



Inside:



Drop and give me 20

page 3



Making the Connexion

page 5



Somerville Media Center is back

page 9

Officials request urgent restoration of neglected war memorials and monuments



Memorials such as the Women of the Union Square Post Plaque have been deteriorating at an Inner Belt Road storage lot in crates for the past five years.

— Photos Courtesy of George McLean and Thomas Gorman

By Harry Kane

Somerville veterans are requesting updates from the Ballantyne administration regarding the historic veteran war memorials and monuments formerly located on Central Hill, which were removed during the construction of Somerville High School in 2018, and have fallen into disrepair in an outdoor storage lot.

At the city council meeting on January 9, a resolution was put forward requesting that the Vietnam and Korean war memorials be placed at a suitable public location rather than waiting for a comprehensive plan for all memorials and monuments.

“The condition of the war memorials that adorned Central Hill is disgraceful and an insult to our veterans that served and died for our city and country,” said Fire Captain Thomas Gorman, *Continued on page 13*

The Boston Comic Arts Foundation brings the magic of comics to Somerville

By Mina Rose Morales

For months, the Boston Comic Arts Foundation has united Somerville’s comic community through its Picture + Panel events, but this February, the monthly series will wrap up at its current venue and move to a new location, though some events will continue to be held in Somerville.

Over the past year, the Boston Comic Arts Foundation (BCAF) hosted its Picture + Panel events at Somerville’s Aeronaut Brewing on the first Monday of each month. The events feature panel discussions with two comic writers and/or artists, delving into their creative journeys. On January 6, 2025, the series kicked off with a comic misfits-themed Picture + Panel featuring Tyrell Waiters and Matt Smith.

“It’s very generic, but it’s really *Continued on page 4*



Maria Hahne, Olivia Presser, and Jason Viola at MICE, 2024.

— Photo By Lauren Miller

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The Union Square Neighborhood Council (USNC) and Rafi Properties announce details for a **Community Benefits Agreement update meeting for Somernova** set to take place on **Wednesday, January 22, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**, the **Argenziano School Cafeteria, 290 Washington St.**, or via Zoom. RSVP via linktr.ee/usnc2017. Interpretation will be available in Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish both in-person and online.

Community members are invited to welcome the **Year of the Snake** at the second **Lunar New Year Festival** on **Saturday, January 25**. This fun and festive celebration will be held in the **Somerville High School cafeteria (81 Highland Ave.)** from 2:30 to 5 p.m. Join in for exciting performances, food, and family-friendly activities that highlight the rich traditions of East, Southeast, and South Asia.

Happy birthday this week to the following: A big happy birthday to our own **Dorothy DiMarzo**, who gives us all those delicious recipes every other week in our paper. We wish her the very best of birthdays this week. Another local who is celebrating this week is **Maria Nella Nunes**. We wish her the very best. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such **Bob Crowley LeBlanc, Roy Moulton, Linda LoPresti, Eddie Hardy, James Casazza** and **Kevin Su**, a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

Continued on page 7

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of January 22 – January 28 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
Wednesday January 22	Sunny	19°/6°	5%	2%	NW 10 mph
Thursday January 23	Partly Cloudy	30°/15°	6%	3%	SW 9 mph
Friday January 24	Sunny	33°/19°	23%	11%	WNW 9 mph
Saturday January 25	Sunny	33°/24°	6%	3%	SW 13 mph
Sunday January 26	Sunny	38°/25°	7%	4%	WSW 12 mph
Monday January 27	Cloudy	39°/29°	25%	20%	WSW 11 mph
Tuesday January 28	Partly Cloudy	40°/25°	23%	14%	W 14 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: **Winter Sauna and Cold Plunge Village open in Somerville**

Amelia Hall says:

Really enjoyed reading this article about cold plunging and its growing popularity! I recently came across an article on <https://arcticplungegear.com/> that talked about the many health benefits of cold exposure, including improved recovery and reduced inflammation. It's great to see more people exploring this practice. Have you come across any tips for beginners looking to ease into cold plunging safely? Would love to hear your thoughts!

Response to: **Review of Lee Varon's new poetry collection 'The Last Bed'**

Bridget Seley Galway says:

Great book!

Response to: **One-way woes**

Cameron says:

Having alternate means of travel for those that can use it only make it more pleasant for those who must drive. The "I can't see 5 ft in front of my car" comment also highlights the reasons why separated bike infrastructure are a must. The curb could've easily be a cyclist.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

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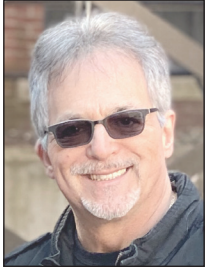
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Life in the **VILLE** by Jimmy Del Ponte

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

Drop and give me 20



(This article first appeared in the January 10, 2015 edition of The Somerville Times)

After graduating from Somerville High School in the

early 70's, with all the demonstrations, walkouts, and drama, I thought college would be a breeze.

It's hard to imagine that 1975 was forty years ago. I was a sophomore at a Boston College in the Back Bay. I was driving my 1967 Dodge Dart back and forth. Often, I would drop off my pal John Glynn in Dorchester. He was my best friend in

college. It was a perfect mix of an Irishman and an Italian from the inner city and together we had as much fun as was humanly possible without getting thrown out of school.

I was very excited to be attending college but would have guessed that I was about to encounter an unforgettable experience that took every ounce of my sanity, and almost drove me over the edge. And it had nothing to do with academics.

Just a few months earlier in the fall of 1974, was when John and I became buds. We were both approached by a major fraternity and invited to come to their "smoker." There was food and beer and belligerent frat brothers. Shortly *Continued on page 11*



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Somerville Police Dept Crime Log January 7 – 13

Assault

25001148: On 1/7/25 at approximately 1:09 p.m., Somerville Police responded to Beacon St. for report of a road rage incident. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he got into an argument with a male and female while in traffic. The suspects began yelling at the victim then threatened to stab him. The suspects and the victim then pulled into a parking lot and the male suspect threw a drink at the victim's car and attempted to grab him. The suspects then fled the area.

Residential Breaking and Entering

25002047: On 1/12/25 at approximately 11:17 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Spring St. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated someone broke into her basement and stole several tools.

Residential Breaking and Entering

25002155: On 1/13/25 at approximately 2:08 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Highland Rd. for report of a breaking and entering in progress. Upon arrival, officers located a male party inside the victim's bedroom. Officers identified the suspect. Nothing was reported missing.

Assault

25002080: On 1/12/25 at approximately 4:21 p.m., a male party came into the station and stated he was walking in Davis Sq. and got into an argument with another male. During the argument, the suspect punched the victim.

Residential Breaking and Entering

25001963: On 1/11/25 at approximately 7:59 p.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Victoria St. for report of a stolen bicycle. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated two bicycles were stolen from his basement.

Arrest

25001840: On 1/10/25 at approximately 11:38 p.m., Somerville Police responded to a business on Elm St. for report of a fight. Upon arrival, officers observed a male party heavily bleeding from his head. He stated he was involved in an argument with another male and was struck in the head with a bottle. Officers located the male suspect and he was placed under arrest.

Other Crimes: 5 Package thefts + 2 Car breaks + 2 Bike thefts



— Somerville Police Department

The Boston Comic Arts Foundation brings the magic of comics to Somerville

CONT. FROM PG 1

good advice – just keep drawing,” said Matt Smith when asked what he would tell aspiring artists to help them pursue their dreams.

Throughout the night, Cory McCarthy, Chief of Student Support for Boston Public Schools, asked the artists a range of questions, including how it all began, how they get in the creative groove, the advice they would give aspiring artists and more. When asked about their creative processes, the two artists offered distinct answers – Tyrell outlined a specific, routine-driven approach, while Matt prefers to listen to music and draw.

“I do a few things: I scroll through Pinterest for hours, I just make pages of art and separate each, and then I go to a comic shop. I can't buy anything – my wife would get mad since there's no space at home. Then, I go home and start

drawing. My wife knows not to bother me,” said Waiters when asked how he finds inspiration.

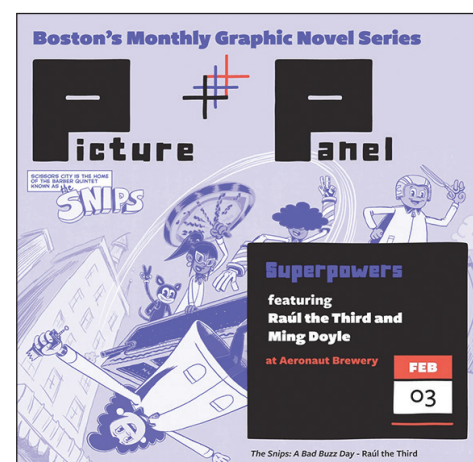
Shelli Paroline and Jason Viola, cartoonists and organizers of the Massachusetts Independent Comics Expo (MICE), wanted to create a space to celebrate comics year-round. MICE, a festival that showcases independent comics artists and small press publishers, offers hands-on workshops and inclusive panel discussions, but it only happens once a year. To keep celebrating comics year-round, Paroline and Viola helped launch BCAF, which grew out of their passion for the art form and desire to help others enjoy comics beyond the festival.

“All of it was a desire to foster a community from comics, and now it's just a bigger community,” said Viola, BCAF's program

director.

BCAF hosts four comic festivals annually, offers workshops, runs the Picture + Panel discussion series, provides mini-grants for self-publishing, and recently launched its Underground Visionary Award at MICE this past December. Somerville has become a second home for many of BCAF's activities. In addition to the Picture + Panel series, BCAF will celebrate comics in Somerville on Hourly Comic Day, February 1, 2025, at Comicazi, a local comic shop. The event will bring the community together to share the practice of creating comics every hour of the day. The event will also feature a panel discussion with local cartoonists Desmond Reed, Sadie Saunders, and Ellen T. Crenshaw.

“We could do a lot more than just a festival if we create a foundation,” said Pa-



roline, BCAF's executive director, when asked how BCAF started.

