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A high-rise on Elm St.? page 12

Somerville adjusts redevelopment plans for 90 Washington St.



Redevelopment plans for the 90 Washington Street property are being revised in the aftermath of recent legal decisions. — Photo courtesy of the City of Somerville

The City of Somerville has announced a recalibration of redevelopment plans for 90 Washington Street following a recent legal decision that significantly increased the cost of the property.

The city will now prioritize the sale of the property for private development, focusing on mixed-use residential development with ground floor retail space – including both affordable and market rate units – that aligns with the community vision outlined by the 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Committee (https://voice.somervillema.gov/90washington_redevelopment). Staff will also explore the possibility of integrating Engine 3 into private development, an approach that faces hurdles but could follow the private-public model used to build Somerville's new Assembly Row Fire Station, which is expected to open this spring.

Continued on page 4

Massachusetts Poet Laureate position created by governor

By The Times Staff

On Monday, February 3, Governor Maura Healey signed an Executive Order creating the position of Poet Laureate for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Executive Order adopts much of the language of a bill filed years ago by former State Representative Denise Provost. Provost's work was recognized by Governor Healey at Monday's celebratory signing.

Lloyd Schwartz, Poet Laureate of Somerville, points out that "Massachusetts until now has been one of only four states that do not have a state Poet Laureate and the only state that has never had one. Soon we will!"

Publisher Gloria Mindock of Somerville's *Cervena Barva Press*, says "It's about" *Continued on page 4*



Somerville Poet Laureate Lloyd Schwartz, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, and former State Representative Denise Provost are all smiles as they celebrate the creation of the state Poet Laureate position. — Photo courtesy of the Office of Governor Maura Healey

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

On **February 5**, from 6 to 8 p.m., the **Somerville Arts Council** will be hosting a **Volunteer Craft Night**. A themed activity where people can design handmade cards which will be sent to the seniors at the Visiting Nurses Assoc. in Somerville. A wonderful way to meet other volunteers, have a few refreshments, and create art. Craft supplies will be available. While you are not required to make a card, we encourage people use their artistic prowess to make something wonderful for those in need. Since space is limited, please RSVP via the Eventbrite link <https://tinyurl.com/bdfvmdpe>. Location: MudFlat Pottery School, 81 Broadway, Somerville.

Celebrate **Lunar New Year** at the **Central Library**. This event will feature interactive reading, arts and crafts, games, a food tasting, and more. This event will be held on **Saturday, February 8**, at the Central Library (79 Highland Ave.) from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Join **WCVB Channel 5 News Reporter Danae Bucci** kick off the **5th Annual Rolling Lunar New Year Celebration at Arts at the Armory**, 191 Highland Avenue. A free community celebration for all ages, **Sunday, February 23**, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., doors open at 11:20 a.m. By **Korean American Citizens League of New England**. Enjoy live performances, Korean food, games, drummers, lion dance and more.

Happy birthday this week to the following: *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of February 5 – February 11 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
Wednesday <i>February 5</i>	Partly Cloudy	34°/22°	5%	2%	WNW 10 mph
Thursday <i>February 6</i>	Rain	44°/35°	90%	71%	SSW 13 mph
Friday <i>February 7</i>	Partly Cloudy	38°/26°	3%	1%	NW 15 mph
Saturday <i>February 8</i>	Cloudy	33°/28°	23%	15%	NW 6 mph
Sunday <i>February 9</i>	Snow	41°/22°	65%	47%	NW 12 mph
Monday <i>February 10</i>	Partly Cloudy	35°/20°	20%	13%	WNW 11 mph
Tuesday <i>February 11</i>	Partly Cloudy	32°/19°	18%	11%	W 13 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: *Lyrical Somerville – January 15*

Suyeon says:

Reading Unwanted Tour Guide as an immigrant, I immediately connected to the poem’s quiet negotiation between history and belonging. Diana Rose Lynch masterfully captures what it means to inherit narratives that aren’t ours but still shape our spaces. The poem’s interplay between the weight of the past—the trials, the myths, the ghosts—and the speaker’s presence in the town struck me deeply. There’s something profoundly moving about reclaiming space, not through erasure or defiance, but through quiet persistence: cultivating a garden, making the earth feed her, insisting on being seen. It speaks to the immigrant experience in a personal and universal way—how we learn the histories of the places we live, even as we build our own.

Response to: *Statement from Mayor Ballantyne on the ceasefire*

longtime Somerville resident says:

Legitimate question, Alan. My guess is that it is because people on all sides of this controversy have, in one way or another, urged to the mayor to take a stand on this extremely complicated issue. And this is not the first such statement she has made. The wording of this one and previous ones she’s released have been very reasonable – even if many people found fault with this or that word or phrase. I assume the only group of people who were strongly opposed to the mayor’s statement is the pro-Hamas “Somerville for Palestine” crowd. In their view, any statement that recognizes Israel’s right to exist is totally unacceptable.

Response to: *Somerville City Councilor At-Large Willie Burnley Jr announces his bid for Mayor*

Megan says:

YASSSS!!!!

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

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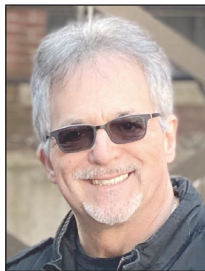
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Life in the **VILLE** by Jimmy Del Ponte

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.

Shake it off



Are you kidding me? An earthquake! Last week we experienced a 4.1 earthquake. I thought it was the guys upstairs' washing machine. I've collected peoples' comments on what they were doing and what they thought the rumbling was.

"My hubby thought it was the washer. Too bad I was sleeping."

"Never heard or felt in concord, Elyse didn't either in Chelmsford. But her friend that only lives 10 minutes away in Westford heard and felt it. I definitely felt it here at home. At first I thought it was just the commuter rail but then I felt the house shake and my glasses were clanging!"

"Home. My entire house shook. I

thought it was an earthquake, turns out it was."

"I thought my dog knocked something over. Then remembered my dog was at the vet's."

"I was in bed ... and the bed vibrated for a couple of seconds."

"I live so near the commuter rail that it was hard to distinguish one from the other since the train shakes the house a lot."

"I thought it was a combo of wind and the commuter rail train coming by to W. Medford"

"I was sitting in my apartment and it just about moved the apartment and it shocked all my windows. We thought it was an earthquake because we have many earthquakes all year. It was just down the street from my apartment building. I do live in York, Maine."

"Didn't even feel it."



"I thought it was the commuter rail going by. I live in Braintree very close to the Weymouth T stop."

"I slept through it."

At least we know a lot of people sleep in pretty late. Thankfully no one was hurt and it gave us something to talk about for a few days.

Somerville making repairs to 90/92 Union Square building roof

The city is making repairs to the roof of its 90-92 Union Square building. This work, being led by the city's Capital Project Division, is expected to begin later this week and continue through the spring.

The building, a former firehouse that dates to the late 1880s, is in need of significant structural repair and was closed in August 2023 in the interest of public safety. Repairs to the roof are being undertaken as an interim measure to prevent further water damage to the structure from taking place. These repairs will necessitate the removal of the clock tower from the building. The clock faces and mechanisms will be retained for potential future use.

