittens under eight weeks old. Violators would be fined \$100 per animal.

When the animal is more than eight weeks old, the outright ban is lifted and replaced with a section that would prohibit the sale or transfer of any dogs or cats at specified outdoor locations, such as flea markets and roadsides. This prohibition would not apply to the transfer of a dog or cat by, or to, a shelter, animal control or animal rescue; or to the display of a dog or cat as part of a state or county fair exhibition, a 4-H program or similar exhibition or educational program. Violators would be fined \$50 per animal for a first offense, \$100 for a second offense and \$300 for a third and subsequent offenses.

“Early separation of puppies and kittens from their mother, and the unregulated roadside sale of dogs and cats, are practices that often lead to serious health or behavioral problems for the animal and no recourse for the new owner,” said sponsor Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield). “I was proud to file this legislation in the Senate this session and am glad that it is one step closer to becoming law and establishing new protections for animals throughout the commonwealth.”

“Passing this legislation would represent an end to the supply-and-demand relationship between Massachusetts and puppy mills and give these animals a better opportunity at finding a home,” said Sen. Patrick O'Connor (R-Weymouth), a sponsor of an earlier version of the measure. “I am a longtime supporter of animal protection issues, even before I ran for Senate. I have cosponsored many animal protection bills and I am focused on protecting animals as some of the most vulnerable members of our society. All animals deserve to be treated with respect and dignity and I am proud to be a voice

for animal rights on Beacon Hill.”

ID FOR LIQUOR PURCHASES (H 4131) – The Senate approved a House-approved bill that would allow alcohol-serving establishments to accept all out-of-state motor vehicle licenses and Global Entry cards issued by the United States Customs and Border Protection office, as valid proof of age and identification.

“As a state that welcomes visitors from across the country to enjoy our museums, sporting events, tourism attractions and other venues, this is a vitally important economic measure that takes the burden off of our small businesses and allows out-of-state visitors to enjoy a drink if they choose,” said House sponsor Rep. Paul McMurtry (D-Dedham). “This bill will go a long way in supporting the commonwealth's businesses as they continue to recover from the pandemic and compete with surrounding states.”

“A constituent of mine reached out regarding Global Entry cards, and how she had been refused service in attempting to use one to purchase alcohol,” said Senate sponsor Sen. Pat Jehlen (D-Somerville). “These cards require two rounds of interviews, one with Customs and Border Protection, and another with a Global Entry Enrollment Center. You must also provide your passport and one other form of identification. Only after this extensive process can you receive the Global Entry Card, which includes the individual's photo, full name and date of birth. Over 5 million people have gone through this process, and it feels unnecessary to bar them from utilizing this form of identification in the commonwealth for the purchase of alcohol.”

STUDENT ID CARDS AND SUICIDE LINE (S 3001) – The Senate approved a House-approved bill that would require that student ID cards include the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline phone numbers and text message numbers.

“This is a critical step in increasing information and access to life saving support and resources, while working to eliminate the mental health stigma those in crisis fear and face,” said co-sponsor Rep. Jack Lewis (Framingham). “At one point or another, we have all faced the difficulty of not knowing where to turn for help or assistance ... I am forever thankful to the MetroWest Regional Coalition for Suicide Prevention for first bringing the idea of this legislation to my attention and to Ashland High School for modeling similar policies. 988 is a supportive resource, and I encourage anyone who faces times of crisis to use this hotline to access compassionate support.”

“This is a simple proposal that can have critical impact, en-

suring our students are equipped with the 988 Behavioral Help Line on their Student IDs,” said House cosponsor Rep. Natalie Higgins (D-Leominster). “This will ensure that they, and their friends, know a trusted mental health resource in a time of need.”

Supporters noted that while suicide is a leading cause of death for people of all ages in the United States, young people are particularly at risk. They said that according to a study published by the National Center for Health Statistics at the end of last year, suicide was the second leading cause of death for Americans aged 15-24, representing a 56 percent increase in the previous decade. They argued that there are significant disparities in these numbers, with LGBTQ+ youth being at greater risk, and Black youth seeing a 73 percent increase in youth suicide rates in that same time period.

OPIOID CRISIS (H 5143) – Gov. Healey signed into law legislation that supporters say would expand non-opioid pain treatments; establish licenses for recovery coaches; support pregnant women and their children who have been exposed to substances; and vastly expand access to opioid-reversal drugs.

Other provisions mandate that all health plans cover opioid reversal drugs such as Naloxone and Narcan – without cost-sharing or prior authorization; require hospitals and substance use treatment facilities to educate patients on opioid reversal drugs and prescribe or dispense at least two doses to at-risk patients upon discharge; require pharmacies in areas with high incidences of overdoses to maintain a sufficient and consistent supply of opioid reversal drugs while also requiring them to stock both over the counter and prescription versions.

The bill includes several new insurance provisions, including a prohibition on life insurance companies from limiting or refusing coverage to a person solely because they obtained an opioid-reversal drug, and a prohibition on medical malpractice insurers from discriminating against health care practitioners who provide harm reduction services. The bill also updates requirements for insurance providers to ensure adequate coverage and access to pain management services including non-opioid treatments and expands access to non-opioid pain treatment by incorporating non-opioid alternatives into provider training.

“Over the course of my career, I've been motivated by those who have tragically lost loved ones to the opioid crisis that is impacting all of our communities,” said Gov. Healey. Their stories have served as important reminders of the urgent need to increase treatment, prevention and recovery services to save lives,” said *Continued on page 16*

COMMENTARY

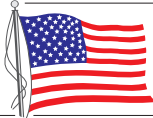
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Have a happy and healthy New Year, Somerville!

Our View Of The Times



Looking back on the year just passed is an interesting thing to do. Sometimes sobering, at other times amusing, yet always somewhat inspiring if one considers what has been accomplished and what else is left to be done.

The advance of progress and renewal marches on as we in turn continue the pursuit of our individual hope and dreams.

Observing and participating in the

machinations of political goings on, even at the lowest level, is something of a civic duty that we all should share a sense of responsibility for. It's what makes democracy great, that every man and woman can make a difference in what transpires, mainly when they express their viewpoints at the polls.

Looking ahead to what may come in 2025, we can't help but feel optimistic

about the days to come in our city. It will take some hard work and serious planning, but an improving economy is within sight, as is better civic infrastructure, community resources, and a plethora of other important quality of life issues.

As always, it's up to us to push things in the right direction. To send the proper signals to our city officials. To back them up when they get it right, and to call them on

it when they seem to go astray. They have their duties and we have ours. Let each one carry on in the best fashion possible.

It is the way of our community. We enjoy a uniquely favorable reputation as those who can.

We wish each and every one of our readers the best in the year to come. May peace, prosperity, and good health bless you and yours.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Carafotes. We wish her the very best. We hope she enjoys her day. Happy Birthday to **Kevin O'Donovan**. We wish him a great birthday. Happy birthday to everyone here and from the city who is celebrating this week. We wish all our Facebook friends, such as **Helene Messina, Christopher Kenney, Thomas Ross, John Brady, Bobby Martini, Martha Rheume, Jon Curtis, Jimmy Deoliveira, Matthew Martino, Marie Miele, Gale Mahan, Steven Anthony, and George Allen** 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.

The **City of Somerville** invites community members to attend its **Mid-Term Ceremonies and Addresses** on **Monday, January 6**, in the **City Hall Council Chamber** (93 Highland Ave.). Speeches will begin at approximately at 5:30 p.m. **Mayor Ballantyne** will deliver her **Mayoral Mid-Term State of the City Address**, reflecting on her second term, recent community initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. The incoming leaders of the **City Council** and **School Committee** will also share their priorities. **Organizational meetings** of the City Council and School Committee will precede the

ceremonies. Community members are encouraged to attend in person or tune in live through the city's cable and educational access channels, online at somer-villema.gov, or on-demand afterward on CityTV's YouTube channel at youtube.com/SomervilleCityTV.