On February 3, 2025, the final Picture + Panel at Somerville's Aeronaut Brewery will go out with a bang, featuring Raúl the Third and Ming Doyle. The team is in the process of finalizing the following venue location.

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

Connexion - the 'catch all, go-to' community center

By Jeffrey Shwom

Inside Rev. Jordan Harris' office, a mural of a figure shows them holding a colorful depiction of the big room at his East Somerville church, with community members greeting and sharing each other's company, while bright white lights radiate outward. It is a message of hope, Rev. Jordan tells us, painted by his husband (@nate_devarie on instagram). "The way we nurture community," shared Rev. Christy Wright, is embodied in the painting. "Hope is so meaningful."

This week, we visited the community center, free library and worship space that is Connexion United Methodist Church (149 Broadway, East Somerville), to see how the special sauce of community was being cooked up. Connexion's mission

statement is "to build community by creating a welcoming, fully inclusive, just, and loving collaborative and worship space." Main programs include a weekly Wednesday meal, a free library, free clothing, and Sunday services, amongst other more informal gatherings.

Rev. Jordan, who trained BU's School of Theology, explained Connexion was born out of the sale of the former College Avenue United Methodist Church in 2012. Then, the facilities cost a lot of money to maintain, and it took away funds for vital services. He pointed out, "part of the vision of moving here was creating a space that is more affordable and accessible. Our doors are open to everything from scouting troops to birthday parties...The (Somerville Community) Growing Center makes maple syrup here. *Continued on page 15*



Connexion United Methodist Church not only provides spiritual sustenance for members of the community, but also nourishing meals, clothing, and other important necessities for those in need.

— Photo courtesy of Connexion



Come to the Table Community Meal.

— Photo by Jeffrey Shwom



The Connexion Collection by All She Wrote Books.

— Photo courtesy of Connexion



Connexion Closet.

— Photo by Jeffrey Shwom

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.

GOV. MAURA HEALEY SIGNS MORE BILLS INTO LAW - Here are some of the many bills that were signed into law by Gov. Healey following the end of the 2024 session:

INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DOWN SYNDROME (S 2970) – Gov. Healey signed into law legislation called requiring health insurance companies to provide Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) for Down syndrome patients. The legislation, sponsored by the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC), will require private insurers and Mass-Health to cover the cost of in-home ABA therapy for children with a single diagnosis of Down syndrome.

“My first sister was born with Down syndrome,” said Rep. Jack Lewis (Framingham), a sponsor of the proposal. “And while she passed away before I was born, the question of how our family and society could have best ensured she had a lifetime of opportunities was regularly discussed in our house, especially around what would have been milestone events for her, like starting school and her first job.”

Lewis continued, “My first volunteer job was at a local summer camp for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, initially because it was a place my sister may have enjoyed. This led to my first job as a habitation assistant in a group home for adults who had formed a community together. Filing this bill ... answered the same question my mom regularly asked, how could we have ensured that my sister had all the opportunities she needed and deserved to thrive?”

“Unfortunately, until now [ABA] has remained only available to people with Down syndrome who either happen to have a dual diagnosis of autism or who have family that can afford to pay privately,” said Maureen Gallagher, MDSC Executive Director. “Ultimately, for those families in our community who need but have not received at-home ABA therapy, insurance coverage will now have the potential to change their and their children’s lives in real, meaningful and lifelong ways.”

ALLOW CAMERAS ON SCHOOL BUSES (H 4940) - Gov. Healey signed into law legislation that will allow cities and towns to use cameras, installed on school buses, to identify and record vehicles that illegally pass stopped school buses. The measure does not change the current fines for these violations. The fines would remain at \$250 for a first offense, \$500 for a second offense, and \$1,000 for a third and subsequent offense. The bill also prohibits these violations caught on camera from being

considered “moving violations” that would raise a diver’s insurance premiums.

“As a dedicated advocate for schoolchildren and improved traffic safety, I was honored to have [the bill] which I sponsored, signed into law,” said Rep. Paul Donato (D-Medford) who sponsored an earlier version of the measure. “This bill gives school districts the opportunity to add cameras to school buses that will allow municipalities to ticket drivers for dangerous maneuvers. Children around the commonwealth will be further protected by this law while they are riding the bus.”

“With the signing of this bill, we are taking a big step toward safer streets and more local control for communities across the commonwealth,” said Sen. Michael Moore (D-Millbury), also a sponsor of an earlier version of the bill. “Passing a stopped school bus endangers our children and is against the law. In cities and towns that choose to use them, school bus mounted traffic safety cameras will help apply the law to those who violate it evenly and without bias. I’m thrilled that Massachusetts has joined over half of U.S. states in legalizing this type of automated traffic enforcement. I look forward to continuing our work to make our roads safer for all in the new legislative term.”

CAMERAS ON PUBLIC TRANSIT BUSES (H 4057) – Gov. Healey signed into law a measure that would allow public transit agencies to use bus-mounted cameras to record and issue fines against illegal parking in bus lanes and bus stops.

The bill sets a minimum fine of \$25 and a maximum of \$125 for bus lane violations, and a flat \$100 fine for bus stop violations. It also prohibits bus lane and bus stop violations caught on camera from being considered “moving violations” that would raise a diver’s insurance premiums.

“This is something the MBTA has been looking to do for a long time,” said Christian MilNeil, the editor of StreetsblogMASS. “The MTA has been using cameras to enforce bus lanes in New York City since 2019, and the vast majority of drivers who receive a camera-based bus lane violation don’t make the same mistake twice. So the value in these systems isn’t in issuing more fines – it’s in keeping bus stops clear so riders can access buses safely and keeping bus lanes clear so that bus operators can spend more time moving passengers instead of waiting stuck in traffic.”

FEBRUARY 4TH IS NOW ROSA PARKS DAY (H 3075) – Gov. Healey signed into law a bill establishing February 4th as Rosa Parks in recognition of the historic civil rights leader.

“Rosa Parks’ bravery on that Montgomery bus was not just a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement—it was a lesson in courage, dignity and the power of standing up for what is right,” said co-sponsor Rep. Kip Diggs (D-Barnstable).

“February 4th is the birthday of Rosa Parks, so it will be a great reminder to all those within the commonwealth to reflect on the role she played in raising international awareness of the struggles for civil rights,” said co-sponsor Rep. Mike Kushmerek (D-Fitchburg).

BOSTON CAN RAISE FINES (H 4507) – Gov. Healey signed into law legislation that would allow the city of Boston to raise from the current \$300 to up to \$2,000, the fines imposed on property owners, landlords and businesses that violate the city’s sanitary code. The bill also allows Boston to adjust the maximum fine for inflation every five years.

Supporters said that the city’s fine limit has not been raised since 1989. They said that raising fines will help crack down on repeat offenders who are not deterred by the small current \$300 fee.

Rep. Kevin Honan (D-Boston), the sponsor of the bill, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill to comment on the bill being passed and signed into law.

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

MARIJUANA SALES CLIMB TO AN ALLTIME HIGH - Marijuana establishments in Massachusetts generated more than \$1.64 billion in gross sales in 2024, setting a new annual record for the state.

“The cannabis industry in Massachusetts continued to mature in 2024 as the commission approved the 700th – and counting– notice to commence operations,” Acting Chair Bruce Stebbins said. “The clear growth of the industry is the result of ongoing collaboration between commissioners and agency staff, business owners, host communities, an engaged consumer base and the medical community. We’re looking ahead to continued growth in 2025 and beyond as we seek to expand the industry with new social consumption licenses.”

PROTECT DRINKING WATER SUPPLY (SD 847) - Sen. Jamie Eldridge (D-Marlborough) and Rep. Natalie Blais (D-Sunderland) filed legislation that would enable the Bay State to develop minimum statewide water quality standards for private wells and expand a financial assistance program to remediate wells affected by PFAS (“forever chemicals”) and other harmful *Continued on page 23*

COMMENTARY

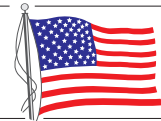
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Cold enough for you?

Our View Of The Times



Lately, we have had to contend with ridiculously cold temperatures.

Remember, when cold snaps like this happen, the temperatures outside can actually be much colder than you think. Always play it safe and follow some simple guidelines, such as those that have been offered by the city. Here are some important highlights:

Make sure your heating system is work-

ing and you have enough heating fuel.

Know where your electricity, gas, and water switches and valves are located and how to shut them off. You may need to turn off water pipes if your pipes freeze or burst.

Make sure your vehicle's gas tank is at least half full and pack an emergency kit that includes blankets and/or warm clothing.

Try to minimize your time spent out-

side, along with your pets.

Check on neighbors and family, especially the elderly and infirm.

Watch for signs of cold-related health concerns like frostbite and hypothermia and please call 911 immediately for any emergencies.

For adults experiencing homelessness the city's Health and Human Services Office and Housing Families have opened an

overnight warming center for the remainder of the winter 2025 season. The warming center will operate seven nights a week from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m., at 42 Prescott St., the Cummings School building, through Sunday, April 13.

Let's all be careful out there – and in there as well. We don't want to see any of our fellow citizens falling victim to the savagery of old Jack Frost!

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

The Somerville Warming Center is looking for donations for their clients. To see what is needed visit their facebook page or their Amazon wish list under Somerville Warming Center.

A Veterans Affairs (VA) Web Resources Information Session will take place on Saturday, January 25. Join Veterans Services staff from the Cities of Arlington, Cambridge, Everett, Medford, and Somerville to learn and navigate existing VA online resources like VA.gov and MyHealthVet. Attendees are encouraged to bring their laptops or tablets. This event will be held at Medford City

Hall at 10 a.m.

Registration is open now for The Artist's Way writing workshop. From January 23 to April 24, the group will meet at Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Ave. in the Lavender Room on Thursdays from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. More info and registration available visit <https://artsatthearmory.org/>.