For more information and periodic updates, visit the project website at somervillema.gov/9092USQroof.

More about the future of the building

The former firehouse is one of many buildings in the city that require renovation. Major investment is also currently needed for schools including the Winter Hill and the Brown schools, the city's fire houses, and other vital infrastructure. The city does not have the current fiscal capacity to prioritize the renovation of 90-92 Union Square before these other significant and pressing needs. The city is, however, committed to developing a plan for its future that will best serve the neighborhood and our community.



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Somerville Police Dept Crime Log January 21 – 27

Arrest

25003929: On 1/22/25 at approximately 12:46 p.m., Somerville Police responded to East Cambridge Savings Bank (285 Highland Ave.) for a robbery. Upon arrival, officers were given a suspect description and were informed that the suspect left in a taxi cab. Officers quickly located the taxi and conducted a stop. The suspect was identified placed under arrest. Officers confiscated a knife from the suspect and recovered \$80 tucked in the seats of the taxi.

Commercial Breaking and Entering

25003915: On 1/22/25 at approximately 11:27 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a business on Grove St. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the manager who stated when he arrived for work, he noticed an office door had been kicked in and a coffee maker was missing.

Residential Breaking and Entering

25004722: On 1/26/25 at approximately 5:35 p.m., Somerville Housing Officers responded to a residence on Warren Ave. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he left to run some errands and when he returned, noticed that his pants, blank checks and cash were missing.

Other Crimes: 2 MV vandalisms + 1 Package theft + 1 Car break + 1 MV theft

— Somerville Police Department



Crime Tip Hotline: 617-776-7210

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

Help Keep Somerville Safe!

Somerville adjusts redevelopment plans for 90 Washington St. CONT. FROM PG 1

“This decision was not made lightly,” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. “We remain unwavering in our commitment to providing our public safety personnel with the facilities they need, but the unforeseen costs associated with this particular property have significantly impacted our ability to proceed with the original plan for a combined public safety headquarters. But this is Somerville, so this is not the end.”

“We are already working on new approaches to meet our public safety building needs and also to ensure our community gets the best possible benefit from this land,” continued the mayor. “Under the changed circumstances, that best use is clearly homes to help address the housing crisis – including market and affordable units right next to our new

East Somerville T stop. I want to thank the Civic Advisory Committee for their work to envision new opportunities for this site.”

Background

The City of Somerville supported the Somerville Redevelopment Authority’s (SRA) eminent domain taking of 90 Washington Street in 2019 during the prior administration. The goal was to convert the derelict site that was home to a vacant commercial strip to a new civic site housing police headquarters, the Engine 3 fire station, and a new base for E911 Emergency Telecommunications services. But the acquisition cost skyrocketed after a legal battle.

• **The original cost paid for the land was \$8.78 million, but a court ruling increased it to \$35.3 million plus inter-**

est, bringing the total to approximately \$39M. This significant increase was due to the jury determining the property’s value based on its potential for high-value lab building development, rather than its value under existing zoning.

• **The city by way of the SRA is now facing a significant, unplanned financial cost.** To cover the increased payment now owed the property owner, the city will issue a short-term bond and apply other funds on behalf of the SRA. The city will work closely with the City Council and the SRA to rezone the property and prepare the full property for sale.

• **Proceeds from the sale will be used to offset the payment owed for the property.** Initial steps for sale have already begun and can be reviewed at <https://voice.somervillema.gov>

/90washington_redevelopment.

• **The city will also be exploring interim needs and options for the Fire and Police Departments,** including maintenance investments and appropriate upgrades to existing facilities in the shorter term, and exploration of new planning options for the long term.

“We understand that this shift in possibilities and plans may raise questions from our public safety officers and the community. It does for us too, so we’re getting right to work, and we’ll be out discussing this with staff, the 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Council, the Somerville Redevelopment Authority, and the City Council to keep the community up to date,” said Mayor Ballantyne. “Together, we will chart a new path forward that meets our needs and serves our community.”

Massachusetts poet laureate position created by governor CONT. FROM PG 1

time! I’m very excited for this. It will be good for the state of Massachusetts, and for our poets.”

Under Healey’s Executive Order, the Massachusetts Cultural Council will set up a statewide application process for this post. After review, the council will recom-

mend two finalists. Governor Healey will then select the Poet Laureate.

Poet Laureate is an honorary title, which brings responsibilities with it. Laureates bring poetry to schools, libraries, civic events, and cultural institutions, and to readers and audiences generally.

The U.S. Poet Laureate is appointed by the Librarian of Congress and serves a one-year term as official poet of the United States.

All other US states except three, and many cities and towns, select their own Poets Laureate.



Advocates cry foul over first SPS Building Project survey

By Jeffrey Shwom

A 5-minute online survey has turned contentious as advocates and city councilors push back against the Somerville School Building Project: Phase One Community Feedback Survey [1], released the morning of January 23.

By that evening's City Council Meeting, a late item was placed by Councilors Lance Davis and Kristen Strezo (Resolution ID # 25-0157) [2] asking "that the administration immediately withdraw the School Building Community Feedback Survey, released this morning, regarding the replacement of the Winter Hill and, potentially, Brown School."

Councilor Strezo stressed, "We believe that the survey the city just put out is problematic. It was put forward ignoring the will of the community, and of the specific construction committee assembled to help create the process, the Construction Advisory Committee (CAG)." Councilor Strezo is the City Council Liaison to the CAG.

Ryan Williams, President of the Somerville Council of PTAs and the Brown School PTA, stated, "We have a serious job ahead of us that will affect the city's schools for decades. It's not clear to me whether the point of the committee is to build consensus or to manufacture consent."

City Spokesperson Denise Taylor responded that, "The survey content was the subject of discussion at two CAG meetings before the final questions were developed. Over the course of those meetings, city staff and consultants received significant and valuable feedback – most of which was either incorporated into this survey (both in the questions and demographic categories) or will be incorporated into the Phase 2 survey planned for later in the process. This first survey is designed for

gathering general preferences. The Phase 2 survey will put specific choices before the community." Furthermore, "the survey was developed collaboratively by a range of City and Somerville Public Schools staff with consultant support (The Consensus Building Institute)," [3] and with CAG member responses and user-testing.

Ryan Williams pointed to major objections "relate(d) to poor survey design, lack of review, and a strong indication of bias." He says that during the process he "specifically pointed them to best practices from the Harvard Program on Survey Design." [4] Problems with the survey include unbalanced responses, a lack of neutral language, and that "both the tone and the narrow context provided in the question directly influences the answer."

Elsewhere, social media conversations that include Winter Hill Community Innovation School parents and members of Somerville's Council of PTAs indicate confusion and frustration with the survey. One comment asked, "Anyone can take this survey even if they do not have kids and maybe don't even live in Somerville?" Another felt that, "they're all written to elicit a certain response."