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://somer-villeartsandcouncil.org/illuminationstour>.

Learn about rodent control at a virtual information session. The city's **Inspectional Services Department** and the **Somer-Viva Office of Immigrant Affairs** invite community members to attend a virtual workshop about rodents on **Thursday, January 9**, from 5 to 6 p.m. online via Zoom. Attendees will learn about identifying if rats are on your property, rodent control methods, tips for prevention, and City resources that can help. Interpretation into Spanish will be available. Learn more and attend or get tips now at somer-villema.gov/rodentsaway.

Continued on page 22

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's
Olio
#955

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

1. Which city drops a giant chocolate kiss at midnight on New Year's Eve?

2. When did the practice of making New Year's resolutions start?

3. Around which landmark do people in London gather to watch fireworks on New Year's Eve?

4. In Spain, what fruit do people eat 12 of when midnight strikes?

5. How many versions of the Times Square New Year's Eve Ball have there been to date?

6. Which country celebrates New Year's Day on April 14th?

7. In 1904, which newspaper sponsored the first
- New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square?

8. In Italy, what color underwear do people wear on New Year's Eve to bring good luck and love?

9. What type of peas do people in the South eat on New Year's Eve for good luck?

10. On New Year's, people in the Philippines wear clothing featuring what type of pattern for good luck?

11. What landmark immigration station in New York Harbor officially opened on Jan. 1, 1892?

12. Which country's New Year's tradition includes bell ringing 108 times?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Women have more tastebuds than men.
2. Women see more colors than men.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

- SYNONYMS
- ACROSS
1. Half of half-and-half

6. Gratuity

9. Remain unsettled

13. Pita, alt. sp.

14. Uncle Sam wants whom?

15. Played violin, e.g.

16. "Encore!"

17. Young canine

18. Amber warning

19. Entice

21. Agreement

23. " ____ Te Ching"

24. Goose egg

25. Antonym of keep

28. Affection

30. Open wine, e.g.

35. Frosts a cake

37. Leave in a bucket

39. Parlor

40. Coating of aurum

41. Like many bathroom floors?

43. Border pass

44. Full of emotion (2 words)

46. Opposite of talker?

47. Tel ____, Israel

48. Auto ____ website

50. Module

52. Compass point between NE and E
- DOWN
1. Tax pro, acr.

2. Capital of Latvia

3. Bibliographical abbr.

4. Not upright

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
13					14			15					
16					17			18					
	19				20		21	22					
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71						72				73			

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

5. Instructions handbook

6. Use an Underwood

7. Promissory note letters

8. Cocoon dwellers

9. Horse and mallet sport

10. Pitcher

11. One ridiculed for studiousness

12. Banned insecticide, acr.

15. Kevin ____ and Sir Francis ____

20. Resting spot for a chicken

22. French vineyard

24. Avid

25. Correct

26. Slipperier

27. 4th letter of Greek alphabet

29. Nothingness

31. Spanish sparkling wine

32. Martini garnish

33. Violinist's pine resin
34. Rogue

36. Wall support

38. It often precedes "eye"

42. Laundry room appliance

45. Correspondence friend

49. Feel remorse

51. Seismic shake

54. Card game move

56. Accustom

57. Sharpen

58. A in UAE

59. Cheesy patty

60. Be inclined

61. Paper holder

62. Dog command

63. Baby goat

65. Pirate's turf

67. "Rocky" creator
- Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

2024: The year in review CONT. FROM PG 4



Under Somerville’s Municipal Voucher program, participating families’ rent and utility costs were capped at 30% of their income, with the voucher covering remaining rental costs. This applies even if their net household income is zero. The voucher program covers all remaining rent and the security deposit.

In May, members of the Tufts community, led by the Tufts Chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), staged a tent protest in the middle of the University’s Medford campus. Students in the camp protested the war in Gaza and called for Tufts to divest from companies that have a level of involvement.

Somerville residents were up in arms last year due to severe increases in their water bills due to changes in billing procedures. In spite of city leaders’ concerns, assisting residents with water bills is prohibited by an obscure Massachusetts state law. A consulting firm was brought onboard to search for ways of mitigating the extreme price hikes.

Also in May, members of the School Building Committee (SBC) who will provide oversight of the city’s construction plans for a new school to meet the needs of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and potentially the Benjamin G. Brown School were selected. The members are working with city and Somerville Public Schools staff and consultants to oversee construction project management such as hiring project managers, architects, and construction contractors, and ensure that detailed plans and designs meet the needs of the school district within budget.

It was announced in June that ‘Homans Lot’ – 350 Medford Street in Gilman Square – would, in a partnership between the city and partnership with CultureHouse, become an outdoor community

space called “Gilman Park” from June through September 2024.

The Gilman Square Station Area Plan, released in 2014, identified the property as one of several lots that could be better activated to serve the Gilman Square neighborhood. The city works with the Gilman Square Neighborhood Council on implementation of several aspects of the plan.

Also in June, the City of Somerville reached a new agreement with the Fire Alarm

Unit union representing its Fire Alarm Operators for a new contract, providing improved wages and benefits for a valued set of city workers.

The city’s Fire Alarm Unit provides 24/7 dispatch for the Somerville Fire Department, and its contract is negotiated by Somerville Firefighters Local 76. The new three-year contract covers the city’s 2024 fiscal year (FY24: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024), as well as FY2025 and FY2026.

Following a vote by the City Council on June 13, Mayor Ballantyne announced that the city has adopted a “Safe Streets” Ordinance that advances pursuit of the city’s Vision Zero goals. The goal of the ordinance is to make city streets safer by ensuring forward-looking design and safety practices are embedded throughout all street improvement projects citywide. This includes reemphasizing the city’s commitment to complete the Somerville Bicycle Network plan’s 40-mile priority network by 2030.

In July, the Somerville Museum honored Mayor Emeritus Eugene Brune for over 30 years of service as a Trustee and for his ongoing commitment and contributions to the Museum. It was a wonderful event with a large and joyous crowd of family and friends who joined together to celebrate Gene, on his birthday, 95 years young.

Continued on page 10

The Somerville Times
Historical Fact of the Week



Eagle feathers #319

This article first appeared in the January 22, 2014, edition of The Somerville Times.

The Finest
By Bob (Monty) Doherty

In 1927, life changed dramatically along the Mystic River marshes in Somerville. Headquarters for the nation’s first retail supermarket chain was built at the intersection of Middlesex and Mystic Avenues. It was a huge complex that encompassed a packing plant, a bakery complex, and multiple produce warehouses.



It was of such enormity that it had its own gas station for its large fleet of trucks. Its bakery output was over 125,000 loaves of bread per day, and its dairy section prepared 58,000 quarts of milk daily.

It had other multiple sections, one called the “Banana Room” just for housing that one item. It supplied over 1,700 chain stores throughout New England and was considered the largest food warehouse in the world.

Its name was First National Stores, Continued on page 15

LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notices can also be viewed on our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com
**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
IFB #25-22**

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

Community Path Extension – Additional Lighting

An Invitation for Bid may be obtained online at www.bidexpress.com, <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **01/02/2025**. Sealed bids will be received at above office until: **01/02/2025 2:00PM EST**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please contact Andrea Caruth at acaruth@somervillema.gov for more information.

5% Bid Deposit required. Prevailing wage applies.

Andrea Caruth
Deputy Chief Procurement Officer
617-625-6600 x3400

1/1/25 The Somerville Times

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, 1/1/25 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, 1/1/25 The Somerville Times

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**NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS
OF
WINTER HILL BANK, FSB**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Members of the Winter Hill Bank, FSB will be held at its office located at 337 Broadway, Somerville, Massachusetts, on the 15th day of January, 2025 at the hour of 2:00 P.M. of said day. The business to be taken up at said Annual Meeting shall be;

- (1) Considering and voting upon approval of the minutes of the last members' meeting;
- (2) Considering and voting upon reports of Officers and Committees of the Bank;
- (3) Considering and acting upon ratifications of the acts of the Directors and Officers of the Bank;
- (4) Election of Directors to fill the offices of the terms of which are then expiring; and
- (5) New business.