Join the Arts at the Armory on Saturday, January 25, at 7:30 pm for an evening of performance by the teaching staff of Esh Circus Arts. Doors at 7:30 pm, show at 8 pm. More info and tickets available visit:

<https://artsatthearmory.org/>

Tweens and teens are invited to join the adventure with Dungeons and Dragons at the Somerville Public Library, Saturday, January 25, 1 – 4 p.m., 79 Highland Ave. Each session, players will be treated to a new adventure by our Professional Dungeon Master, Dragoneye Zach. Everything you need to play will be provided. There are two sessions each month. Registration is required and opens two weeks before each session. Register <https://somervillepubliclibrary.assabetinteractive.com/calendar/dungeons-and-dragons-at-spl-with-dragoneye-zach-4/>

Know your rights as a renter and immigrant at the Somerville Movement Meeting. Register here: bit.ly/Somerville-Renters. Saturday, February 1, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., in East Somerville (register for location). Masks will be mandatory when not eating or drinking. Registration will close at 9 a.m. on Thursday, January 30. Space is limited. Childcare and breakfast will be provided. ESP: Protejamos nuestra comunidad de Somerville – Conozca sus derechos como inquilino e inmigrante. Regístrese aquí: bit.ly/Somerville-Renters.

Continued on page 21

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#958

1. What U.S. President had both the warmest and the coldest January inaugurations on record?
2. "Lady Bird" was the nickname for the wife of which president?
3. Which president's administration became known as "Camelot"?
4. Which president officially gave the White House its name?
5. What type of hat is typically associated with Sherlock Holmes?
6. Which fabric is made from the flax plant?
7. What is the name of the traditional Scottish garment worn by men?
8. Which TV show is based on the books by George R.R. Martin?
9. What is the term for a score of one under par in golf?
10. What instrument did Miles Davis famously play?
11. Which country is the origin of the cocktail Mojito?
12. What is the smallest planet in our solar system?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Americans spend 2.5 days a year looking for lost items.
2. "Go" is the shortest complete sentence in English.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

SUPER BOWL

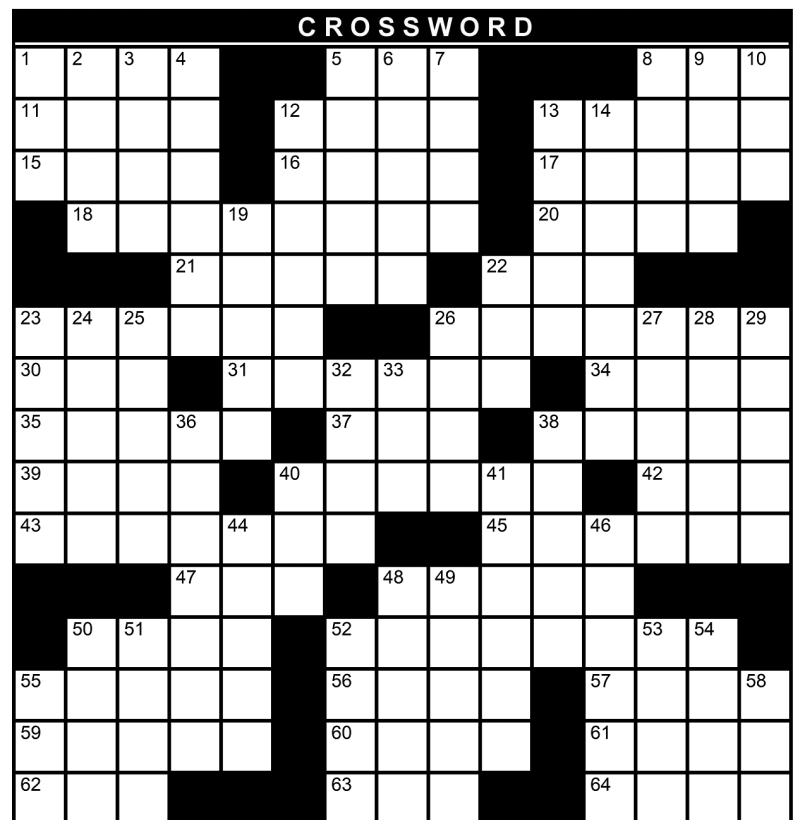
ACROSS

1. Bungle
5. Cause of a trip?
8. Dao, alt. sp.
11. Between marquess and viscount
12. Super garb?
13. Inlet in Norway
15. Cogito ____ sum
16. Long story
17. Deprived of a limb
18. Half-time headliner
20. Ice, dark or middle ____
21. Cindy Crawford wore " ____ Dukes" in a Super Bowl ad
22. Flightless bird
23. Last year's Super Bowl winners
26. A cheap, run-down motel
30. " ____ the fields we go"
31. Merry
34. Actor's part
35. Expensive
37. Not him
38. Cell phone bill item
39. Civil Rights icon
40. David Tyree's ____ Catch
42. Letters of distress
43. What rule follower does
45. Get cozy
47. Greed, biblically-speaking
48. Grieve for the dead
50. Time period
52. Team with most Super Bowl appearances
55. 3600 seconds, pl.
56. Casino chip
57. Salmon's output
59. En ____, all together
60. Like Piper of Hamelin
61. Uber alternative
62. ____ Robinson
63. Acronym, abbr.
64. "Come Sail Away" band

DOWN

1. Service charge
2. Songbird
3. Craving
4. Marilyn Monroe, e.g.
5. ____ lazuli
6. Hot
7. 52 cards
8. Hefty volume
9. Greek god of war
10. I, e.g.
12. Cherry red
13. Post vitriol
14. Team with no Super Bowl appearances
19. Looney Tunes duck
22. Architectural add-on
23. Meat of coconut
24. Roman king of Judea
25. Like certain whiskey
26. Grow crop
27. Brag
28. Algorithmic language
29. Ganders' companions
32. Tom Jones's " ____ a Lady"
33. Rolodex abbr.
36. ____ Superdome
38. Wombs
40. Lady lobster
41. Hardened
44. Follows wash
46. Pig sounds
48. Bouncing off the walls
49. Weasel's aquatic cousin
50. Fly like an eagle
51. Boot-wearing kitty
52. Mama Bear's husband
53. To perfection (3 words)
54. Justin Timberlake's " ____ Back," sung in Super Bowl show
55. Expression of doubt
58. Steelers' number of Super Bowl trophies

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.



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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:



Statement from Mayor Ballantyne on the ceasefire

The desperately needed ceasefire between Israel and Hamas appears to finally be close, but we cannot lose sight of the full goal of ending this horrific war, releasing all the hostages, addressing the devastation and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and working toward a lasting and just peace for all in the region.

— Mayor Katjana Ballantyne

Somerville Media Center reopens

Somerville Media Center has reopened to the public and is bringing new facilities and services online for the Somerville community. Public hours are Monday – Thursday: 12 to 8 p.m., Friday: 12 to 6 p.m. and Sunday: 4 to 8 p.m., 12 Tyler Street.

Their new computer lab and podcast studio are operational and already providing service to members. Their new and luxurious conference room has already hosted meetings for staff and board of directors. Next online will be, their hot set mini-studio and full-sized main studio. Registration is open for 2025 Spring Youth Programs, visit <https://www.somervillemedia.org/>.

SMC welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors on Jan 13. Jhenny Saint-Surin specializes in work with government, philanthropy, nonprofits, grassroots organizing and the private sector and has served on SMC's board in the past. James Mucci, retired Senior Director of Financial Operations of Harvard University School of Dental Medicine, was elected as the new Treasurer. Ben Martin, Senior Program Director of Somerville's CityTV, was appointed ex-officio to the board by the Mayor's Office. Joseph Lynch was elected President and Tracey Pratt was elected Clerk.

The board expressed incredible gratitude to the three board members who completed their service in January: Joe Constantine, Linda Walsh, and John Long.



Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Ricotta & Marmalade Bruschetta

I had some leftover ricotta from another recipe I made this week. I also had some brioche that needed to be used up. Immediately I knew what I would make. I remember this snack from my childhood. My Sicilian uncle made this often and it soon became one of my favorite snacks growing up. Don't skip the black pepper, it really melds the flavors together. Give it a try, you won't be sorry.

- 2 pieces of brioche
- 3/4 cup of ricotta, (whole milk)
- 1/4 teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons orange marmalade,

divided
Freshly ground black pepper

Toast the brioche. In a small bowl, mix the ricotta and lemon zest. Split the ricotta mixture between the two slices and spread on the toast. Add the marmalade to each slice of toast. Add about 2-4 turns of freshly ground black pepper to each slice. Serve it with a double espresso and enjoy! You can use whatever bread you want. Ciabatta is a great vessel for the creamy goodness too. You can make smaller bruschetta for snacks or even an addition to your brunch menu. Serves 1-2.

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



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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
& COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR**

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LEGAL NOTICE - HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC)

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a public meeting and public hearings on **Tuesday, February 4, 2025** at 6:45pm on the following applications, in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to historic@somervillema.gov.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Registration URL:

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_JNkenh06QimYGZ5raNEZtv

Webinar ID: 872 1108 6854

TO CALL IN

An attendee must register for the meeting online in order for a call-in number to be emailed to them by Zoom.

ALL OF THE CASES ADVERTISED BELOW HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING COMPONENT

Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties

HP24-000005 – 25 Atherton St

Applicant: Christine Strout – IRB Real Estate

Owner: Carr Schoolhouse Condo Trust

The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter a LHD property by installing EV charging stations and a transformer in the parking lot.

HP24-000055 - 170 Central Street

Applicant: Doug White

Owner: Baij Joshi

The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter an LHD property by replacing the siding, roofing, window framing, and trim of the building.

Case documents reviewed by the HPC are available on the City website at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases>.

Cases may be continued to a later date; please check the agenda (posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting) on the City website or email historic@somervillema.gov to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertised. **Note:** Written comments due to historic@somervillema.gov **NO LATER THAN NOON** one week prior to the meeting date. Email historic@somervillema.gov with inquiries.

1/15/25, 1/22/25 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.storagetreasures.com on **2/11/2025 at 12:00PM**. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Anderson Jacob unit #0181; Matina Williams unit #2123. 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.