The *Somerville Times* confirmed that there is not a clear spot where all respondents can indicate that they are public school staff that do not live in Somerville. Spokesperson Taylor indicated this was fair criticism. "Generally, staff are identifying in the 'How do you describe yourself' question in the demographic section, but we should have included a specific question asking how the respondents are affiliated with Somerville. While noting that staff too can be residents and parents, we will consider ways to address this including correcting for that in the Phase II survey." Any resident of Somerville or a member of the Somerville Public Schools community can complete this survey.



The city's School Building Project survey has been deemed "problematic" by many, including some City Councilors. — Photo by Bobbie Toner

The city also talked about methodology and best practices, and says it is rare historically that folks "game" the survey. "Analysts from SomerStat use a range of techniques to ensure we are gathering high-quality and legitimate data. We don't exclude potential participants based on location or IP address because we want to make sure we are accommodating for both multimember households and legitimate survey responders who may reside out of state," like school staff and families of unhoused students temporarily residing outside Somerville. "Instead, there are numerous methods on the backend to review responses for potential efforts to misuse the survey."

Councilor Strezo said, "Whatever happens with the school, our Somerville community deserves to gather authentic opinions on what Somerville parents, students and guardians want, for they will inherit whatever buildings come forward."

As previously reported in *The Times* [5], the city is in the process of school planning for one or more Pre-K through 8th grade public schools, to firstly meet the needs of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School, and possibly the Benjamin G. Brown School. The city estimates this to be a seven-year process.

Links:

[1] <https://cityofsomerville.jotform.com/243645742889069>

[2] <https://somervillema.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7104686&GUID=4A0F-2DAD-7F11-4C29-A87F-CB3AA1852C-3C&Options=&Search=>

[3] <https://www.cbi.org/>

[4] chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcapjpcglclefindmkaj/https://psr.iq.harvard.edu/sites/projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/psr/files/PSRQuestionnaireTipSheet_0.pdf

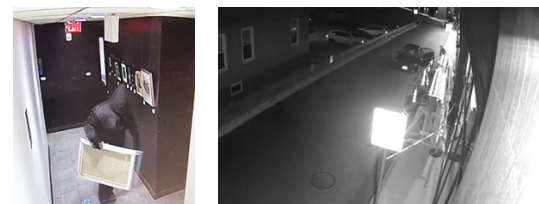
[5] <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/138116>

Somerville Police release video footage of art theft; community asked to share any tips

The Somerville Police Department is seeking any information regarding the individual shown here in connection to a larceny involving a painting that occurred at 50 Prospect Street in the early morning hours of January 5.

If you have any information, please contact Somerville Police Detective Jonathan Thermidor at 617-625-1600 x 7231.

Security footage can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/3CIUCO5>



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.

When the 2024 legislative session ended on January 1, thousands of bills that did not get final approval by the House and Senate died.

Beacon Hill Roll Call's research highlights four major bills that were easily approved by the Senate but died from inaction in the House.

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

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

Rarely are either of those methods used to discharge a bill from a committee.

Some critics say that sometimes bills are held up in committee because someone in a high position of power either inside or outside the Statehouse is opposed to it.

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

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

Beacon Hill Roll Call contacted the office of House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy) and House Ways and Means chair Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston) several times last week and asked why these bills, easily approved by the Senate, died in the House. Neither office responded.

Here are the four bills that were easily approved by the

Senate but died in the House. *Beacon Hill Roll Call* asked the Senate sponsor of each bill how they feel about it dying in the House and whether they have filed the bill for consideration in the 2025-2026 session.

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

On July 27, 2023, the Senate 38-0, approved and sent to the House legislation that would make it easier for homeless youth and adults to secure free state ID cards. The House took no action on the bill and it died.

Supporters said that currently a person experiencing homelessness faces prohibitive fees and documentation requirements when trying to obtain an ID card. They noted that this legislation removes those barriers by eliminating fees and only requiring that applicants present documentation showing that they are currently receiving services provided by the state, a homeless service provider or another service provider.

They argued that ID cards are necessary for applying for jobs, enrolling in school, interacting with law enforcement, accessing government buildings, opening financial accounts and many other basic services that many take for granted.

Last week, sponsor Sen. Robyn Kennedy (D-Worcester) told *Beacon Hill Roll Call*, "This bill reflects a continued commitment to addressing homelessness, building on the work of my predecessor and in collaboration with the Coalition for the Homeless. It represents an important step in supporting our most vulnerable residents, and I appreciate the efforts of all advocates and stakeholders involved. As it moves forward this session, I look forward to working with colleagues in the Senate to pass it again. I defer to my colleagues in the House to get it passed in their chamber."

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS (S 2491)

On October 26, 2023, the Senate 38-0, approved and sent to the House a bill that would require all prisons, homeless shelters and K-12 schools to maintain free menstrual products, including sanitary napkins, tampons and underwear liners in private and public restrooms and to make them available in a "convenient manner that does not stigmatize any persons seeking the products." The House took no action on the bill and it died.

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

ucts affects students' class attendance.

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

Last week, sponsor Sen. Pat Jehlen (D-Somerville) told *Beacon Hill Roll Call*, "I refiled the bill and am hopeful for its passage."

HIV PREVENTION DRUGS (S 2480)

On October 26, 2023, the Senate 38-0, approved and sent to the House a bill that would allow pharmacists to prescribe, dispense and administer a short-term supply (60-days once in a two-year period) of HIV prevention drugs, known as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), to a patient without a prescription. The House took no action on the bill and it died.

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

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

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

Last week, sponsor Sen. Julian Cyr (D-Truro) did not respond to *Beacon Hill Roll Call's* repeated requests to comment on the bill dying in the House and whether he has refiled it.