Dated this 31st day of December, 2024 at Somerville, Massachusetts.

Per Order of the Board of Directors

Marie A. Danieli
Corporate Secretary

1/1/25 The Somerville Times

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2024: The year in review

CONT. FROM PG 9

After months of searching for the ideal candidate for the position of new Somerville Police Department Chief, Boston's Shumeane Benford was selected in August. The 30-year law enforcement veteran left dual roles as Boston Housing Authority Police Chief as well as Boston Chief of Emergency Management to take up the job in Somerville.

In September, a flurry of complaints arose when the Somerville Central Library curtailed their operating hours due to a pattern of disruptive behavior by both minors and adults, according to library staff. The City Council looked into the issue and made several suggestions related to alleviating the problems. A return to regular hours took place in October with new resources aimed at creating a safe and supportive library environment. Security cameras were installed in strategic locations in the library, and a professional security company trained in de-escalation provides an on-site guard at targeted hours.

A community meeting to discuss the safety situation in Davis Square and the adjoining Seven Hills Park area was held in October to address recent incidents in the Davis Square area, including two stabbings in late September within a few days of each other. The Somerville Police Department has implemented a 24-hour directed patrol of Davis Square and Seven Hills Park in response to escalating concerns over public safety and open drug use.

Safety protocols were examined in October after a Green Line derailment occurred on the Red Bridge during a track switch on the way to Union Square from Lechmere Station. An investigation by the NTSB revealed that the train had left Lechmere Station where it entered a 10-mph zone while moving at 36 mph. The operator ignored the "double red signal" to stop near Red Bridge, where the Medford/Tufts and Union Square branch intersect. It then drove over a track switch while in the process of switching, which made the second car go in a direction other than the first. No serious injuries were reported.

Meanwhile a number of closures at several MBTA stations, including along the Green Line, were scheduled throughout the year in order to conduct maintenance procedures on those lines.

The Presidential Election took place on November 5. Among the issues of local interest, Democratic Senator in Congress Elizabeth Warren handily defeated Republican challenger John Deaton by a wide margin. Question 6, the amendment of the Community Preservation Act that would increase the property tax surcharge from 1.5% to 3% for funding affordable housing, open space, and historic preservation – of particular interest for Somerville voters – passed. The passage of Question 6 increases Somerville's dedicated fund by way of a tax surcharge that will be matched by state funds.



It was revealed in November that the future of the Arts at the Armory has come into question. Many stakeholders raised their concerns, and the final resolution of the matter is expected to be reached by mid-2025. Then, after an extensive community process, the City of Somerville released a draft Somerville Armory Master Plan, a roadmap of how to best preserve and envision a future for the Armory building as a thriving community arts center for years to come.

In December, Councilor-At-Large Jake Wilson announced that he is launching a campaign for mayor in the 2025 Somerville municipal election.

Also in December, the MBTA completed its work on the Green Line to eliminate

slow zones on all of its lines. More than 100,000 feet of rail was replaced over the past year. The upgrades are expected to improve safety and reduce delays.

Phase 1 of Bus Network Redesign (BNR) launched on December 15, changing bus routes 104, 109, 86, 116, 117, and 110. 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.

2024 was a year characterized by the usual accomplishments and controversies that are to be expected in this dynamic City of Somerville. May 2025 bring even more of the best that the city has to offer.

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The Somerville Times

Best of Somerville 2024

Cast your vote!

You have until January 3 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 8 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 of Somerville Services

Best Coffee Shop Franchise
Best Coffee Shop local
Best Bar Food
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 of Somerville Businesses

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

Illuminations 2024

Celebrate the incredible artistry of our residents and businesses as they transformed their yards, windows, and storefronts with festive lights, whimsical decorations, and dazzling displays of creativity. While there is still a little time left, take a self-guided tour using the Somerville's official online map (<https://beta.somervilleartscouncil.org/illuminations/>) and experience Somerville's unique and interactive Illuminations extravaganza.





Photos by Bobbie Toner



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Ms. Cam's

Olio

Answers

1. Hershey, PA

2. 4,000 years ago, with the ancient Babylonians

3. The London Eye

4. Grape

5. Seven

6. India

7. The New York Times

8. Red

9. Black-eyed peas

10. Polka dots

11. Ellis Island

12. Japan

New Leaf Espresso: a simple, co-op espresso bar on Highland

By Jeffrey Shwom

Now, folks who had their haircut at Razors Barbershop over the years may remember there being coffee, or a basic set-up of coffee. I am trying to remember in 2009 when I frequented the place whether it was Keuring coffee and whether there were Italian cookies. Either way, it is certainly a welcomed sight along Highland, at the corner of Cherry Street, to see New Leaf Espresso continue the tradition, in a new way.

The worker-owned cooperative espresso bar opened December 7, with early advertisements tacked to utility poles on 8x11 sheets of paper. This is not the first instance of coffee served within Razors. Capito Coffee (Peabody) operated there starting in late 2021 and through at least a portion of 2022, if not longer.

Today, the seating area has lots of deep greens, the cushion for the window seats and the pine table ornaments. The barrels, for sitting, leaning, drinking and waiting, bring a charm to this open concept space. The feel is in between a small, European style coffee bar and a lounge-y waiting area.

I was asked at least twice if I had a haircut appointment, which was kind of fun. It is the holiday season and there are a lot of folks getting them all cut in preparation for upcoming gatherings. It is a social, cheerful environment, with scissors clipping and steam from the espresso machine whistling. Italian salutations and humming clippers were heard too, as well as

mellow coffee shop music, taking me away from the stress of the holidays.

The past few years have seen Central Somerville, near or on Highland between Davis Square and Central Street, perk up with coffee options: Three Figs (Highland and Cedar), Wicked Cafe (199c Highland Ave), and Zaruma Gold Coffee (Lowell Street at Woodbine Street) to name a few.

Eoin Jaquith is subletting the space from Razors owner Anthony Berriola. Eoin (pronounced like Owen) is one of the co-operative owners. He / they told me, “It is cooperatively owned by everyone who works here.” It is similar to Circus Cooperative Cafe, which according to Circus’s website, was “founded by cafe workers who spent years looking for an equitable workplace in the Greater Boston Area.”

“Before we (the co-op members) started this place, two of us (Andrew DeBenedictis) worked at 1369 (Coffee House) in Inman. We worked together for a year. I worked there for several years. I was one of the people making the union push happen. Now, I am doing different coffee.” There are five co-op members as of now.

The approach here, per Eoin, is they are “trying to do things simple. 1369 is very customization heavy. You can do anything you want to the coffee. It can be overwhelming. We are trying to keep it simple and affordable.” Espresso drinks start at \$3. The baked goods, like croissants and cookies, are from Danish Pastry House, baked in Watertown. The coffee is from Broadsheet Coffee Roasters (Cambridge)



Worker-owned cooperative espresso bar New Leaf offers customers a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere along with coffee drinks and snacks at affordable prices. — Photo by Matt Kennedy

and tea from Mem Tea (Davis Square).

As for the check-in process for haircuts and walk-in customers for the espresso bar, Razors and New Leaf are working on it, on the fly. Eoin even helped one walk-in with their haircut check-in process. “It is nice to have the chatter and noise all the time. With coffee, you have people and noise all the time.” So, a different type of noise for a different, simple type of coffee experience.

Eoin is still a bit surprised how things turned out. “I never thought I was gonna do this. It was a ridiculously good oppor-

tunity. It was already built out, and already had an espresso machine. Anthony needed someone to run it.”