1/22/25 The Somerville Times

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE Section 108 Loan Application

The City of Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development is preparing an application for a Section 108 loan as allowable under Section 108 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. **The City seeks feedback on the draft application**, which will be available at

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/office-strategic-planning-and-community-development-ospcd/ospcd-administration> starting **January 22nd, 2025**.

- The City will hold a public hearing **February 12th, at 6pm** to present the draft application and receive comments. Members of the public may attend this hearing at the **West Somerville Community School**.
 - o **Project/Program Title:** Clarendon Hill Redevelopment, Phase II
 - o **Purpose:** To replace and expand the Clarendon Hill public housing development in West Somerville.
 - o **Location:** This project is located at 34 North Street in West Somerville.
 - o **Project/Program Description:** The phase to be funded with this loan will replace 71 state public housing units and add 21 new affordable units for households earning up to 80% of Area Median Income. 100% of the housing units constructed in this phase will benefit low- and moderate-income people. The project is part of a larger project to replace 216 out of date state public housing units as well as add green space, traffic safety improvements, and better connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the City of Somerville should contact Adrienne Pomeroy, at APomeroy@somervillema.gov.
- Interpretation into other languages may be available upon advance request by contacting the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs at somerviva@somervillema.gov or calling 311 at 617-666-3311.
- Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the Section 108 Loan Application to Miranda Rubin (mrubin@somervillema.gov) by email, or in person or by writing at the City's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (City Hall, 3rd Floor). All comments received by **February 22nd, 2025**, will be incorporated in the final application.

1/22/25 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING SERVICES
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP# 25-36**

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement & Contract Services Department invites proposals for:

E-Rate Consultant Services

The RFP package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/procurement-and-contracting> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress landing page <https://www.bidexpress.com/businesses/33100/home> on or after: **Wednesday, January 22nd, 2025**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2:30 pm, Wednesday, February 12th, 2025**.

The City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive any minor informality in the RFP process, and accept the proposal(s) deemed to be in the best interests of the City of Somerville.

Please email procurement@somervillema.gov for more information.

Thupten Chukhatsang
Senior Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3400

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www.TheSomervilleTimes.com



NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

Removal of Public Shade Trees

City of Somerville

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 87, the City of Somerville will hold a **virtual public shade tree hearing on Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 12:00 PM** using Zoom software to consider the removal of the following three public shade trees:

299 Broadway Development

- **299 Broadway**- One honey locust: 19" diameter, fair-good condition
- **15 Temple Street (corner of Sewall St and Sewall Ct)**- One honey locust: 20" diameter, fair-good condition

Trees are proposed for removal as part of the development of 299 Broadway, a Chapter 40B affordable housing project. Five new street trees totaling 15" in caliper and 68 new trees within the property totaling 160" caliper are planned for replanting.

Elderly Education Center ADA Parking Conflict

- **33 Cross Street on Bonair St**- One red maple: 4" in diameter, good condition

Tree is in conflict with proposed ADA parking space. A new tree will be planted adjacent if possible

The trees identified above have been posted for public inspection. **In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 87, any objections to the removal of any of these trees must be submitted in writing to the Tree Warden prior to or at this public hearing.** Documents may be sent via email to: trees@somervillema.gov, or mailed to: 1 Franey Rd., Somerville, MA, 02145. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this Public Shade Tree Hearing will be conducted via remote participation. A recording of this hearing will be available upon request to trees@somervillema.gov.

Registration URL: <https://tinyurl.com/mf9ar4en>

Webinar ID: 857 0719 0451

1/22/25 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE PROCUREMENT AND
CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Request for Quotes
IFB 25-35**

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

On-Call Fleet Repairs

A bid package may be obtained online at:

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/procurement-and-contracting-services> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, January 22nd, 2025**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **12pm, Thursday, February 6th, 2025**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

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

Sonia Castro
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

1/22/25 The Somerville Times

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Officials request urgent restoration of neglected war memorials and monuments

CONT. FROM PG 1

who served during Operation Iraqi Freedom in Kuwait, and is a member of the Veterans' Commission on Monuments, Memorials and Dedications.

Many of the memorials and monuments were neglected and have deteriorated as a result of being boxed in outdoor crates on Inner Belt Road for over five years, explained Gorman.

"Several of these memorials have fallen into disrepair, with some requiring urgent restoration and others needing complete replacement," according to a document from the George Dilboy VFW Post 529 and the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 16, written on November 1, 2024.

"The condition of the monuments as they are presently stored is disrespectful to the memory of the citizens of Somerville, some who went voluntarily and some who were chosen to go," said Gorman. "They gave their life ... it's disturbing that their memory is treated like that."

In a Somerville Times article from July 31, 2019, entitled, War Memorial and playground planned for Central Hill Campus, written by Erin Nolan, a War Memorial Walk featuring many of the memorials was expected to be started by now.

Nolan wrote: "The War Memorial Walk will run parallel to Highland Avenue and feature a Civil War memorial, memorial cannons, a Unitarian memorial, a Spanish War/ Philippine/ China memorial, a World War I memorial, Dilboy Monument, a Korean War Memorial, a Vietnam War memorial, and an Honor Roll memorial. There will also be space left for a future memorial. During Phase I of the project, the Vietnam War and Korean War

monuments are expected to be completed."

What's being referred to as the War Memorial Walk or possibly The Walk of Heroes has yet to be started, and questions are swirling at the George Dilboy VFW Post 529, as to when the process will begin.

Gorman says that he thinks the plan to place the war memorials back in front of the high school is just a "stall tactic."

But for now, veterans just want to get two of their memorials placed in a public location. They are requesting a comprehensive status update on the condition of the all memorials and a clear timeline for the return of the Korean and Vietnam memorials following the restorations.

"Those memorials should be displayed somewhere, as opposed to being kept in storage," said Gorman.

The Vietnam War memorial is in decent condition, according to officials. The memorial contains names of Somerville and Cambridge soldiers who died and an inscription that reads: WE CAN'T FORGET.

The Korean war memorial would need to be fully restored and reconstructed; it is in pieces that are scattered in different boxes that have deteriorated over the years.

During the State of the City address Mayor Ballantyne promised to "reinstall" the war memorials, explained Ward 4 City Councilor Jesse Clingan at the January 9 city council meeting.

"I think we need to keep the spotlight on this issue," said Councilor Clingan.

While the city has "grand plans" for a Veterans Memorial Walk, there are a number of "dominos that need to fall into place" for this to happen, explained Ward 1



The Vietnam war memorial would be the first to be restored and placed in a public location.

City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin.

The average age of a Vietnam veteran is 68-years-old and the average age of a Korean veteran is 84-years-old, so it is imperative that the process get started, Councilor McLaughlin noted.

"I think they would be satisfied with

having the good instead of the perfect," McLaughlin said. "And just find a permanent location or temporary location... whatever it takes, to acknowledge their sacrifice."

George McLean, Vietnam veteran and former Somerville police

Continued on page 13



The war memorials and monuments that were on Central Hill before the high school construction began. The Dilboy Monument, Somerville Honor Roll and First Congregational Unitarian Society memorial are all still on Central Hill.



Veterans gathered on November 14 to address the city council with the hopes of starting the process to begin reinstalling the monuments and memorials.

Officials request urgent restoration of neglected war memorials and monuments

CONT. FROM PG 12

chief says this is a “debacle.” He explained that it is “disheartening” to see the dismantled monuments in what he referred to as a “dump.”

“The boxes have just deteriorated, fallen apart, looks like some of the boxes were vandalized...bits of the monuments sticking out...a soldier’s head. The Vietnam veteran’s memorial, half the box is gone,” McLean said.

Over the last 20 years or so, Somerville has been gentrified, explained McLean, and many veterans say that the city has lost interest in honoring the legacy of soldiers.

“We feel that the new Somerville people who live here really don’t care much about the veterans,” McLean said. “And if they kick the can down the road long enough, those of us that are left will be dead.”

City councilors are now onboard with advocating for a “tangible plan” to get the memorials and monuments restored and to be “placed somewhere in the city where they get the respect, the dignity, the tribute, that we feel they so richly deserve,”

McLean says.

The idea of a Hero’s Memorial Walk with a garden and all of the memorials and monuments in one location on Central Hill is what veterans like McLean say they ultimately would like to see happen, but for the time being they would like to see the landmark Vietnam and Korean war memorials prominently placed in a public location where citizens can stop, reflect and pay homage to soldiers who died to serve and protect the country.

Back on November 14, 2024, veterans gathered to address the city council regarding restoration and reinstatement efforts of monuments and memorials. Councilors Wilfred N. Mbah and Matthew McLaughlin put forth the order to address the concerns raised by Somerville veterans and ensure transparency, accountability and a commitment to engage with veterans to preserve the memorials and monuments.

“It represents the veterans who grew up in the city, many of them who died fighting for our country,” McLean said during a No-



The Civil War monument also known as 'The Soldiers' and Sailors' monument before it was dismantled. Dedicated on May 31, 1909.



The Spanish War/ Philippine/ China memorial was unveiled on December 9, 1929, and restored in 2010, according to Robert Hardy Jr. of George Dilboey VFW Post 529.

ember 14 city council meeting. “We can pay tribute to them and teach the young people of our community of Somerville’s history and the veterans’ history.”

Vietnam veteran Robert Hardy Jr. from the George Dilboey VFW Post 529 said that there was an agreement with the city that the monuments would be replaced at the same time as the landscaping and playground following the completion of the high school project. But that never happened, he explained.

At the November 14 meeting Hardy Jr. described the Korean war memorial as the one that is “most destroyed.” He said that some of the benches and sculptures are broken in the Civil War monument, also known as the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ monument.

“Is it going to be another 10 years before we are going to get it done?” he said.

Hardy Jr. also described cobblestones, pillars and two cannons that were used in the monuments that have apparently disappeared.

“If you don’t know what the veterans represent, shame on you!” Hardy Jr. said.

Operation Desert Storm veteran Steve Hanson from the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 16 said: “We are all appalled at the length of time it’s taken to move on getting this situation resolved.”