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

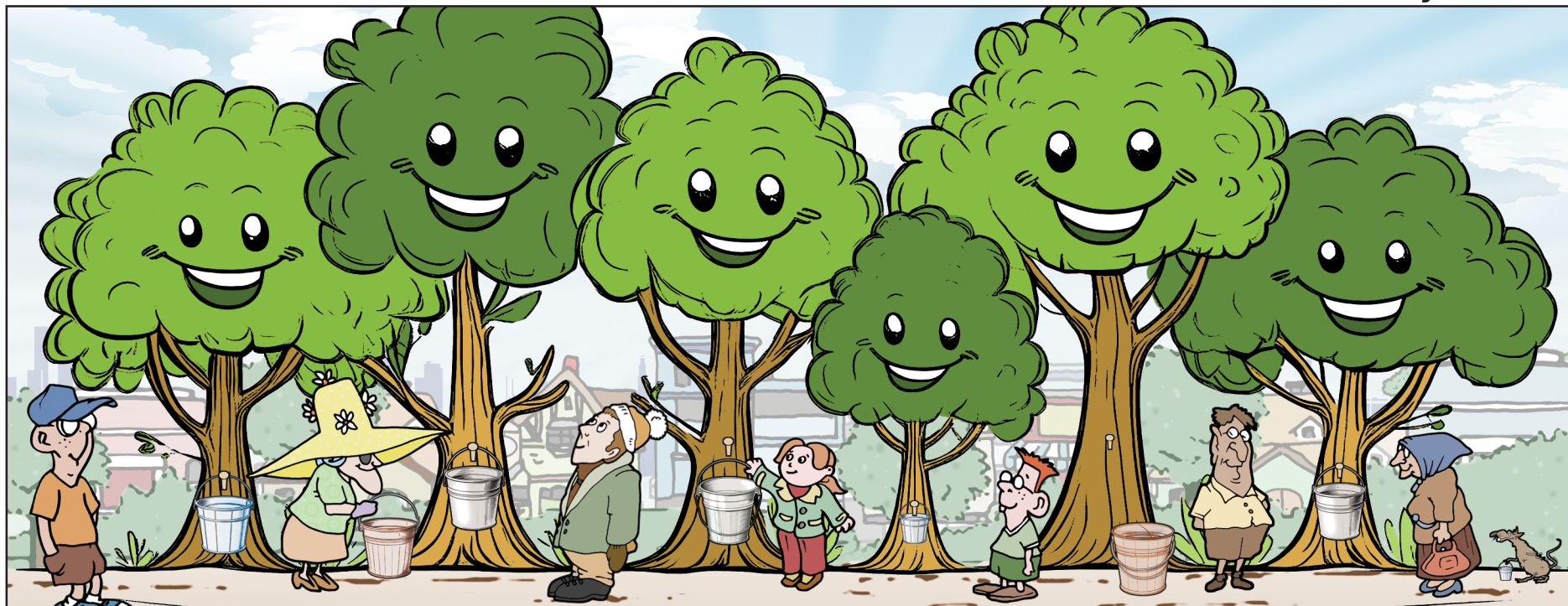
LOCAL OPTIONS INCLUDING TAX HIKES FOR CITIES AND TOWNS

Gov. Maura Healey filed legislation, dubbed by her as the Municipal Empowerment Act, that *Continued on page 16*

COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Let's everybody get sappy!

Our View Of The Times



The Annual Maple Boil Down has become a widely popular tradition here in the city, and the preceding collection of maple sap is currently underway.

As part of this project, a team of volunteers taps a swath of maple trees on the Tufts campus collecting dozens of gallons of sap over a number of weeks.

At the Maple Boil Down events, taking place on February 28 and March 1, coordi-

nated by the Somerville Community Growing Center, the sap is boiled down into real, true 100% hyper-local maple syrup.

At this event, youth and adults alike have a chance to learn about tree anatomy and physiology and experience the process of making fresh maple syrup first-hand.

Participants watch first-hand as sap collected from sugar maple trees on the Tufts Campus is boiled into syrup, and connect

with others in the community.

The first tapping and boil-down was in March, 2000. Volunteers tapped trees at the Growing Center and in the yard of Lisa Brukilacchio, the city's Green Space Coordinator and that of her neighbor, and used a basic "furnace" made out of cinderblocks. The following year they connected with Tufts University to tap trees on campus, and students built from scratch

a metal furnace that retained heat better than the cinderblock one.

Over the course of February, Growing Center volunteers will transport the sap to Aeronaut for safekeeping until the boil events on February 28 and March 1. If you wish to volunteer to help with the transport, go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B4AA9AC2DA5FDC07-54456294-saptransport#/>

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Happy birthday to **Cheryle Snow**. We wish Cheryle the very best on her birthday. Happy birthday to **Bernard Gibbons**. We wish him the very best on his birthday. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Sarah Martino, Steven DeCarlo, Alan Carvalho, Carolyn Dacey Corbett, Amy Ferreira, Jill Koerber, Joan Marshall, and Laurie Herra-Bullerwell** 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.

Ms. G, the groundhog from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, saw her

shadow on **February 2**, which means six more weeks of winter will follow.

The **Public Safety for All Task Force report** is now live. The group is recommending that the city adopt a co-response model, implement body-worn cameras for law enforcement, consider utilizing civilians in SPD, and more. Read the full report or the executive summary at somervillema.gov/psfa.

Small Mart returns to **The Crystal Ballroom** in Davis Square, **Sunday, February 9**, with a special Valentine's market. They will have 40+ local vendors with

handmade goods, art, jewelry, vintage and more. Free entry, all ages, wheelchair accessible and a full bar. 55 Davis Sq., 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

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.

All Somerville residents should be on the lookout for the **2025 annual City of Somerville census** in their mailbox. The 2025 census form also includes an application to vote by mail in Somerville's pre-

liminary and city elections this year. High census participation provides an accurate population count, which helps the city plan municipal services, apply for grants, and adapt as the population changes. The **Elections Department** also uses the census to help keep voting rolls up to date. It's easy to take part in the census. Just fill out the short form, be sure to sign and date the form, and then return it one of three ways: mail it back in the provided postage-paid return envelope, scan the form and email is to census@somervillema.gov, or drop it off in person at **City Hall** (93 Highland Ave.). Contact 311 (617-666-3311) with any questions.

Continued on page 21

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#960

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. When is National Black History Month? | Bowl was the coldest? |
| 2. When is National Bubble Gum Day? | 8. What was the highest-scoring Super Bowl game ever? |
| 3. What group has won the most Grammy awards? | 9. At the Chinese New Year, red envelopes represent what? |
| 4. How many U.S. Presidents have won Grammy awards? | 10. What does it mean if the groundhog sees his shadow? |
| 5. What was the Super Bowl's original name? | 11. What is the name of February's full moon? |
| 6. What U.S. state released the first lottery scratch ticket? | 12. What number in craps shows if you throw "snake eyes"? |
| 7. Which Super | |

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out.
2. Punctuation wasn't always a part of our written language.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