Even though they are open Monday through Saturday now, the goal is to be open later. “The plan is to be open nights, a night coffee shop. The hope is to get two shifts of people here.”

New Leaf Espresso, 308 Highland Ave., at Razors, is open Monday through Saturday: 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. No reservations needed and walk-ins welcomed. Follow @newleafespresso on Instagram or visit www.newleafespresso.com.

Historical Fact CONT. FROM PG 9

Inc. and the owner was businessman and sports promoter Charles F. Adams. Adams had the grocery business in his blood. He began with his first job working as a boy in a Vermont corner store and later proved himself a master by his creation in Somerville.

Whatever he did, he did well. His other fascination was sports. By any measurement, Charles Francis Adams, namesake of the Adams Cup Trophy and Division, was one of New England’s foremost sports promoters and pioneers. He was president or principal owner beginning in 1924 with the Boston Bruins, then the Boston Braves in 1927, and the Suffolk Downs Racetrack in 1937 – but his real passion was hockey.

Charles Adams created the Boston Bruins, which celebrates its 100th birthday this year. Ever since he was a boy in Vermont, he loved hockey. When he came to Boston, he was enamored with the city’s amateur hockey leagues, but they could not compare to watching Canadian professional hockey.

It wasn’t easy, but on November 1, 1924, Charles Adams founded professional hockey in America by acquiring the Boston franchise. He named the team the Bruins, which means brown bear. He chose the original brown bear insignia and uniform colors to match the colors of his First National Stores color pattern of

brown and gold.

Years later, changes happened. The bruin logo would be modernized into the familiar Boston hub-wheel design and the more visible black and gold colors. Also, the name of his Somerville’s corporation name was changed to the more familiar anagram “Finast.”

The team played their first four years at the old Boston Arena, which is now a Northeastern University complex. The construction of the first Boston Garden was led by Adams. It was in this building, in 1929, that his Bruins won their first Lord Stanley Cup.

His feats have been honored in the



American, Canadian, and Vermont Halls of Fame. For 100 years, from Canal Street in the North End to Canal Lane in Winter Hill and beyond, Somerville fans have been sold on the Black and Gold. American hockey’s “First” and New England’s “Finast.”

Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 6

Governor Healey. “I’m proud to sign this bill that will expand access to lifesaving overdose reversal medications and coaching throughout the recovery process.”

“This important legislation reflects an approach to substance use disorder that emphasizes recovery, compassion and evidence-based care,” said Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein, MD, PhD. “The measures included in this bill will help break down barriers to care and push back against the stigma that hinders far too many from seeking effective treatment and moving toward recovery. Notably, this model of care affirms that the commonwealth is committed to treating substance use disorder as a public health issue, not as a moral failing. It recognizes that with the right support, individuals can reclaim their lives, families can heal and communities can thrive.”

INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS IN CONSTRUCTION – Gov. Healey signed an Executive Order to increase the participation of women and historically underrepresented groups in construction.

The Executive Order establishes a Diverse and Equitable Construction Workforce Participation Committee to facilitate interagency collaboration on this work. It also identifies and encourages best practices for state agencies to encourage equitable workforce participation in construction, such as utilizing registered apprentices, hiring local businesses and those with a record of hiring women and underrepresented groups, and encouraging contractors to provide supportive services like childcare. The committee will also work with state agencies on data collection to measure the workforce participation of women and underrepresented groups.

“Here in Massachusetts, we know that we get the best results when our workforce reflects the rich diversity of the people of our state,” said Gov. Healey. “The construction industry offers good-paying jobs and benefits that sustain families, and it’s important that we increase access to this field for women and historically underrepresented groups. Not only is it good for these workers and their families, but it’s also good for our employers and our economy as a whole.”

“The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to breaking down barriers to employment and increasing access to career opportunities,” said Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Lauren Jones. “We look forward to building on our great partnership with the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Massachusetts Building Trades, Building Pathways, contractors and many more to meet workforce demands and advance representation among women and people of color in the trades.”

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

AUTO AND HOME INSURANCE DISCOUNTS

(H 5133) – The House approved and sent to the Senate legislation waiving, for six years, until 2030, a law that requires businesses and groups to have a 35 percent participation rate in order to qualify for group auto and home insurance discount rates. The measure permits groups with less than the 35 percent participation to take advantage of group rates, which supporters said will save members between 5 percent and 8 percent. The law has been waived since 1997. The 35 percent requirement was first included in a 1973 law.

Supporters said if the bill is not approved, insurance discounts for 322,000 vehicles and 142,000 homes in the Bay State would disappear on January 1, 2025 and consumers will pay millions of dollars more for insurance.

Reps. Dan Cahill (D-Lynn) and Tom Walsh (D-Peabody) sponsors of the measure did not respond to repeated requests by *Beacon Hill Roll Call* asking them to comment on their bill.

ALLOW ELECTRONIC RECEIPT FOR DELIVERY OF FUEL OILS AND PROPANE (H 4132) – The Senate approved a House-approved bill that would allow companies to send customers an electronic delivery receipt for the bulk sale of fuel oils and propane.

“This legislation modernizes the receipt system by allowing the vendor of bulk sale deliveries to utilize an electronic receipt, ticket or other form of recorded representation for the purchaser to review the sale item,” said House sponsor Rep. Jeff Roy (D-Franklin). “Massachusetts is one of the last states to update this antiquated system of delivery of receipts/invoices from bulk sales. In today’s world of technology, it only makes sense that the delivery of receipts/invoices can be safely and efficiently transmitted to the consumer without having to leave a paper bill at the door or mailbox. Many, if not most businesses, already operate this way and there is no good reason not to advance bulk sales in this direction as well particularly as the consumer would have a choice in the method of delivery.”

Supporters also noted that customers frequently complain about the current practice of the company leaving bags with receipts on their doorknobs or in their mailboxes. They said leaving the receipts in a USPS mailbox is not permitted by law and also leaves consumers vulnerable to identity fraud. They also pointed out that leaving a plastic bag which might remain on the doorknob for several days is a clear signal to would-be criminals that the homeowner is not home and might be traveling.

COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES (S 3002) – The Senate approved a House-approved proposal, originally sponsored by Gov. Healey, which 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 hun-

dreds 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.

RENAME THE OFFICE OF ELDER AFFAIRS (S 3006) – The Senate approved and sent to the House legislation that would change the name of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to the Executive Office of Aging and Independence. The proposal also replaces outdated language in the state’s lawbooks, including changing “elderly persons,” to “older adults” and “handicapped” to “adults with a disability.” The new legislation also incorporates gender-neutral language into current law. The original version of the bill was filed by Gov. Healey in May.

“The Executive Office of Elder Affairs was established more than 50 years ago and was one of the nation’s first state agencies dedicated to addressing the needs of older people,” said Healey. “Today, the agency has evolved to offer programs and services that support 1.7 million older residents and nearly 1 million family caregivers. Our administration is committed to meeting the changing needs of today’s older adults, and I am thrilled that this name change better reflects those that we serve.”

“The new name ... mirrors the values and goals of our older adult population and our commitment to support the vibrancy, independence and dignity of our family members, friends and neighbors as they age,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Kate Walsh.

QUOTABLE QUOTES – *Special Snowplow Edition*

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) announced the winners of the third annual “Name A Snowplow” contest for elementary and middle school students in Massachusetts.

The contest received entries from public school classrooms located all across the state to name the 12 MassDOT snowplows that will be in service during this 2024-2025 winter season. The purpose of the contest is to celebrate the snow and ice season and to help recognize the hard work and dedication shown by public works employees and contractors during the winter season.

“Maintaining safe and clear roads across *Continued on page 17*

Book review: ‘The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra’ by Vaseem Khan

By Dennis Fischman

I have never traveled to India – except through a book.