According to a December 9 document addressed to members of the City Council Public Utilities Public Works Committee: “The city is moving forward with plans to preserve and protect those veterans’ monuments.”

The document cites a building referred to as the Talewsky property that could be used to store the monuments and memorials before the restoration process starts.

The next Veterans’ Commission on Monuments, Memorials and Dedications meeting will be held on Wednesday January 22, 12 – 1 p.m. This meeting is remote only. Link to register for Attendees: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/WN_H9Jb3Omn-Qa-JvNYWGMOEaA.

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Ms. Cam's

From page 8

Olio

Answers

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Ronald Reagan | 7. Kilt |
| 2. Lyndon B. Johnson | 8. Game of Thrones |
| 3. John F. Kennedy's | 9. Birdie |
| 4. Theodore Roosevelt | 10. Trumpet |
| 5. Deerstalker | 11. Cuba |
| 6. Linen | 12. Mercury |

Connexion - the 'catch all, go-to' community center CONT. FROM PG 5

We have a Toy Drive with MAMAS. We love to be able to provide space for. It is a catch all, go-to space for East Somerville and the city of Somerville as a whole." The space hosted over 400 events in 2024 alone. East Somerville Main Streets has its office there.

We met with two other staff members to hear their thoughts on what Connexion meant to them. Rev. Christy, Food Justice Advocate, praised Pastor Jordan's connection with the community. "Connection is the literal term for what he does." She talked about his early involvement. "Someone was coming in looking for a pair of pants, and Jordan could not find anything" from their stash. "Jordan said he would go to Costco and get them a pair."

Tim Johnson, Sexton and Worship Tech, shared that when one of their un-housed neighbors, Jose Antonio, passed away, they had their celebration of life at Connexion. "This place feels like my first home. My other home is just other. I am here six or seven days a week." They were brought to this church through Rev. Jordan and Nate.

Tim brought up an important detail about their church. "One of our foundations ... is hospitality. To be able to use the money to open our doors and give generously to our community, over and over." Here is where the ongoing programming fits in. The Connexion Collection by All She Wrote Books is a free library of books by feminist, queer, and

Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) authors. The vestibule is hosting a free clothing space for people in need. And now, Connexion is doing a Winter Coat Drive for new or gently used coats, with a giveaway planned for Saturday, January 25, 2 - 5 p.m.

Every Wednesday, Connexion hosts the "Come to the Table Community Meal" at 5 p.m. From the website, it is "Food Security with Dignity" as they try to provide inclusive and culturally appropriate meals free and open to everyone. About 80 meals are served per week. A soothing atmosphere with social, diligent, and friendly volunteers welcomed a lineup of folks who came to grab some food or share a table with others. On this cold-

er, windier Wednesday evening, chicken, vegetables, rice and beans with delicious gravy were packaged, sponsored by a local East Somerville restaurant.

Rev. Christy told us, "This meal keeps people going. A hot meal is important in the winter time. It is relationship building. It transforms a simple meal into something bigger." She also was happy to report they are fully funded for 2025, a welcomed sign post-pandemic and a show of strength for a program that almost faltered in the Fall 2024.

To volunteer at 4 p.m. at Wednesday's Come to the Table Community Meal, contact christy@connexionumc.org. Visit www.connexionumc.org for more information.



Mural by Nate Devarie.



Table with packaged meals.

— Photo by Jeffrey Shwom

— Photo by Jeffrey Shwom

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Facebook at www.facebook.com/somerville.times.1

State Legislature passes legislation to address rising prescription drug costs

The Massachusetts Legislature passed *An Act relative to pharmaceutical access, costs and transparency*, which protects patients and makes prescription drugs more affordable. A provision that caps copays for people with chronic conditions, filed by Representative Christine Barber (D-34th Middlesex) of Somerville and Medford, was included in the final bill.

“Prescription drugs cure disease, manage chronic illness, and are life-saving for many. Yet prescription drugs do not work if people cannot afford them. Our neighbors should not have to choose between picking up their prescription and picking up groceries,” said Rep. Barber.

This new law will reduce copays for people with diabetes, asthma, and heart

disease, three chronic conditions that disproportionately impact people of color and low-income communities. For generic medication for each of these conditions, all copays will be eliminated. For a designated brand name medication for these conditions, including insulin, copays will be capped at \$25.

When people cannot access critical preventive care, the likelihood of visiting the emergency room for care increases drastically. These affordability challenges are a significant health equity issue. Black and Latinx residents in Massachusetts are more likely to cut pills in half, skip a dose, or not fill a prescription due to cost (36%) than white residents (19%), putting them at greater risk for health complications.

The new law also addresses prescription drug costs by: allowing the state to regulate pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs); increasing transparency into PBMs and drug manufacturers by providing data to the Health Policy Commission (HPC) and the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA); and by requiring pharmacists to inform consumers if purchasing a drug at retail price would be cheaper than using insurance.

Reducing copays for prescription drugs provides direct relief to patients and ensures that people can afford the care they need. This bill was signed into law by Governor Healey on January 8, 2025.

— Office of State Rep. Christine Barber State Representative Christine Barber.



‘Grounding McGrath’ Boulevard Project to receive more than \$43 Million in federal funding

Ongoing efforts to “Ground McGrath” Highway (Route 28) in Somerville have received a federal funding boost. Last week, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced that the State has been awarded a more than \$43 million federal grant to advance the project, which would replace the elevated McCarthy Overpass with a safer, more accessible ground-level road and people-friendly streetscape. The grant is part of more than \$102 million in federal support that Massachusetts won for transportation infrastructure projects.

Built in the 1950s, the McGrath Overpass has long cut off part of East Somerville from safe and easy access to neighborhoods to its west. Replacing the elevated highway with a ground-level boulevard will knit these neighborhoods back together at human scale. New features will include a safer, more accessible, and sustainable streetscape designed for all ages, abilities, and transit modes including walking, rolling, biking, riding the bus, and driving. In addition to reuniting neighborhoods and sparking the local economy, the project will further the city’s dogged pursuit of its Vision Zero goal to

eliminate transportation-related deaths and serious injuries.

“For too long our community has been divided by a highway that doesn’t serve the needs of our residents. Grounding McGrath will make us safer and more connected, and it will right a decades-old wrong that harmed our neighborhoods,” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. “I want to thank Governor Healey, Senator Markey, Senator Warren, and Representative Pressley for continuing to prioritize this project and for their work to help secure this critical funding for our community.”

“I also want to acknowledge the decades of hard work by tireless community advocates who refused to accept the status-quo and called out the harms done by discriminatory transportation policy. Today is a win for not only them but for our full community,” said Mayor Ballantyne.

More About the McGrath Boulevard Project

The McGrath Boulevard project focuses on portion of McGrath Highway between Third Street in Cambridge and Broadway in Somerville. It is the result of decades of grassroots advocacy and effective collaboration among the city, the Massachusetts



Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and federal partners.

“In classic Somerville fashion, our community is tackling another legacy infrastructure challenge to improve safety and quality of life for our residents,” said Brad Rawson, Director of the city’s Mobility Division. “McGrath Boulevard will help people get where they need to go, whether they take transit, walk, bike, or drive. Kudos to our partners at MassDOT, who

are not only designing a human-scaled road, but showing real skill and creativity to secure construction funding for this critical project.”

While the project is still in the early phases of design and there is much work and community process ahead, this funding represents a major step forward.

For more information and to stay up to date on this project, visit mass.gov/mc-grath-boulevard-project.

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Book review: 'Bluebird, Bluebird' by Attica Locke

By Dennis Fischman

Any mystery set in the U.S. with a Black main character will have something to say about racism, intentional or not. As I wrote in my review [1] of *Blanche Passes Go*, by the redoubtable Barbara Neely, "She is an outsider on the inside, a person who can be invisible as she goes about her tasks, yet someone perfectly placed to find out all the things that her employers want to keep secret." A white woman would not have been quite so invisible, or receive so many secrets. But racism is really the reality in which the book operates, not its subject.

In *The Legacy* [2], by Necole Ryse, the murders take place at a "Black Ivy League school." Nearly all the character are Black, but the need to excel – to show the white world that they are just as good – flavors the story on every page.

Like Ryse, Jonathan Brown, author of *The Big Crescendo* [3], won a Barbara Neely Award,

but his main character could not be more different. He's a Black drummer whose day job is helping to run a rent-a-studio for wannabe bands. He's not an Ivy Leaguer: he's an Easy Rawlins knockoff. But again, racism mostly lurks in the background. Both books are set in a Black world.

Bluebird, Bluebird [4], by Attica Locke, is different. Relations between white and Black people are at the core of the story. There are five dead bodies before this book is over, and all of them died partly because of racism (which is why Texas Ranger and former attorney Darren Matthews, a Black man, defies good sense and goes out from Houston to rural Texas, off Highway 59, to investigate – even when he is supposed to be on suspension).

Before the book is over, however, we find that love, lust, greed, and pride can connect people across racial lines as well as make them intensely strange to one another. The setting (the small

town of Lark in Shelby County, Texas) is the kind of place where everybody knows everybody and where poor people of every race interact. There are interracial love affairs and – pardon the expression – their strange fruit. And there's an Aryan Brotherhood, not very smart and not very competent, but a deadly threat to every Black person in town, including, now, our hero.

I've enjoyed a few other books by author Attica Locke, especially the two about Jay Porter (*Black Water Rising* [5] and *Pleasantville* [6]). This one (the December 2024 pick of the *Somerville Public Library Mystery Book Club* [7]) is more of a conventional murder mystery than some of the others. What it shares with them is a very deep sense of place and local culture--and how the history of Black people standing up for their dignity, in ways both honorable and twisted, has shaped both the geography and the people.

I'm glad there are more books



Bluebird, Bluebird, by Attica Locke. Thorndike Press, 2017, 443 pages.

in the Highway 59 series for me to look forward to.