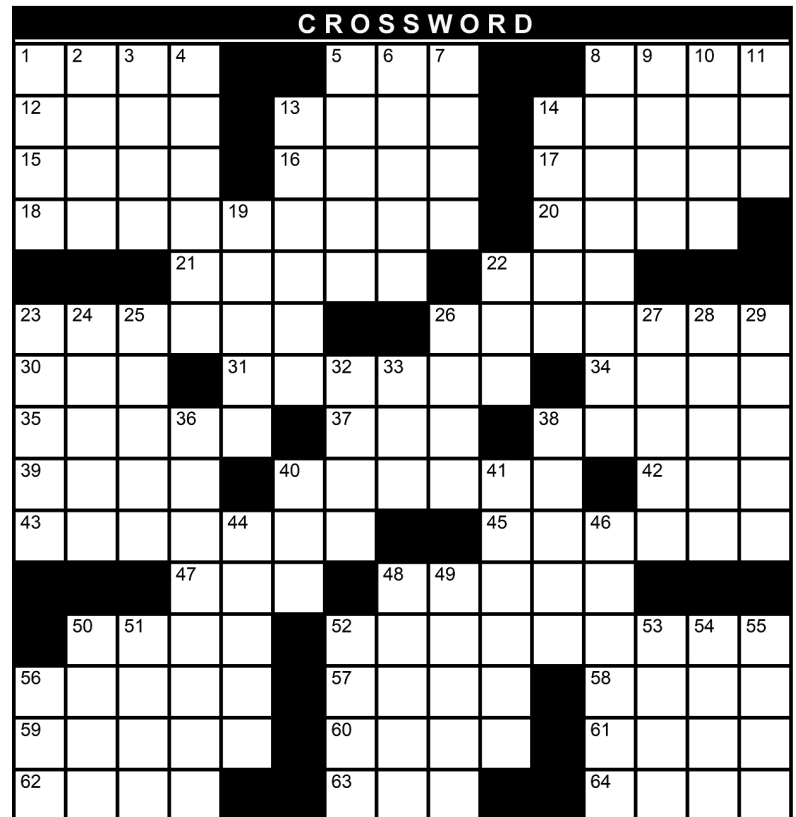
IDIOMS

ACROSS

1. Actor Driver
5. By way of
8. Bambino
11. Oscar De La ____
12. Do this backwards to try hard to please
13. Range
15. Petri dish gel
16. Celestial bear
17. K-pop home
18. Cold one is offensive
20. Sportscaster Andrews
21. Outer space path
22. Hold title to
23. Take this to commit to marriage
26. Bullet factory
30. Even, poetically
31. Trim
34. Sitar music
35. Kon-Tiki and such
37. Be in a cast
38. Very, in music
39. Actress Barrymore
40. "Long Day's Journey into Night" playwright
42. Between Mar. and May
43. Annuling
45. Loads
47. Compass point between NE and E
48. Dugout river ride
50. Check-in via text
52. Sign of nervousness (2 words)
55. One up
56. Lowest female voice
57. One quark plus one antiquark
59. Toothpaste brand
60. Riddle without solution
61. Cogito ____ sum
62. Leg's partner, price-wise
63. Make a mistake
64. Robin's house

DOWN

1. "Eureka!"
2. They cause no problems when they sleep
3. Nursemaid, in India



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- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 4. ____ 5, band | 32. Group of buffaloes |
| 5. "Il Trovatore" composer | 33. Breaking it relieves tension |
| 6. Garment insert | 36. When these meet, one can afford what they want (2 words) |
| 7. Month before Nisan | 38. Remote in manner |
| 8. Torus, pl. | 40. Football's extra point |
| 9. Word before sesame | 41. "The Call of the Wild" author |
| 10. Cupful that's not for everyone | 44. Gold bar |
| 12. Adjective derived from bulb | 46. Dig further |
| 19. Prods | 48. One on artist's wheel |
| 22. Dot follower | 49. Communion table |
| 23. Lost, in Provence | 50. Feline vibration |
| 24. Live's partner | 51. Unit on a list |
| 25. Hungry | 52. Easy piece |
| 26. Voting no | 53. Ireland's other name |
| 27. Like Fran Drescher's voice | 54. Duds |
| 28. Wide open | 55. Edible tuber |
| 29. Bear digs | 58. 1990s negation |

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:



The Boston Science Fiction Film Festival celebrates 50 years

The Boston Science Fiction Film Festival is back and still kicking after 50 years! Having survived pandemics, snowpocalypses, technological upheaval, and brain-melting shifts in the movie-going landscape, the annual event returns February 12–17 to the Somerville Theatre and other Davis Square locations.

The country's longest-running genre fest, Boston Sci-Fi will celebrate its milestone anniversary with five days of local and national premieres and visiting filmmakers, followed by *It Came from the Orson Welles*, a 24-hour marathon of favorite sci-fi features, plus contests and more, which kicks off at noon Sunday, February 16.

Selected primarily from over 300 submissions, the Boston Sci-Fi festival lineup includes 10 feature films – including a world premiere and three U.S. premieres – and seven stellar shorts programs. Several films chosen for the event tap into the biggest tech story of the century, the rise of AI. At the same time, the 2025 selections illuminate an essential aspect of humanity: the need for community and genuine connection.

Special programs and panels focus on the search for life on other planets, the future of film festivals, and screenwriting tips from SF50 filmmakers.

Festival highlights for 2025 include:

Opening Night Selection Small Town Universe, an award-winning documentary about the search for alien life in a small West Virginia community. Boston's Museum of Science co-presents this screening and a visit from director Katie Dellamaggiore for a Q&A.

The Science of Hunting Aliens, a program featuring Avi Loeb, Harvard University theoretical physicist and author of the book *Interstellar: The Search for Extraterrestrial Life and Our Future in the Stars*.

U Are the Universe, Pavlo Ostrikov's debut film about a space trucker in an increasingly radio-active world and the universal human experiences of love and loneliness, written and directed in Ukraine during the Russian invasion.

Strange Harvest: Occult Murder in the Inland Empire, an utterly absorbing faux crime film with a timely reminder of how fabricated stories can be convincingly packaged as reality.

Is / Was \ Will, a dazzling feat of found footage editing focused on two near-future strangers drawn to each other during a drug-fueled haze. Featuring Continued on page 11



Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Pan Roasted Chicken Thighs

This is a time saver for a weeknight meal. The results, crispy skin and succulent meat. It's all ready in 45 minutes! Serve with mashed potatoes and roasted carrots or asparagus or any other vegetable you like.

6 Bone-in, Skin-on Chicken Thighs
Salt
Pepper
1 Lemon, Juiced (optional, see below)
1 Tablespoon Honey (optional, see below)

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Season the skin side of the thighs with the salt and pepper and place them in a cold 12" oven safe sauté pan. It's much easier to place the thighs in a cold pan because they won't stick on contact. I highly recommend using a splatter

screen to help keep your stove top clean.

Once all the thighs are placed in the pan, season the other side. Place the pan over medium heat for 2 minutes, then turn up to high for approximately 8 minutes or until the skin has browned.

Once browned, turn over the thighs, skin side up and place in the oven for 35 minutes. Once done, place the thighs on a platter.

You can serve them as is, or you can add a little more flavor to the dish by removing all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the sauté pan. Place on the stove top and squeeze the juice of one lemon into the pan along with a tablespoon of honey and blend well. Cook down for a minute or two, reducing the lemon juice. Drizzle over the thighs and serve.

Serves 3 really hungry people.

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



LEGAL NOTICES

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



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
 MAYOR

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Somerville City Council's Land Use Committee and the Somerville Planning Board will hold a joint public hearing on **Thursday, February 20th, 2025** at 6:30 pm. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this hearing will be conducted via remote participation.

REGISTER ONLINE

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZuR40J6bQ2Cgq3DCtw4t40

The purpose of this hearing is to receive public comments concerning the following:

- Horace-Ward LLC, Bealm Realty, LLC, Delhi Properties, LLC, and Delhi Properties II, LLC requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 11 Horace Street, 5-7, 9, 13, and 15 Ward Street, and 15 and 21 South Street from Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) to Mid-Rise 6 (MR6).

Zoning amendments may be viewed online by searching the Somerville City Council's [online meeting calendar](https://somervillema.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx) (https://somervillema.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx) for the address or item number.