There are several series of murder mysteries set in India. Some are current plots, some historical. You can find police procedurals, women private detectives, cozies, any subset of the mystery genre that suits your taste.

For instance, I’ve read the Perveen Mistry series by Sujata Massey, starting with *The Widows of Malabar Hill*. In that debut, set in 1921 Bombay, a Parsi (Zoroastrian) woman lawyer starts to suspect that something is not right when the three widows of a Muslim man all leave their inheritance to the same charity. As a woman, she is in a better position to talk with them. Throughout the series, Perveen’s position as an outsider within helps her to solve mysteries ... and helps us to understand Indian society a century ago.

If you’re more in the mood for an intercultural romance, the

Captain Jim and Lady Diana mysteries by Nev March may be just the ticket. Start with *Murder in Old Bombay* [1], where the couple (a wounded British soldier who’s a Sherlock Holmes fan and a high-born Parsi woman whose sisters have come under attack) explore the twin sources of violence: British imperialism and Hindu nationalism. (Spoiler alert: in a second book, the couple have come to the U.S. and solve a murder at the Chicago World’s Fair.)

Let’s come closer to the present, though, and introduce India’s answer to Alexander McCall Smith [2].

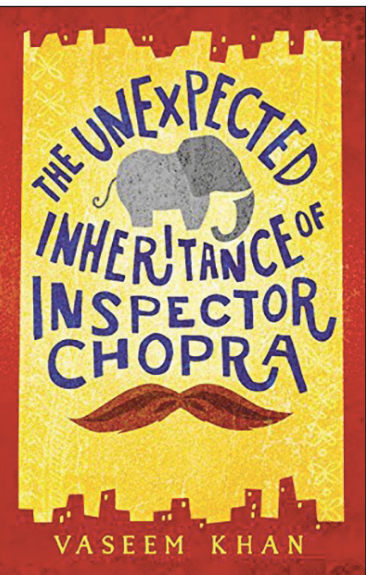
In *The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra*, [3] by Vaseem Khan, we meet an everyman type, Inspector Ashwin Chopra (Retired). Newly retired, that is: he’s only in his fifties, but a heart problem (and his very concerned wife, Poppy) have forced him to leave his career behind. Or so it seems.

Three strange things appear

on the scene just as Inspector Chopra is supposedly leaving it. There’s the body of a boy, apparently drowned in a ditch, but not a very deep one and not anywhere you would expect him to go. There’s the face of a master criminal whom Chopra thought he had killed years ago.

And then, there’s a baby elephant. Baby Ganesh, to be exact, a diminutive 200-pounder, a mysterious gift from Chopra’s faraway uncle. What will Chopra do to get the elephant, apparently in mourning, to eat? How will the retired cop solve the mysteries when he can no longer claim support from his former department? And what will Poppy (who sees him spending so much time away from home and thinks he must be having an affair) say when she finds out he is once again putting his life on the line?

This is quite obviously a first book of a series [4], spending so much time introducing characters and setting it seems a bit like



“The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra” by Vaseem Khan. Redhook, 2015, 316 pages.



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

- [1] <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/56952570-murder-in-old-bombay>
- [2] https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/4738.Alexander_McCall_Smith
- [3]<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24717411-the-unexpected-inheritance-of-inspector-chopra>
- [4] <https://www.goodreads.com/series/162646-baby-ganesh-agency-investigation>

Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 16

Massachusetts during winter is no easy task,” said Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbits-Nutt. “We appreciate how educators are engaging their students in this fun competition that honors this vital public service. Congratulations to the winning classrooms, and we look forward to seeing your snowplows out in the field.”

“This contest is a great way for schools across the state to connect with the crews who work tirelessly to keep our roads clear each winter,” said Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver. “Thank you to everyone who took part in this contest, and congratulations to our winners.”

Here are the 12 winning names and the schools that submitted them:

“Control-Salt-Delete” — *Swift River School, kindergarten, New Salem, MA*

“Abomindable Plowman” — *Brophy Elementary School, 4th grade, Framingham, MA*

“Snow Force One” — *Great Oak Elementary School, kindergarten, Danvers, MA*

- “Taylor Drift” — *Dighton Elementary School, 1st grade, Dighton, MA*
- “Ice S’now More” — *St. Mary of the Hills School, 4th grade, Milton, MA*
- “Snowana” — *Morris Elementary School, 4th grade, Lenox, MA*
- “Ice Ice Baby” — *Pine Cobble School, 5th grade, Williamstown, MA*
- “It’s Snow Problem” — *Paul R. Baird Middle School, 6th grade, Ludlow, MA*
- “Meltin’ John” — *Manville School, 8th grade, Boston, MA*

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 December 23-27, the House met for a total of four hours and 26 minutes and the Senate met for a total of four hours and one minute.

Mon. Dec. 23	House 11:07 a.m. to 1:55 p.m. Senate 11:08 a.m. to 2:09 p.m.
Tues. Dec. 24	No House session No Senate session
Wed. Dec. 25	No House session No Senate session
Thurs. Dec. 26	House 11:02 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. Senate 11:18 a.m. to 12:18 p.m.
Fri. Dec. 27	No House session No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

Upcoming Events:

Medical Equipment Program – Through the generosity of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and from the direction of Mayor Bal-lantyne, the Council on Aging can provide Durable Medical Equipment at no cost to Somerville residents. Residents with a documented need for medical equipment must be over the age of 60, or have a permanent disability, and must be otherwise unable to afford or access needed medical equipment. We currently have available: Commodes, Bath Benches, Rollator Walkers, Incontinence Supplies and Transport Wheelchairs (wheelchairs are intended for transport and are not self-propelling or self-breaking.) For additional information, or for an application, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Lockboxes for Seniors - What is the Lockboxes for Seniors program? The Lockboxes for Seniors program is intended to provide Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) access to your residence in the event of an emergency where you are unable to open the door. A key to your residence will be stored in a secure metal storage device, like a realtor's lockbox, at your residence. The access code to the lockbox will only be available to Police, Fire, or EMS personnel and used only during an emergency. Who is eligible? The program is targeted towards Somerville community members who live alone and are aged 65+, or those who are disabled and/or suffer from major medical illness at any age. Individuals living in apartment complexes or other facilities with maintenance staff are not eligible for this program. How do I know this is safe? A member of the Somerville Fire Department will install and demonstrate how the lockbox operates and answer any questions you may have. The four-digit combination on the lockbox will only be available to respond to emergency personnel in the event of an emergency. Who should I contact for more information? For more information, please contact Debby Higgins at the Council on Aging via E-mail at dhiggins@somervillema.gov or by telephone at (617) 625-6600 ext. 2321. The Council on Aging will

verify eligibility for services. This program is designed for those who are at most significant risk for falls or have limited mobility. All participants will be required to provide a spare house key to be used in the lock box as well as a safety inspection of the property.

Portuguese Senior Coffee Social – The third Monday of each month (January 20th) from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at our Ralph & Jenny Center located at 9 New Washington Street. Holiday celebration. This event will be bilingual in Portuguese and English. RSVP to Juliana Bertoldo by calling 978-291-8277.

Book Club – Meets the 3rd Friday of each month (January 17th) starting at 10:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Do you love books and want to discuss your love of reading with others? Consider joining the Book Club. This month's selection is 'The Dog Went Over the Mountain' by Peter Zheutlin. The group meets in person and concurrently via Zoom. To RSVP or to inquire about the book club selection please call Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov as space is limited.

Asian Tea – Mind-Body Connection – The second Monday of each month (January 13th) from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Our Ralph & Jenny Center located at 9 New Washington Street. RSVP to Maureen Bastardi by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2335 or email Maureen at mbastardi@somervillema.gov.