Links:

- [1] <https://www.thesomerville-times.com/archives/131245>
- [2] <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/22907251-the-legacy>
- [3] <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/48728204-the-big-crescendo>



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

[4] <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/40605488-bluebird-bluebird>

[5] <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6214113-black-water-rising>

[6] <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/41014941-pleasantville>

[7] <https://www.somervillepubliclibrary.org/adults/book-social-groups>

Somerville's 2024/2025 snow season reminders

It's that time of year. Here are some reminders: Snow emergency parking is on the even side of the street all winter this season unless posted signage says differently.

For every snowfall, property owners are responsible for shoveling their sidewalks down to the pavement within six daylight hours after the snow stops.

To get snow emergency announcements, sign up for alerts or update your information at somervillema.gov/alerts or by calling 311 (617-666-3311).

Flashing blue lights at major intersections also indicate a snow emergency has been declared. Snow emergencies are also announced on the city's website, social media feeds, CityTV, and via information shared with local media. The Somerville Teen Shoveling program, a paid program encouraging youths to shovel out seniors and homeowners with disabilities after a snowstorm, is accepting applications. You must be registered with the program prior to a storm beginning.

Sign Up Today for Somerville's Teen Snow Shoveling Program

Paid snow shoveling program pairs teens with senior homeowners and homeowners with disabilities for shoveling assistance. The 2024/25 Somerville Teen Shoveling Program, a paid opportunity for youth to help local seniors and homeowners with disabilities after a snowstorm, is currently accepting applications.

Sign Up to Shovel

The program is available for teens aged 14 to 19 years old. All interested youths must submit an application. Youths aged 18 or 19 must also submit a CORI form.

Once registered for the program, youth will be assigned one or more homes for the duration of the snow season, and will be contacted by their assigned homeowner after each storm.

Sign Up for Shoveling Assistance

Somerville residents interested in receiving snow shoveling assistance must submit an application and a CORI form to the Somerville's Council on Aging's Holland Street Center (167 Holland St.) and appear at the Holland Street Center in person with a government-issued photo ID (such as a driver's license, state ID, or passport). Forms may be completed ahead of time or upon arrival at the Center.

The payment rates for assignment for the 2024/25 season is as follows:

Services

Homeowners may request one or more services. Payment is arranged directly between the homeowner and their assigned shoveler

Sidewalk & Steps : \$25

Driveway (One Spot): \$25

Corner Lots: \$60

*In case of extremely heavy snowfalls, or extremely cold temperatures, prices may change or all jobs may not be able to be completed. Talk with the program coordinator to learn more.

**Driveway spots will be shoveled but snow removal from an actual vehicle is the owner's responsibility.

***No snow blowers will be used by teens

To learn more, or ask any questions, please contact Daniel Harris at dharris@somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600 ex 2406.

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

Medical Equipment Program – 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.

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. There is no charge to participate in the program if you meet the established target criteria. 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.

Cultural Series Event featuring Music from the Anything Goes Trio – Thursday, January 30th 11:00 a.m. at the Dilboy Post located at 351 Summer Street. \$5 per person. Lunch (stuffed chicken) will be served at noon; the cost of lunch is subsidized by the City of Somerville. Reserve

your spot for the event and lunch by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Virtual Reality Experiences Travel Experience – Mediation Experience, Tuesday, January 27th starting at 2:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. Join us as we travel to different destinations and learn interesting facts about each place. Using ARPA funding directed to the Council on Aging by Mayor Ballantyne, the COA has partnered with Rendever, a Somerville based company focusing on the benefits of virtual reality in older populations. Studies have found that virtual reality can help reduce stress, decrease isolation, reduce pain and lower fall risk. Virtual reality is a 3D, computer generated simulation that is accessed through wearing a headset. Space is limited, but you will have many opportunities to participate in this two-year pilot program. RSVP to Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318 or email Molly at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov.

Movie Day – Friday, January 24th starting at 10:30 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. This month's movie is Fall into Winter starring Lori Loughlin and James Tupper. Follow Kelly, as she must work next to her nemesis Brooks, her brother's high school best friend that now owns half of Kelly's family-owned candy shop. The running time is 1 hour 25 minutes. RSVP by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov - \$2.00 Pizza Lunch served after the movie.

Technology Workshops – The Council on Aging continues to strive to close the technology gap by partnering with Somerville Cambridge Elder Services to bring technology workshops to the COA. Each Monday session will focus on different topics related to internet use and safety.

Monday, January 27th – Staying Safe on Social Media How to stay safe while having fun on social media. If you have any questions or to RSVP contact Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318 or email Molly at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov.

Tech Time – Drop-in Hours. Every Tuesday in January starting at 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Receive assistance with all your phone, tablet and computer questions. RSVP by contacting Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318 or email Molly at Knitting Group Tuesday, January 14th, 21st & 28th 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center located at 167 Holland Street. Please RSVP to Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov.

Bingo – Every Tuesday in January at our Ralph & Jenny Center starting at 10:00 a.m. Lunch is available following Bingo. RSVP to Debby

Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2323 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Bingo – Every Thursday in January except for January 30th starting at 10:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2323 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Veterans Group – Tuesday, January 28th at our Holland Street Center starting at 10:30 a.m. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

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 A Map of the World by Jane Hamilton. 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.

Bowling – Wednesdays, January 22nd and 29th at Flatbread d Company/Sacco Bowl Haven in Davis Square at 45 Day Street from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. - Free - RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

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 clorenti@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

GovTV – Xfinity 22/Astound 13/613

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

7:00 AM COA: General Seated Exercise #2
 7:30 AM Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner
 9:00 AM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 10:30 AM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 11:00 AM First Flag Raising 2025
 12:05 PM Henry Hansen Park Opening
 12:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 1:00 PM School Committee Meeting 1-13-25
 2:30 PM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 4:00 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 4:30 PM SomerViva em Português
 5:00 PM Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting
 7:00 PM Mental Health Matters: Veterans
 7:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 8:00 PM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 9:30 PM City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
 10:05 PM First Flag Raising 2025
 11:10 PM Henry Hansen Park Opening
 11:30 PM SomerViva an Kreyol

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

12:00 AM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 1:30 AM Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address
 7:00 AM Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address
 8:30 AM COA: General Seated Exercise
 9:00 AM SomerViva em Português
 9:30 AM Mental Health Matters: Veterans
 10:00 AM City Council Meeting 1-9-25
 12:00 PM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 12:30 PM First Flag Raising 2025
 1:35 PM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 3:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 7:00 PM City Council Meeting - LIVE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

8:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 10:00 AM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 11:00 AM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 12:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 1:30 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 3:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 4:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 6:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 8:00 PM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 9:00 PM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 10:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 11:30 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

1:30 AM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 2:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 8:00 AM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 9:00 AM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 9:30 AM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 10:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 12:00 PM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 1:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Plymouth S
 2:30 PM SHS Chorus: Evening of Song
 4:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 6:00 PM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 7:00 PM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight

12:30 AM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 1:00 AM Chamber of Commerce Awards
 2:30 AM SomerViva an Kreyol
 7:00 AM Yoga with Jenn Falk - Practice IV
 8:00 AM First Flag Raising 2025
 9:05 AM SomerViva em Português
 9:35 AM Finance Committee Meeting
 12:00 PM City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
 12:35 PM Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner
 2:00 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 2:30 PM School Committee Meeting 1-13-25
 4:00 PM SomerViva em Português
 4:30 PM Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address
 6:00 PM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 7:30 PM Talking Business: Night Life
 8:00 PM First Flag Raising 2025
 9:05 PM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 10:35 PM Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

12:30 AM First Flag Raising 2025
 1:35 AM 2025 Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address
 7:00 AM COA: General Seated Exercise
 7:30 AM Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting
 8:45 AM Checking In w/ Mayor Ballantyne:
 Street Safety
 9:00 AM Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address
 10:30 AM Three Kings Day Celebration
 11:00 AM Domestic Violence Vigil 2024
 12:00 PM Mental Health Matters: Veterans
 12:30 PM Veterans Day Ceremony 2024
 1:30 PM City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
 2:05 PM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 2:30 PM First Flag Raising 2025
 4:00 PM Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting
 6:00 PM Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address

7:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 8:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 10:00 PM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 11:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Plymouth S

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

12:30 AM SHS Chorus: Evening of Song
 2:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 8:00 AM School Committee Meeting
 9:30 AM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 11:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 1:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 3:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 4:30 PM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 5:00 PM SHS Girls Basketball vs Everett
 7:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 8:30 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 10:30 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

12:30 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 1-21-25
 2:00 AM SHS Girls Basketball vs Everett
 8:00 AM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 9:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 11:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 1:00 PM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 2:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 4:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 5:30 PM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight

7:30 PM Checking In w/ Mayor Ballantyne:
 Street Safety
 7:40 PM Henry Hansen Park Opening
 8:00 PM City Council Meeting 1-9-25
 10:00 PM Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address
 11:30 PM City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

12:05 AM Mental Health Matters: Veterans
 12:35 AM Central Somerville Ave. Mtg.
 2:30 AM City Council Spotlight: JT Scott
 7:00 AM Chair Yoga w/ Janine Duffy
 7:30 AM SomerViva em Português
 8:00 AM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 8:25 AM City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
 9:00 AM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 10:30 AM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 11:00 AM Central Ave. Public Meeting #4
 12:00 PM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 12:30 PM Community Mtg on Davis Sq Area
 Public Safety 10-9-24
 2:10 PM Henry Hansen Park Opening
 2:30 PM Finance Committee Meeting 1-21-25
 4:30 PM SomerViva em Português
 5:00 PM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 6:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 7:00 PM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 7:30 PM City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
 8:05 PM City Council Meeting 1-23-25

MONDAY, JANUARY 27

12:00 AM Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address
 1:30 AM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 2:00 AM Community Mtg on Davis Sq Area
 Public Safety 10-9-24
 7:00 AM COA: General Seated Exercise #2
 7:30 AM First Flag Raising 2025

8:35 AM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 9:00 AM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 9:30 AM SomerViva em Português
 10:00 AM Finance Committee Meeting
 12:00 PM City Council Meeting
 4:00 PM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 7:00 PM School Committee Meeting – LIVE
 10:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 11:00 PM First Flag Raising 2025