Final language of the above amendments may be modified by the City Council during the legislative process. Persons unable to attend the hearing may provide comments by email to the Planning Board and the City Council at publiccomments@somervillema.gov. Comments must be received no later than 12 Noon the day of the Hearing to ensure they are conveyed to the Committee for inclusion with the hearing testimony. The Chair(s) may opt to extend the period for written comments, in which case additional comments will be accepted until the date indicated. This information can be found in the minutes of the meeting.

2/5/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
LICENSING COMMISSION

There will be a Public Hearing before the Licensing Commission on **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of Wine and Malt License, Common Victualer, Entertainment by Devices, and Sunday Hours License for Eleven Union, LLC d/b/a Taco Riot at 11 Union Square.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AzKkDdERTbeDuuuDUXiQPA You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
3. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may send written comments by US mail to the Executive Secretary at 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143, or by email to licensing@somervillema.gov. Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Commission.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.

ANDREA R. TORRES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
[LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV](mailto:licensing@somervillema.gov)

2/5/25 The Somerville Times



INVITATION FOR BIDS

SHA Job No. P-STOVE022025

The Somerville Housing Authority invites sealed bids from Vendors to supply and deliver stoves to our Somerville, Massachusetts location/s, in accordance with the documents prepared by the Somerville Housing Authority Purchasing Department

Job No. **P-STOVE022025**

Description of Work: Supply and deliver NEW Stoves as needed. Delivered to Somerville, MA.

Term of contract is 3 years or 1 year if alternate is chosen.

Sealed Bids will be received until **11:00 A.M., on February 19, 2025**, and publicly opened forthwith, at the Offices of the Somerville Housing Authority, Somerville, MA 01245.

Bid and Contract Documents will be available for download on Somerville Housing Authority's web site www.sha-web.org, under our bid opportunities tab on **February 5, 2025, 11:00 a.m.** Updates and addendums will be posted on website. Bidders are responsible for downloading and including updates, and addendums with their bid. There will be no charge for these documents.

If you are submitting a bid, you must register with Anthony Crespo by email at Tonyc@sha-web.org and provide contact information including, telephone number, and email. You will receive a reply that your email has been received. Bidders/Contractors are responsible for ensuring that their email and bids are received.

If mailed or delivered bids should be sent to Somerville Housing Authority, Purchasing Department, Stove Bid, Attn. Anthony Crespo, 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, MA 02145 no later than the specified time. A mail slot is provided if you would like to drop off.

You may also email bid documents to SHAPurchasingbids@SHA-Web.Org. Emails/Bids will not be opened until the due by date and time. If emailing **Title subject line SHA Job No. P-STOVE022025 Bid – your company name**. Contact Anthony Crespo by email at Tonyc@sha-web.org to enquire if your email was received. **Do not include bid** when inquiring if the bid was received.

All inquiries regarding this bid shall be directed to the Purchasing Department by email to Tonyc@sha-web.org.

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
IFB #25-40

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

2025 Street Resurfacing Project – Tufts Street

An Invitation for Bid may be obtained online at www.bidexpress.com, <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **2/06/2025**. Sealed bids will be received at above office until: **02/27/2025 2:00PM EST**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

MassDOT prequalification of contractors with the class of work as, Highway Construction, for the project with an estimated value of \$2,087,976 will be required.

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

5% Bid Deposit required.

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

2/5/25 The Somerville Times



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://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/section-108-loan-application-final-public-hearing-version.pdf> starting January 8th, 2025.

- The City will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, February 27th at 6pm** to present the draft application and receive comments. Members of the public may attend this hearing at the West Somerville Neighborhood School. **This is a change of schedule from the previous meeting that was scheduled on February 11th.**
- 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 Somerville 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) at the City's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (City Hall, 3rd Floor). All comments received by February 28th, 2025, will be incorporated in the final application.

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City of Somerville
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
 City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The **Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)** will hold a virtual public hearing on **Wednesday, February 19, 2025**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KJJUHJ9Sg6RpNK_wr70TW
 Webinar ID: 831 8343 8980

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.

The Zoning Board will consider the following pursuant to M.G.L. 40A and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance:

- 59 Linden Street** Fan Wang seeks a Major Amendment to a previously issued Special Permit (ZBA 2019-96) under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a non-conforming structure.
- 34 Allen Street** Chris Ulrich seeks a Special Permit for a conforming entry canopy on a nonconforming principle building type for the NR zoning district.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions>.

Interested persons may provide comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov.

2/5/25 The Somerville Times

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LEGAL NOTICES

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
LICENSING COMMISSION**

There will be a Public Hearing before the Licensing Commission on **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of Wine and Malt with Cordials and Liqueurs License, Common Victualer, and Entertainment by Devices License for Kush By Saba d/b/a Kush Modern Mediterranean at 5 Sanborn Court.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9tJfzeu6vDUXiQPA> You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
3. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may send written comments by US mail to the Executive Secretary at 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143, or by email to licensing@somervillema.gov. Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Commission.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.

ANDREA R. TORRES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
[LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV](mailto:licensing@somervillema.gov)

2/5/25 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
LICENSING COMMISSION**

There will be a Public Hearing before the Licensing Commission on **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of Wine and Malt License, Common Victualer, and Sunday Hours License for Kayaa LLC d/b/a Momo N Curry at 431 Somerville Ave.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9tJfzeu6vDUXiQPA> You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
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[LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV](mailto:licensing@somervillema.gov)

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
LICENSING COMMISSION**

There will be a Public Hearing before the Licensing Commission on **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of an Alteration of Premises, Outdoor Public Sidewalk License for Crispy Crepe, LLC d/b/a Mr. Crepe at 51 Davis Square.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9tJfzeu6vDUXiQPA> You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
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[LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV](mailto:licensing@somervillema.gov)

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB#25-44**

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

Various Trips for Older Adults

The bid package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, February 5th, 2025**. Sealed bids 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 19th, 2025**.

The City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor informality in the bid process, and accept the bid(s) deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Somerville.

Please email procurement@somervillema.gov for more information.

Thupten Chukhatsang
Senior Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3400

2/5/25 The Somerville Times

The Boston Science Fiction Film Festival celebrates 50 years

CONT. FROM PG 9



voice work by Kumail Nanjiani, Carrie Coon, Sam Rockwell, and Murray Bartlett.

I Hope This Helps!, a doc executive produced by Matthew Modine in which writer-director Dan-iel Freed tries to train AI to help him destroy AI, followed by a Q&A with the filmmaker.

I'm Not a Robot, in which filmmaker Victoria Warmerdam questions her humanity following a series of failed CAPTCHA tests. The film has been shortlisted for a 2025 Oscar nomination for Best Live Action Short and will screen as part of the February

15 shorts program ALTAIR.

The February 15 panel *The Future of Film Festivals* at partner location Comicazi, featuring in-sight from Boston-area fest programmers and administrators. More details will be shared in the leadup to the fest on Boston Sci Fi's:

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/BostonSciFi>)
Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/bostonscifi/>)
Bluesky (<https://bsky.app/profile/bostonscifi.bsky.social>) feeds.