Men's Group – Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month (January 14th) starting at 10:30 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. RSVP to Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Function Junction – January 3rd, 10th and 17th starting at 9:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Focus on functional fitness by doing exercises that help with activities of daily living and maintain-ing independence! In this class, we will improve coordination and cardio. We'll work on both strengthening and stretching muscles using resistance bands, dumbbells, the wall and chair to im-prove posture and mobility. RSVP to Michelle Deutsch at 617-625-6600, ext. 2315 or email Michelle at mdeutsch@somervillema.gov.

Walking Club – Every Thursday in starting at 9:00 a.m. Weather Permitting – Meets at the Holland Street Center entrance. RSVP by calling Michelle Deutsch 617-625-6600, ext. 2315 or email Michelle at mdeutsch@somervillema.gov.

Friendly Caller Program - We have many wonderful volunteers who are waiting to give you a call. Whether you are looking to make a new friend or would just like a friendly chat to look for-ward to every week, this program has you covered. Call Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 to learn more about the program and to sign up.

Looking for a location to chat with your friends? Come to the COA on Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., the senior center is open, and the coffee is on as we wait for the start of Bingo.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay connected via our Facebook page - Informative, entertaining, lots of photos and updates. Vis-it our page at <https://www.facebook.com/SomervilleCOA/>

Follow the Somerville Council on Aging on Instagram! You can find us under the Instagram handle: somervillecouncilonaging If you have any questions or need help following us, contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or email her at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

If you would like to receive a virtual copy of our monthly newsletter, please contact Maureen Bastardi at 617-625-6600, ext. 2335 or email Maureen Bastardi at mbastardi@somervillema.gov.

If you would like to receive a copy of our monthly newsletter in the mail, please contact Connie Lorneti at 617-625-6600, ext. 2319 or email Connie at clorneti@somervillema.gov.

If you would like to become part of our Google Group, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

Visit us online at www.TheSomervilleTimes.com
Facebook at www.facebook.com/somerville.times.1
and follow us on X/Twitter at [@somervilletimes](https://twitter.com/somervilletimes)

City issues precautions to prevent frozen water pipes

Frigid temperatures and gusty winds can cause one of winter’s worst woes: frozen pipes. Property owners, tenants, and residents can take some simple precautions to prevent the inconvenience and expense of frozen water pipes.

Prevention Tips:

- Insulate pipes and faucets in unheated areas
- Check insulation around pipes regularly
- Patch any cracks and holes in doors, windows, and walls near pipes
- Seal leaks
- Make sure that heat can circulate around pipes
- Never shut off your heat
- Turn off outside faucets
- Open the faucet a small amount on extremely cold nights

Visit sommervillema.gov/frozenpipes for more information and steps for preventing frozen pipes.

— City of Somerville



Somerville to share Public Safety for All final reports Tuesday, February 4

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Somerville’s Department of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) are inviting all to join a community event presenting the completed reports from the Public Safety for All Task Force, Civilian Oversight Task Force, and Anti-Violence Working Group on Tuesday, February 4, (rain date Thursday, February 6) at Somerville High School (81 Highland Ave).

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m., and constituents are invited to join members from the Public Safety for All Task Force, Civilian Oversight Task Force, and Anti-Violence Working Group for a discussion of their findings, a Q&A about the course of their work, and an overview of next steps in the process. Free snacks and refreshments will be provided. In advance of the event, each report will be shared on

January 28, via the PSFA webpage. “Ensuring public safety in Somerville means listening to our community, embracing transparency, and working collaboratively toward meaningful change,” said Mayor Ballantyne. “I encourage all residents to join us on February 4 to hear directly from the dedicated members of our task forces and working group. Their reports reflect months of thoughtful engagement, research, and a shared commitment to making Somerville safer and more equitable for all.”

Submit questions to the Task Forces/Working Group

Ahead of the Public Safety for All Report Release Event, community members will have the opportunity to submit questions directly to the members of the Task Forces/Working Group. Beginning at 9

a.m. on January 28, there will be a form for constituents to submit questions for the Q&A portion of the meeting on the PSFA webpage.

RSJ encourages community members to consider submitting a question to be discussed by the Task Forces/Working Group members live at the Report Release Event. There will be an opportunity for community members to ask questions live during the meeting but submitting questions in advance is recommended.

About the Public Safety for All Initiative Task Forces

The Public Safety for All, Civilian Oversight, and the Anti-Violence Task Forces, each comprised of residents, subject matter experts, and City Council members, began their work in late Spring 2023.

The Public Safety for All Task Force was

tasked with focusing on two key areas:

Drafting recommendations that will inform the adoption of an alternative, co-response, and/or unarmed response model to address calls for service and identified public safety needs in Somerville.

Drafting recommendations that will help and improve Somerville’s public safety infrastructure at large.

The Civilian Oversight Task Force was tasked with producing recommendations for the City’s first-ever civilian oversight entity, including its powers, duties, composition, and more.

The Anti-Violence Working Group was tasked with producing recommendations that specifically focused on mitigating four types of violence in the City: gun violence, gang violence, domestic violence, and traffic violence.

Somerville Media Center’s moving day is scheduled for Jan 3, 2025

Somerville Media Center will make the move to a newly renovated 4900 sqft community media facility at 29 Properzi Way in Somerville on January 3, 2025, after 16 months in a temporary location. Our general contractor, Menemsha Solutions, is wrapping up 18 weeks of construction and proceeding with mechanical, electrical, and fire inspections this week. Movers have been booked to transport equipment and resources from three remote storage facilities as well as pick up new furniture and fixtures purchased to fit our new space. Community members can soon step into the first brand new facility this organization has offered since 1983.

After January 3, SMC staff can begin bringing brand new technical facilities back online that have been unavailable to the community since late 2023. Our video engineer, Andreas Uthoff, will work with staff to install new equipment in our main, HOT set, and podcast studios. Staff will also prepare a new computer lab, open workshop, conference room, and staff offices for delivering programs and services. New opportunities for tours of the completed building and a return to monthly orientations for the public can begin within a few short weeks.

Expect announcements for a grand opening in late January to coincide with Somerville Media Center’s annual meeting.

— Somerville Media Center





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.

Workshop for parents and guardians

Somerville Public Schools students and staff are implementing restorative practices in schools across the district to strengthen community and relationships. Now SPS parents and guardians are invited to join one of three sessions about restorative practices and how to use these strategies at home. The third and final sessions will take place on Tuesday, January 14, from 5:30–7p.m. at Albert F. Argenziano School. Pizza and childcare will be provided. Session in English and Portuguese. Please register: tinyurl.com/RJ24-25.

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

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER
By Bobbygeorge Potaris

Where do you go to do your math homework on New Year's Eve? Times Square.

The "Original"
All Types Vent Cleaning
Restaurant Hood Cleaning
Dryer Vent/ HVAC Cleaning
Power Washing
Licensed and Insured
in Massachusetts
We travel all over
Massachusetts
Call today to find out
our weekly specials!
Call Jimmy 857-366-3761

To advertise in
The
Somerville
Times
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Bobbie Toner
857-488-5138

**Somerville through
the eyes of Denise**



Country Manor? Or Somerville street scene?... — Photo by Denise Provost

On This Day in History
January 1

1698 – The Abenaki Indians and Massachusetts colonists sign a treaty halting hostilities between the two.

1808 – A U.S. law banning the import of slaves comes into effect, but is widely ignored.

1863 – President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves in the Confederacy.

1891 – Facilities opened on Ellis Island, New York, to cope with the vast flood of immigrants coming into the United States.

1907 – The Pure Food and Drug Act becomes law in the United States.

1918 – The first gasoline pipeline begins operation from Salt Creek to Casper, WY.

1937 – At a party at the Hormel Mansion in Minnesota, a guest wins \$100 for naming a new canned meat – Spam.

1959 – Fidel Castro seizes power in Cuba as General Fulgencio Batista flees.

1999 – The euro, the new money of 11 European nations, goes into effect on the continent of Europe.