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28

12:05 AM Finance Committee Meeting
 2:30 AM Mental Health Matters: Veterans
 7:00 AM COA: General Seated Exercise
 7:30 AM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 9:00 AM City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
 9:34 AM Community Mtg on Davis Sq Area
 Public Safety 10-9-24
 11:30 AM Mental Health Matters: Veterans
 12:00 PM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 12:30 PM Mental Health Matters: Veterans
 1:00 PM Midterm Ceremonies &
 Mayoral Address
 2:30 PM First Flag Raising 2025
 4:00 PM Central Somerville Ave. Meeting #
 5:30 PM Domestic Violence Vigil 2024
 6:30 PM City Council Spotlight: JT Scott
 7:00 PM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 7:30 PM SomerViva em Português
 8:00 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 8:30 PM School Committee Meeting 1-27-25
 11:30 PM Mental Health Matters: Veterans

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29

12:00 AM Senior Circuit: Health & Wellness
 12:30 AM MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
 2:00 AM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona

EdTV - Xfinity 15/Astound 15/ 614

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

8:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 10:00 AM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 11:00 AM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 12:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 1:30 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 3:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 4:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 6:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 8:00 PM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 9:00 PM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 10:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 11:30 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

1:30 AM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 2:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 8:00 AM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 9:00 AM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 9:30 AM School Committee Update:
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 10:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Medford
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7:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 8:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 10:00 PM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 11:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Plymouth S

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

12:30 AM SHS Chorus: Evening of Song
 2:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 8:00 AM School Committee Meeting
 9:30 AM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 11:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 1:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 3:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 4:30 PM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 5:00 PM SHS Girls Basketball vs Everett
 7:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 8:30 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 10:30 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

12:30 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 1-21-25
 2:00 AM SHS Girls Basketball vs Everett
 8:00 AM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 9:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 11:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 1:00 PM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 2:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 4:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 5:30 PM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight

6:00 PM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 7:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 9:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 11:00 PM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

12:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 2:00 AM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 3:30 AM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 8:00 AM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona
 8:30 AM School Committee Meeting 1-13-25
 10:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 12:00 PM SHS Girls Basketball vs Everett
 2:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 4:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 6:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 7:30 PM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 8:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 10:00 PM SHS Girls Basketball vs Everett

MONDAY, JANUARY 27

12:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 2:00 AM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 4:00 AM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 8:00 AM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 9:00 AM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 10:00 AM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 10:30 AM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 12:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona

1:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 3:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 4:30 PM SHS Jazz Ensemble Concert
 5:05 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 7:00 PM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 8:00 PM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 9:00 PM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 9:30 PM SHS Hockey vs Medford
 11:30 PM School Committee Update:
 Superintendent Dr. Carmona

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28

12:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 2:00 AM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 3:30 AM SHS Jazz Ensemble Concert
 8:00 AM School Committee Meeting 1-13-25
 9:30 AM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 11:00 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 1:00 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 3:00 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 4:30 PM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 5:00 PM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert
 6:00 PM WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
 7:00 PM SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
 8:30 PM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford
 10:30 PM SHS Hockey vs Melrose
 12:30 AM SHS Girls' Basketball vs Chelsea
 2:00 AM SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
 2:30 AM Brown School 2025 Winter Concert



Somerville Fair Housing Commission
Question of the week



Q: Did Martin Luther King play a role in promoting Fair Housing?

A: Yes. Read about the Chicago Freedom Movement, which advocated for “open housing” – the right for Black Americans to buy homes anywhere they wish.

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.

Popcorn Comedy with Amy Tee

You're invited to Popcorn Comedy: an intimate standup comedy experience in the Somerville Theatre's 30-seat micro-cinema!

This month's headliner is the hilarious Amy Tee. Known for her dry wit and raw honesty, Amy is a national touring comedian who has appeared on Sirius XM, the LOGO television network, the Laugh Factory, and the Boston Comedy Festival.

Named one of the “funniest lesbians in America” by Curve magazine, Amy's act delves into relationships, mental health, and her own experiences with alcoholism, bipolar disorder, and recovery. Amy is one of New England's best comedians

Thursday, January 30, 7:30 – 9 p.m. Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square, Somerville



Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Highland Avenue sunrise...

— Photo by Denise Provost

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



What did the skillet eat on its birthday?
Pan-cake.

On This Day in History

January 22

- 1689 – England's “Bloodless Revolution” reaches its climax when parliament invites William and Mary to become joint sovereigns.
- 1807 – President Thomas Jefferson exposes a plot by Aaron Burr to form a new republic in the Southwest.
- 1824 – A British force is wiped out by an Asante army under Osei Bonsu on the African Gold Coast, the first defeat for a colonial power.
- 1879 – Eighty-two British soldiers hold off attacks by 4,000 Zulu warriors at the Battle of Rorke's Drift in South Africa.
- 1905 – Russian troops fire on civilians beginning Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg.
- 1930 – Admiral Richard Byrd charts a vast area of Antarctica.
- 1939 – A Nazi order erases the old officer caste, tying the army directly to the Party.
- 1971 – Communist forces shell Phnom Penh, Cambodia, for the first time.
- 1982 – President Ronald Reagan formally links progress in arms control to Soviet repression in Poland.

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Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

The **Somerville High Trivia Team** is competing on *WGBH's High School Quiz Show* this year. Congratulations **Ella, Calla, Jack, Sam, Nate, Oliver, Coach (and SHS History Teacher) Theodore Blake** and the rest of the **SHS Team**. Only the top 17 trivia teams in the state qualified for the annual tournament. Show your support by cheering them on as part of the studio audience during the show's recording on **January 25**, (Tickets <https://gbhevents.ticketbud.com/qualifying-match-2-somerville-vs-wild-card-winner-c9ffb18d-04cb7f409149>) The next match (if they win) will be recorded on **January 26** (Tickets: <https://gbhevents.ticketbud.com/quarterfinal-1-tbd-vs-tbd-70d3f02d-55b6b4f68a2b>). Somerville's first match will air on WGBH and Youtube on **February 22**.

Mudflat is now accepting submissions for its upcoming exhibition, **The Mudflat Cup Show 2025**. Artists are invited to submit original, functional, and food-safe cup designs completed within the last three years. Works must be priced individually (not as a set) with a maximum price of \$180 and be ready for installation upon delivery. Artists may submit up to five entries, with one image per entry. No substitutions will be accepted. Apply by February 5. Apply Here [*****](https://www.cognitofirms.com/MudflatStudio/TheMudflatCupShow2025Juried>ShowApplication.</p>
</div>
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Are you looking for a way to **get involved**? The **City of Somerville** needs **board and commission members**. Learn more and apply for current openings by visiting [somervillema.gov/besomerville](https://www.somervillema.gov/besomerville).

Calling all **artists!** **East Somerville Main Streets** is looking for a talented artist to create the official poster for **Carnaval 2025**. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase your work, contribute to a vibrant community event, and gain exposure. Apply by **February 10** by visiting their website www.eastsomerville-mainstreets.org

A reminder that **Christmas tree pickup** is underway in Somerville **through Friday, February 14**. Trees can be placed curbside on your regular trash day after removing all decorations. Do not put trees in a plastic bag. Constituents should contact 311 (617-666-3311) if their tree has been out for over two weeks.

The **Somerville Theatre** to screen rare vintage crime melodrama with all-Black cast. *The Flying Ace* (1926), added to U.S. National Film Registry, is to be shown with live music on **Sunday, February 2**. Can discrimination exist in an America where everyone is Black? That's among the questions posted by *The Flying Ace* (1926), a rare surviving example of movies produced early in the 20th century for Black audiences in segregated cinemas. *The Flying Ace*, named to the **U.S. National Film Registry** in 2021, will be screened in honor of **Black History Month** on Sunday, February 2 at 2 p.m. at the Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square, Somerville. Admission \$17 adults, \$13 members, \$12 seniors/children. Tickets are available at somerவில்theatre.com or at the door.

The **Somerville Public Library** will be hosting an **open mic night** in the **Central Library Auditorium**. You're welcome to bring and read your own poetry or a work by another poet. Registration is encouraged: visit <https://tinyurl.com/57xkttey>. **Poetry Open Mic Night, January 23**, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., 79 Highland Ave.

Puzzle Challenge and Swap. Bring your old or gently used puzzles to the **Central Library** and swap them for ones you haven't done yet. They'll also be hosting a community challenge for how many puzzles the community can complete in three hours. This event will be held on **Sunday, January 26**, at Central Library (79 Highland Ave.) from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Learn more and register <https://www.somervillepubliclibrary.org/>

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**. The **Giveaway** will be **Saturday January 25**, 2 – 5 p.m. Please consider donating New or gently used coats. You can also purchase coats on their Amazon wish list.

With the **winter cold** over the coming days, here are some important tips for staying safe and warm: Dress in layers and cover as much exposed skin as possible when outdoors, minimize time outside, including for pets, check in on family

and neighbors, follow all safety precautions if using space heaters. Do not use a stove or oven as a heat source. Check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and make sure they are working and have fresh batteries. Learn more about carbon monoxide safety: mass.gov/info-details/carbon-monoxide-co-safety. Prevent frozen water pipes: somervillema.gov/frozenpipes. For more, visit: somervillema.gov/coldweather.

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 somervillema.gov/heatingassistance.

Somerville High School students are invited to bring their **SHS ID** to the **Somerville YMCA** on **Fridays** from 7 to 9 p.m. and **Sundays** 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.

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: somervillema.gov/alerts. Having trouble signing up? You can call 3-1-1 (617-666-3311) for assistance.

With the days growing shorter and temperatures dipping colder, the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** is in critical need of new or lightly used jackets for their clients currently living outside. If you have any

adult sized coats hanging in your closet that you don't wear, please consider dropping them off at the Somerville Homeless Coalition admin office located at 255 Elm Street, Suite 204, during the hours listed below. **Drop Off Hours:** Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., 2 – 5 p.m. Each coat donated provides warmth, dignity, and safety for our neighbors having to face the harsh New England winter conditions.