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Davis Square residents contemplate proposed 25-level high-rise on Elm Street

By Harry Kane

A real estate developer is soliciting community feedback at neighborhood meetings for a proposed high-rise in Davis Square. The concept of building a 25-story tower in Somerville's hippest neighborhood has a lot of residents talking.

Some may say a project of this scope in Davis Square is paving the way for future progress, while others think the tower would be too big.

"A lot of the people in the square are extremely concerned," said Jack Connolly, former Somerville Ward Six and At-Large Alderman (known now as City Councilor).

Flyers from an anonymous group recently circulated throughout the neighborhood questioning the sensibleness of the development, asking: "Do we really want something like this in Davis Square?"

Shortly after, a second flyer was posted in response to the first one in support of the building project.

Copper Mill, a Boston-based commercial and residential real estate developer, hopes to turn the Davis Square block that includes the Burren Pub, McKinnon's Meat Market and Dragon Pizza, into a multifamily high-rise with retail storefronts at the corner of Elm and Grove streets.

"That would be the biggest building to ever be built in the City of Somerville," Connolly said, expressing concerns about the construction process in the neighborhood.

Currently the zoning for the parcel only allows for four stories, so the building project that's being proposed would not be possible yet. The developer would most likely need a special permit.

Copper Mill acquired the ground lease from Scape North America in 2023, according to Banker & Tradesman, a real estate and financial information website.

Initially, there was a plan to build student-focused housing, but later the project was changed to a four-story lab space over retail. That plan may no longer be viable, according to the developer.

Now, Copper Mill is looking to build a 500-unit high-rise and is holding community meetings to gauge the sentiment among Davis Square residents.

"The economic vitality of Davis Square hinges on the small businesses," said Connolly. He worries that the massive construction project would negatively impact small businesses in the nearby area from thriving, at least in the short term.

Andrew Flynn, former CEO and Founder of Scape North America, is the Boston-based commercial real estate developer spearheading the Copper Mill project.

The main obstacle is the property is currently zoned as Commercial Core 4 (CC4), which permits commercial buildings up to 4 stories in height. The Commercial Core zoning district does not permit residential uses nor buildings over 4 stories tall, according to the city.

"The conceptual development being discussed in Davis would either need the

City Council to consider changing how Davis Square is currently zoned, or the property owner could possibly pursue a comprehensive permit subject to the MGL 40B process, which allows the Somerville Zoning Board to waive local regulations to permit a taller building if the proposed project meets the 40B criteria, specifically for affordable housing," said Dan Bartman, the interim-director of the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division in the Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development.

Copper Mill has held public community meetings with the first of these on October 16 with 10 Copper Mill team members and 14 community members in attendance, including Ward 6 Councilor Lance L. Davis.

Meanwhile, the Davis Square Neighborhood Council has been meeting to discuss the project proposal.

Elaine Almquist, the temporary President of DSNIC, said their community group has met once per month for the past year, and that the meetings have become more focused around the Copper Mill project as of late.

"It's mostly residents in the Davis Square neighborhood who were frustrated that they weren't getting information on what was happening in their own community," Almquist said.

The group is in the process of writing and finalizing bylaws to become an official council.

Almquist recalls the DSNIC meetings in early 2024, with residents expressing their displeasure of the vacant lots in Davis Square.

During the first Copper Mill meeting, the team said the market for lab space was saturated and not "economically viable," Almquist recalls. That is when they introduced the high-rise project, acknowledging that the parcel is currently zoned for four stories in height.

Copper Mill followed up by holding more open community meetings on October 30, November 20 and December 11 to discuss the proposed high-rise.

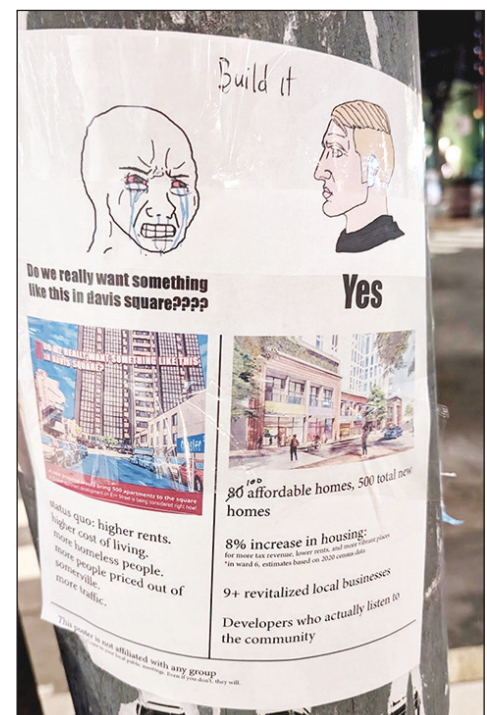
"We've had a huge uptick in the discussion of what's going on in the Copper Mill project because someone in the neighborhood printed flyers and delivered them," said Almquist.

The flyers contained DSNIC contact information with a photo of a large building, but Almquist says she doesn't know



Flyers began circulating last year when a developer proposed a 25-level apartment development in Davis Square on Elm Street.

— Photo Courtesy of Elaine Almquist



A response to the first flyer.

— Photo Courtesy of Thomas Low Sternberg

who made them.

"We want our neighbors to attend these meetings with the developer and express whatever their desires are about this building to the developer," she said, regarding the DSNIC meetings that occur on the last Monday of every month.

To date, there is no formal proposal for the building and the conceptual renderings of the Copper Mill project are preliminary ideas that have been presented at the open community meetings.

If everything goes as planned, construction could begin within

Continued on page 13



The third Copper Mill meeting on November 20.

— Photo Courtesy of Elaine Almquist

V66 Documentary to Screen at Somerville Theatre

The award-winning documentary feature *Life on the V: The Story of V66* is screening for one-night only at the Somerville Theatre on Thursday, February 27, at 7:30 p.m. in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the music TV channel V66 that hit the TV airwaves in Boston in February 1985. The screening will feature a post-screening Q&A with director Eric Green as well as former V66 employees.

Life on the V: The Story of V66 tells the story of V66, the hugely popular music video TV channel that was broadcast throughout the Boston area during the height of the music video craze in 1985-86, only to disappear from the airwaves after 18 months. Over 40 years later, the fans remain and memories of this channel have formed an important place in 80s nostalgia. The documentary focuses on this music outlet that came out at a time when cable penetration was minimal in New

Continued on page 22



Davis Square residents contemplate proposed 25-level high-rise on Elm Street

CONT. FROM PG 12

12 months' time. The current plans contain retail and commercial space components with first-level storefronts and the possibility of a restaurant. The residential part would have 500 units with 20 percent of the units meeting affordability requirements, according to the meeting notes.

There may be an underground parking lot with 100 spaces, but the development

team would like to encourage the use of public transit, and opinions on the parking "vary" among community members.