GovTV – Xfinity 22/Astound 13/613

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1		4:00 PM	School Committee Update: Ellenor Barish	10:00 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	11:00 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
7:00 AM	Central Ave. Public Meeting #4 11.18.24	4:31 PM	SomerViva an Kreyol	10:35 AM	Henry Hansen Park Opening	11:35 AM	SomerViva em Português
8:00 AM	School Committee Update: Ellenor Barish	5:00 PM	Latin American & Caribbean Heritage	11:00 AM	First Flag Raising 2025	12:00 PM	City Council Meeting 12-12-24
8:31 AM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024		Month Celebration	12:00 PM	City Council Meeting 12-12-24	5:00 PM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies & Mayoral
9:00 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	6:00 PM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	4:00 PM	Central Somerville Ave. Workshop #3		Address - LIVE
9:40 AM	Henry Hansen Park Opening	6:35 PM	Henry Hansen Park Opening	5:00 PM	Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner 2024	10:00 PM	First Flag Raising 2025
10:00 AM	City Council Meeting 12-12-24	7:00 PM	Senior Circuit: SHINE/MCR	6:30 PM	Senior Circuit: SHINE/MCR	11:00 PM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024
1:40 PM	Checking In w/ Mayor Ballantyne:	7:30 PM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans	7:00 PM	School Committee Update: Ellenor Barish	TUESDAY, JANUARY 7	
	Street Safety	8:00 PM	First Flag Raising 2025	7:31 PM	School Committee Meeting 12-16-24	12:00 AM	First Flag Raising 2025
2:00 PM	First Flag Raising 2024	9:00 PM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #5	9:30 PM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024	1:00 AM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #2
3:00 PM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans	11:00 PM	Domestic Violence Vigil 2024	10:00 PM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #5	2:15 AM	Henry Hansen Park Opening
3:30 PM	Veterans Day Ceremony 2024	11:50 PM	Checking In w/ Mayor Ballantyne:	SUNDAY, JANUARY 5		2:31 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol
4:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: JT Scott		Street Safety	12:00 AM	Western Pearl Street Reconstruction First	7:00 AM	Fit 4 Life Home Workout w/ Phelan #2
5:00 PM	First Flag Raising 2024	FRIDAY, JANUARY 3			Community Meeting	7:30 AM	Domestic Violence Vigil 2024
6:00 PM	Domestic Violence Vigil 2024	12:00 AM	Finance Committee Meeting 12-10-24	2:00 AM	Domestic Violence Vigil 2024	8:30 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
7:00 PM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #5	7:00 AM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #2	7:00 AM	Chair Yoga w/ Janine Duffy	9:05 AM	SomerViva em Português
9:00 PM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	8:15 AM	Checking In w/ Mayor Ballantyne:	7:30 AM	Latin American & Caribbean Heritage	9:30 AM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024
9:40 PM	Checking In w/ Mayor Ballantyne:		Street Safety		Month Celebration	10:00 AM	Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner
	Street Safety	8:30 AM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024	8:30 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol	11:30 AM	School Committee Update: Ellenor Barish
10:00 PM	Community Mtg on Davis Sq. Area	9:00 AM	First Flag Raising 2025	9:00 AM	First Flag Raising 2025	12:01 PM	Senior Circuit: SHINE/MCR
	Public Safety 10-9-24	10:00 AM	Veterans Day at Milk Row Cemetery	10:00 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	12:30 PM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies & Mayoral
11:40 PM	Henry Hansen Park Opening	10:30 AM	Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner	11:00 AM	Domestic Violence Vigil 2024		Address
THURSDAY, JANUARY 2		12:00 PM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024	12:00 PM	Senior Circuit: SHINE/MCR	3:00 PM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024
12:00 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	12:30 PM	City Council Meeting 12-12-24	12:30 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 12-10-24	3:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: JT Scott
12:35 AM	SomerViva em Português	4:02 PM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	3:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Jake Wilson	4:00 PM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #5
1:00 AM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024	5:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 12-10-24	4:00 PM	Veterans Day Ceremony 2024	6:00 PM	Talking Business: Night Life
1:30 AM	City Christmas Tree Lighting & Santa 2024	8:00 PM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #5	5:00 PM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans	6:30 PM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans
7:00 AM	Fit 4 Life Home Workout w/ Phelan #2	9:50 PM	Checking In w/ Mayor Ballantyne: Street Safety	5:30 PM	Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner 2024	7:00 PM	Senior Circuit: SHINE/MCR
7:30 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	10:00 PM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024	7:00 PM	Senior Circuit: SHINE/MCR	7:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
8:05 AM	SomerViva em Português	10:30 PM	Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner 2024	7:30 PM	First Flag Raising 2025	8:05 PM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies & Mayoral
8:30 AM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans	SATURDAY JANUARY 4		8:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo		Address
9:00 AM	Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner 2024	12:00 AM	City Council Spotlight: JT Scott	9:05 PM	Henry Hansen Park Opening	10:00 PM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024
10:30 AM	Community Mtg on Davis Sq Area	12:30 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol	9:30 PM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024	10:30 PM	Domestic Violence Vigil 2024
	Public Safety 10-9-24	1:00 AM	Latin American & Caribbean Heritage	10:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 12-10-24	11:30 PM	School Committee Update: Ellenor Barish
12:10 PM	Checking In w/ Mayor Ballantyne:		Month Celebration	MONDAY, JANUARY 6		WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8	
	Street Safety	2:00 AM	City Christmas Tree Lighting & Santa 2024	1:00 AM	Senior Circuit: SHINE/MCR	12:01 AM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies & Mayoral
12:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	7:00 AM	City of Somerville Inauguration 2024	1:30 AM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #5		Address
1:05 PM	Senior Circuit: SHINE/MCR	9:00 AM	City Hall Menorah Lighting 2024	7:00 AM	City of Somerville Inauguration 2024	2:30 AM	Henry Hansen Park Opening
2:00 PM	School Committee Meeting 12-16-24	9:30 AM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans	9:00 AM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #5		