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://www.somervillemysticdrains.org).

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**. 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.

Snow emergency parking is on the **even side of the street all winter**, unless posted signage says differently. Sign up for alerts or update your information at [somervillema.gov/alerts](https://www.somervillema.gov/alerts). You can call 311 if you need assistance. Flashing blue lights at major intersections indicate a snow emergency. Snow emergencies are announced on the city's website, social media feeds, CityTV, and via information shared with local media. For more information on the city's snow policies, visit [somervillema.gov/snow](https://www.somervillema.gov/snow).



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Somerville Photographer
Marc Occil:

His work blazes out at you with an emotional spectrum

Recently I caught up with Somerville photographer Marc Occil. I was struck by his photographs of the “Occupy Boston” protests in Boston. He generously answered some questions that I sent his way

Doug Holder: How has it been for you as an artist to live and or work in Somerville, Ma?

Marc Occil: I’ve lived in Somerville for quite some time. It was a kind of culture shock when I moved here in my adolescence. There was a lot to get used to. A lot underlying social negativity at that time to navigate. Because of that, I mostly only lived in Somerville and focused my work on the bordering neighborhoods in towns outside of Somerville. It wasn’t until recently that I was made aware of the possible resources available to artists within Somerville.

DH: I read references to you as a ground photographer.” How do you define that?

MO: I came up with the title from the military term “boots on the ground.” These are individuals who are positioned on the front lines to witness an event firsthand. “On The Ground Photography,” (or O.T.G.P), is visual storytelling through my eyes events and places I’ve witnessed. It is something I can leave behind, if nothing else, then what I’ve seen.

DH: You have a book of photographs that was published that dealt with the Occupy Boston Movement in Boston, back in 2011. What drew you to this event as a subject for your work?

MO: Three years prior, I witnessed a life-altering event I didn’t think I would see in my lifetime, and it altered my perspective. When the Arab Spring happened, there was so little information given at the time because it wasn’t happening here. I really wasn’t paying that close attention to the news at that time. I had on a lot of blinders. But what little was getting through, one of the things that was being talked about was the possibility of us going into a depression. Then I heard about “Occupy Wall Street.” Thought it might make a good subject to capture. Then “Occupied Boston” happened. When it first started I was being dismissive of it. I thought it was trying to be a carbon copy of what was hap-



pening in Manhattan. But then I realized I was being close-minded. I decided to visit the encampment. Listen to the stories. Capture a few images. It turned into three and a half months and over 5,000 images. It was the humanity that drew me.

DH: Does your work have a decidedly political edge to it? Are you a political person by nature?

MO: HA! \$#@& No! And yet, I understand the intricate workings of that particular brand of Kung Fu. In 1992, when the LA police were acquitted of all charges of the beating of Rodney King – against such damning and irrefutable evidence – I turned to a man much, MUCH smarter than me and asked, “How was this possible?” And the only answer he could give me was that it was political. As intelligent as he was there was no way he could figure out how to communicate the injustice that occurred other than regurgitating a sound bite. So I had to learn how this politics stuff worked on my own. I wanted to come to some form of acceptance of what just occurred (and then a decade later *The West Wing* smoothed out all the bumps of that patchwork education).

DH: I have always admired the work of Walker Evans, Dianne Arbus, etc. They often inspire my poetry. How about you – who are your inspirations and why?

MO: Gordon Parks. A Renaissance man in a time where such an individual could be killed with ease for expressing himself in any way shape or form. He blazed the trail that left permanent shadows in the earth, and he did it without guidance.

Joseph Louw. For being at the *Continued on page 23*

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

A poem written by yours truly – just before the city started to transform itself – for better and worse.

Somerville: Walking to Union Square 1994

They hold torches for me
Cigarettes in their hands
Barmaids at the foot of every doorway
Along Somerville Ave.

They stand at portals of darkened rooms
The stench of Budweiser and Boilermakers flushed
Out on the street
The call of fugitive hacking coughs
For some unseen corner
As I pass.

They are sentries
Faces caked with makeup
Their pores closed to the air
Unimpressed
Ignoring me
Seductively leaning against the buildings
Challenging me
To come in.

By the Catholic school
A breeze naughtily lifts the plaid skirts of school girls
As they pull them down modestly
During their first season of self-consciousness.

In the distant
The commercial towers of Boston
Rise through the haze
Like a Mecca
Overlooking the sprawl
Of a shanty town.

Though I am drawn to this image
I don’t follow the traffic’s
Frantic swirl
Into the city.

I know its promise is hollow

It has already left me
Dwarfed and nameless

I head home.

— Doug Holder

Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 6

contaminants in drinking water supplies. Residents, located heavily in rural areas but also in all 351 cities and towns, rely on private wells for their drinking water. They note that many people are consuming water that may be unsafe because the source is not regularly tested and treated like public water supplies and could have harmful contaminants such as PFAS, arsenic, radon, uranium and more.

“As the Legislature continues to address PFAS contamination in communities across the state this session, it’s crucial that the hundreds of thousands of households relying on private well water have access to clean and safe drinking water,” said Sen. Eldridge. “That’s why I’m proud to once again file legislation to empower the DEP to regulate private wells and establish a program to help homeowners test their wells for dangerous contaminants.

MASSACHUSETTS GUN LAWS RANKING - Everytown for Gun Safety’s 2025 State Gun Law Rankings were released last week, and they report that Massachusetts has the second strongest gun laws in the nation, just behind California.

According to the report, the rankings show a clear connection between stronger gun safety laws and lower rates of gun deaths. The report suggests that if every state in the country had the gun death rates of the nine states with the strongest gun safety laws, 299,000 lives could be saved in the next decade.

“Gun laws save lives and states that enact common-sense, bipartisan policies are clearly standing on the side of public safety,” said Nick Suplina, Senior Vice President for Law and Policy at Everytown for Gun Safety. “As 2025 gets underway, we’re doubling down in the states, defending the gains we’ve made and charting new paths ahead. We can turn the tide on our nation’s gun violence crisis, but only if all leaders step up to meet the moment.”

“Our lawmakers took lifesaving action last year to enact a major piece of gun safety legislation – and our communi-

ties have already benefited from this challenging work,” said Rachel Everley, a volunteer with the Massachusetts chapter of Moms Demand Action. “Today’s announcement is just further evidence of the value of our combined efforts. Now Massachusetts has the second strongest gun safety laws in the country, and we will continue forging ahead because we have seen what can be accomplished when we do.”

NEW PHOTO DISPLAY AT THE STATE HOUSE – Gov. Healey unveiled a new photography display featuring archival film images of the Statehouse from the 1920s to 1940s, alongside equivalent modern-day film photographs.

“The Massachusetts Statehouse has a storied, revolutionary history – from Sam Adams and Paul Revere laying the first cornerstone in 1795, to President John F. Kennedy’s 1961 address ahead of his inauguration, to Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1965 address at the height of the Civil Rights Movement,” said Gov. Healey. “I’m thrilled to unveil this photography project, led by some of our most talented young people, which reminds us all of our obligation to honor the legacy of this incredible building while also striving to continue to deliver history-making progress for our residents.”

QUOTABLE QUOTES – *State of the Commonwealth Edition*

Gov. Healey delivered her annual State of the Commonwealth address to a joint session of the House and Senate. Here are some excerpts from the speech:

“Two hundred and fifty years ago this April, on a common in Lexington and a bridge in Concord, the farmers, tradesmen and shopkeepers of the Massachusetts Militia took a stand. They risked everything for the right to self-government and they started the Revolution that gave us our country. This is our legacy, Massachusetts, and it’s more than history. It’s who we are.”

“I am moved beyond words by the grit, drive and sheer goodness of the people of Massachusetts. I see it in our citi-

zen soldiers. It’s in the firefighters who spent weeks battling wildfires last fall. When we see what firefighters are doing in Southern California right now, and what our own firefighters and first responders do every day, we are so grateful.”

“I see it in the teachers and schools where we pioneered public education. And I see it in breakthroughs by our scientists and innovators. Did you know, in 2024, one-third of all the Nobel Prizes were won by people in Massachusetts? That’s not unusual for our state.”

HOW LONG WAS LAST WEEK’S SESSION?
Beacon Hill Roll Call tracks the length of time that the House and Senate were in session each week. Many legislators say that legislative sessions are only one aspect of the Legislature’s job and that a lot of important work is done outside of the House and Senate chambers. They note that their jobs also involve committee work, research, constituent work and other matters that are important to their districts. Critics say that the Legislature does not meet regularly or long enough to debate and vote in public view on the thousands of pieces of legislation that have been filed. They note that the infrequency and brief length of sessions are misguided and lead to irresponsible late-night sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding the end of an annual session. During the week of Jan. 13-17, the House a met for a total of nine hours and 27 minutes while the Senate met for a total of nine hours and 13 minutes.

Mon. Jan. 13	House 11:03 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Senate 11:16 a.m. to 11:27 a.m.
Tues. Jan. 14	No House session No Senate session
Wed. Jan. 15	No House session No Senate session
Thurs. Jan. 16	House 11:00 a.m. to 8:10 p.m. Senate 11:06 a.m. to 8:08 p.m.
Fri. Jan. 17	No House session No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 21

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 CONT. FROM PG 22

worst place the worst possible time and still having the wherewithal to exercise his craft to capture one of the most horrific moments in time.

“It was just a matter of realizing the horror of the thing. Then I knew I must record it for the world to see.”
Berenice Abbott. Manhattan’s first unofficial publicist.

If there was ever an individual who could capture a city like a still life model. Raw. Naked. Demure. Slightly coquettish with a sprinkling of “Je ne sais quoi.”

DH: Why should we view your work?
MO: Because for a still, inanimate, often lacking color, rectangular window, it’s loud. Like, volume turned up

to 11, LOUD. It is often teeming with life even though it’s just a sliver of it. It is dark situation, it blazes out at you with an emotional spectrum. It is something that happened in front of you but you didn’t see it at the time because it went by with the speed of a snap of a finger. It’s our lives in a box.

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