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1		9:00 PM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert	9:00 PM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United	4:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night
8:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden	9:30 PM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	10:30 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Lynn English	5:00 PM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase
9:30 AM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	10:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading	SUNDAY, JANUARY 5		6:30 PM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert
10:00 AM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	11:30 PM	Argenziano 4-8 Ensembles Winter Concert	12:30 AM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading	7:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden
11:00 AM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert	FRIDAY, JANUARY 3		2:00 AM	All-City Middle School Winter Concert	8:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night
11:30 AM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	12:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading	2:30 AM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	9:00 PM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert
12:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading	1:30 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Chelsea	3:00 AM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	10:00 PM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert
1:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Tide	8:00 AM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	8:00 AM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	10:30 PM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert
3:00 PM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United	8:30 AM	Healey grades 3-8 Winter Concert	9:00 AM	Argenziano 4-8 Ensembles Winter Concert	11:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading
4:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	9:30 AM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert	9:30 AM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	TUESDAY, JANUARY 7	
5:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Melrose	10:00 AM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United	10:00 AM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	12:30 AM	SHS Hockey vs Tide
6:30 PM	Healey grades 3-8 Winter Concert	11:30 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Melrose	10:30 AM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase	2:00 AM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United
8:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden	1:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden	12:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Lynn English	3:30 AM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night
9:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	2:30 PM	All-City Middle School Winter Concert	1:30 PM	Kennedy gr 4-8 Winter Concert 12-11-24	4:00 AM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase
10:00 PM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	3:00 PM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase	2:30 PM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United	5:30 AM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert
11:00 PM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert	4:30 PM	Kennedy K-3 Winter Concert 12-10-24	4:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Melrose	8:00 AM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert
11:30 PM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	5:00 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	5:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	9:00 AM	Argenziano 4-8 Ensembles Winter Concert
THURSDAY, JANUARY 2		5:30 PM	Healey grades 3-8 Winter Concert	6:00 PM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	9:30 AM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night
12:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading	6:30 PM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert	7:00 PM	Argenziano 4-8 Ensembles Winter Concert	10:00 AM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert
1:26 AM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United	7:00 PM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United	7:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	10:30 AM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase
2:51 AM	SHS Hockey vs Tide	8:30 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Melrose	8:00 PM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	12:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden
4:06 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Melrose	10:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden	8:30 PM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase	1:30 PM	Kennedy gr 4-8 Winter Concert 12-11-24
5:21 AM	Healey grades 3-8 Winter Concert	11:30 PM	All-City Middle School Winter Concert	10:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Lynn English	2:30 PM	Argenziano PreK-6 Winter Concert 12-13-24
8:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden	SATURDAY, JANUARY 4		11:30 PM	Kennedy gr 4-8 Winter Concert 12-11-24	3:02 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Lynn English
9:30 AM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	12:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Lynn English	MONDAY, JANUARY 6		4:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Tide
10:00 AM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	2:00 AM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase	12:30 AM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United	6:00 PM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United
11:00 AM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert	8:00 AM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase	2:00 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Melrose	7:30 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Melrose
11:30 AM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	9:30 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Chelsea	3:30 AM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	9:00 PM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert
12:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading	11:00 AM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United	8:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden	10:00 PM	Argenziano 4-8 Ensembles Winter Concert
1:30 PM	Kennedy gr 4-8 Winter Concert 12-11-24	1:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden	9:30 AM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	10:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night
2:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Tide	2:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading	10:00 AM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	11:00 PM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert
4:00 PM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase	4:00 PM	All-City Middle School Winter Concert	11:00 AM	WHCS Grade 4-8 Winter Concert	11:30 PM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase
5:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	4:30 PM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	11:30 AM	WHCS K-3 Winter Concert	1:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Lynn English
6:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Malden	5:00 PM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	12:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs N Reading	2:30 AM	Kennedy gr 4-8 Winter Concert 12-11-24
7:30 PM	SHS Coding and Robotics Family Night	6:00 PM	SHS Winter Concert & Art Showcase	1:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Tide		
8:00 PM	El Sistema Somerville December Concert	7:30 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Chelsea	3:00 PM	SHS Boys’ Basketball vs Boston United		

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

You are invited to a virtual public meeting to discuss improving **water quality in our rivers** through the development of an updated **CSO Control Plan on Wednesday, January 22**, at 6 p.m. This meeting is a collaboration between the **City of Somerville**, the **City of Cambridge**, and the **Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)**. Join us for this joint public meeting to learn about the alternatives developed so far to control combined sewer overflows and how the affordability will be evaluated for each entity. Learn more about the project and sign up for the meeting by visiting voice.somervillema.gov/joint-cso-planning/.

Join the **Athletics Department** in honoring the first inductee, **Jerry Knight**, into the **Somerville High School Athletics Ring of Honor**. He was chosen for his amazing contributions to the Somerville High School athletic community. Jerry was a standout student athlete who ran track and played basketball for Somerville High School until graduating in 1961. He coached at SHS, then served as Athletic Director until he retired in 2005. Come to the ceremony on **Friday, January 10**, at 6:30 p.m. in the **Somerville High School Brune Field House**.

Help **Connexion** gather **winter coats** for the community. Coats can be delivered to Connexion, located at 149 Broadway in Somerville. Available drop-off times: Weekdays: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Sundays: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Donations accepted until January 24, 2025. The Giveaway will be Saturday January 25, 2pm-5pm. Please consider donating New or gently used coats. You can also purchase coats on their Amazon wish list.

Head to **Rococo** for **Winter Plant Care 101 (+ Plant Swap)** and learn the key steps to maintaining happy and thriving indoor plants, especially during the colder months. The workshop will cover the essentials of year-round houseplant care, so you can confidently keep your plants healthy and thriving. Discover helpful tips for caring for your plants during the winter months, including light, watering, humidity, and troubleshooting common issues. Tuesday, January 14, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Rococo Floral, 1 Bow Markey Way. Post-session, there will be a plant swap raffle, where everyone will get to take home a plant.

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/heating-assistance.

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>.

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.

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.

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 somervillema.gov/alerts and click on the button for your preferred language. Step-by-step sign-up instructions are available at: [somerville-](https://somerville-ma.gov/alerts)

[ma.gov/alerts](https://somerville-ma.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](https://somerville.mysticdrains.org).

The **SomerViva: Office of Immigrant Affairs**, in collaboration with **Saint Benedict Church**, warmly invites you to a festive **Three Kings Celebration** on **Sunday, January 5**, 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 community. 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 **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.

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

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. Residents with a documented need for medical equipment must be over the age of 60, or have a permanent disability, and must be otherwise unable to afford or access needed medical equipment. We currently have available: Commodes, Bath Benches, Rollator Walkers, Incontinence Supplies and Transport Wheelchairs (wheelchairs are intended for transport and are not self-propelling or self-breaking.) For additional information, or for an application, please contact **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

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



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

What?! No Massachusetts State Poet Laureate?

Lyrical SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Poet Daniel Kitmanyen writes: “I’m an Endicott College student in the class of 2026. I study environmental science and want to work in conservation. I love poetry because it’s a great way to express yourself.”



My Caribou

In response to a statue of a Caribou and a young girl nestled against the reclining animal. This was viewed at the Manninen Arts Center at Endicott College in Beverly, MA.

You are not the mother I chose,
You are not the parent I so hoped for,
You are not perfect,
Your mistakes are plentiful,
Your lack of accountability and responsibility
makes me curious how you became a parent,
Yet, you are the mother I needed
You are the foundation I was destined to have,
You are not perfect,
And you make plenty of mistakes,
But like a Caribou,
Who is so white and pure,
You hold me up,
You embrace my soul,
You are not the mother I chose,
But you are the mother I love

— Daniel Kitmanyen

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



The New England State Poets Laureate: an Afternoon

I am on the board of the New England Poetry Club, and at a recent meeting one of our board members wondered why we don’t have a state poet laureate. In December, we had a wonderful reading with New England Poet Laureates, and we all were very impressed with the work that they have done. A friend of mine – a former state legislator – tried to push a bill through many times, but it was considered “fluff.” Hey, don’t we have a state donut? This couldn’t be a money issue, because most laureates get grants of only a couple of thousand per year, and I believe you get a lot of bang for the buck. And it is a damn shame

that our state that has a rich literary history does not have one. I encourage you to call or write your legislator, the governor, or your local newspaper to make them aware of this. It couldn’t hurt if you put this on your social media. Who knows! It may become viral, and there is no vaccine. Below is a link to the State Poet Laureate reading, where the poets read from their work and explained what they have done in their roles as community building creatives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDwPg-PrU1J0>

Restorative Practices for parents

Restorative Practices are being rolled out across Somerville Public Schools as part of their Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum. In November and December, they gave SPS parents and guardians a chance to learn restorative practices, the same way their children are learning them in classrooms across the district. Over 35 parents and guardians attended the two first workshops called “From Conflict to Connection: Building a Stronger Relationship with Your Child.”



Parents and guardians participated in community-building circles, and explored ideas for adopting restorative practices at home. One parent shared, “One thing that went well was engagement and attentiveness during discussions. Everyone was willing to share and be honest. Great to experience what our kids are experiencing.”

Director of Student Services Elizabeth Doncaster co-designed the workshops with staff from the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC), our family engagement department. Ms. Doncaster facilitated the sessions along with SFLC social worker Jennifer Ochoa, who is pictured facilitating a Spanish-language workshop. Learn more about SEL programs on the Student Services website: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/sel>

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