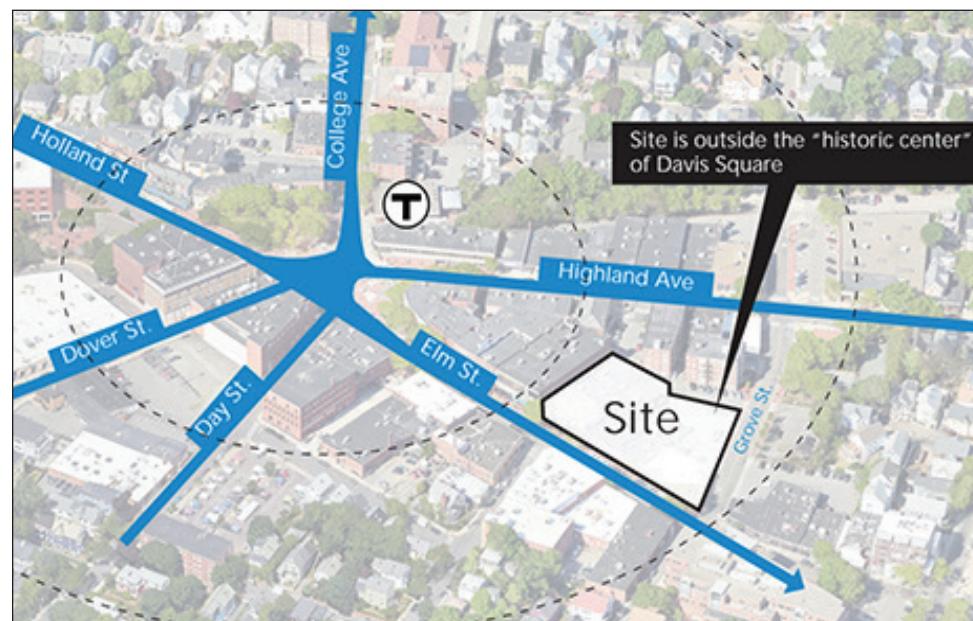
The Copper Mill team said the project timeline would span 18-24 months once the construction phase begins.

The next Copper Mill meeting will be on February 12 at 6 p.m. at the Somerville Community Baptist Church on College Avenue.

The DSNC holds monthly meetings on the last Monday of every month, and the next meeting will be on February 24 at 6 p.m. at Somerville Community Baptist Church.

"Housing remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Somerville and our region," according to Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "We know that expanding our housing sup-

ply, especially affordable housing, is critical to keeping Somerville accessible to residents of all backgrounds and incomes. As a city, we are committed to thoughtful, community-driven growth that supports local businesses, enhances our public spaces, and strengthens our neighborhoods. Any new development must align with our values of affordability, sustainability, and inclusivity."



Copper Mill renderings of the 231-249 Elm Street and 6-8 & 12 Grove Street proposed apartment development.

— Photos Courtesy of Copper Mill

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Ms. Cam's

From page 8

Olio

Answers

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. February | 7. Super Bowl VI |
| 2. First Friday in February | 8. Super Bowl XXIX: 49ers 49, Chargers 26 (75 total points) |
| 3. U2 | 9. Good luck for the new year |
| 4. Three: Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama | 10. Six more weeks of winter |
| 5. AFL-NFL World Championship Game | 11. The Snow Moon |
| 6. Massachusetts | 12. Two |

Somerville City Councilor At-Large Willie Burnley Jr announces his bid for mayor

On Sunday, City Councilor At-Large Willie Burnley Jr announced his run for mayor of Somerville. The prolific legislator has been a driving force for change since he was elected in 2021, passing a dozen laws that include expanding tenant rights, enhancing cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure with his Safe Streets Ordinance, ensuring police accountability, improving accessibility, reducing barriers to affordable housing, and creating first-of-its-kind protections for polyamorous residents.

“With a federal administration determined to roll back our rights, decisive local leadership is more important than ever,” Burnley said in a statement. “I’m running to become our next mayor because I believe I can bring our community together around shared values that will create a safer, more sustainable, and economically stronger Somerville.”

Burnley brings a record of pushing

to increase affordability to the race. As a councilor, he has advocated for using federal funds Somerville received to abolish medical debt for residents, successfully suspended inequitable fees for local tattoo parlors, and recently went viral for calling for an end to the practice of forcing renters to pay for brokers they didn’t hire. The only renter in the race, Burnley was once displaced from Somerville and intends to use the mayor’s power to find ways to bring down the cost of living for residents.

In addition to being previously endorsed for his council seat by Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley as well as Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, Burnley has racked up impressive union support in his previous races, having been backed by the Somerville Educators Union, UAW Region 9A, the Greater Boston Labor Council, 32BJ SEIU, and Teamsters 122. Before

joining the council, Burnley was a member of Teamsters 122.

“As mayor, I will expand benefits for city workers so that we can attract and retain staff, I will implement a Green New Deal for Somerville Public Schools so that our students can benefit from a fully sustainable learning environment, and we will finally create an unarmed emergency response program to support our neighbors experiencing crisis,” Burnley said.

The announcement serves as the latest example of Burnley making history. Previously, he was responsible for naming Leonard Grimes Park in East Somerville, the first park in the city to be named after a person of color. If elected, Burnley would be the first Black mayor of Somerville and tied with James E. Hagan for the youngest mayor of the city.

— Press release from the office of Willie Burnley Jr For Mayor of Somerville



City Councilor At-Large Willie Burnley Jr.

Former youth hockey president asks for middle school intramural girls’ hockey program in Somerville

By Harry Kane

A small parent group is working to grow girls’ ice hockey in Somerville.

An order was put forward by the City Council on January 23 for the Director of Somerville Parks & Recreation to discuss the introduction of an ongoing middle school intramural girls’ hockey program.

“We believe that a middle school intramural girls’ hockey program is an equity issue, an inclusivity issue and a sustainability issue,” said Annette McKee, former president of the Somerville Youth Hockey Association.

McKee says girls don’t have “real opportunity and access” in part due to the costs. And she says there are additional barriers.

“There is the persistent misconception and bias that hockey is a boys’ sport.”

Somerville Youth Hockey Association does not offer an all-girls’ hockey team at any level. “There is no girls’ hockey team at Somerville High School,” McKee added.

McKee argues that there is an “underinvestment” of girls’ hockey in the City of Somerville and by including intramural girls’ hockey in middle school, it would ad-

dress the need.

Middle school sports focus on skill development over competition. “It can provide a supportive, developmental fun environment for girls,” McKee explained.

According to the Women’s Sports Foundation, middle school girls drop out at twice the rate of boys in school sports by age 14.

“We believe that a city-wide intramural girls’ hockey program ... partnering with a nonprofit community-based organization like Somerville Youth Hockey can provide the sustainable foundation for building girls’ hockey in Somerville,” McKee said.

A student at Somerville High School named Natalie Zielinski said that she started playing hockey in the 6th grade and is currently on the Medford High School Girls Varsity Ice Hockey team because Somerville doesn’t have a girls’ team.

Hockey can be learned in middle school, just like volleyball or soccer. “Girls have specific needs,” Zielinski explained. “For example, they need their own space without boys to develop skills and learn to play confidently with a team that represents and supports them.”

Zielinski says that hockey can “help cul-



Somerville’s Parks & Recreation Department is being called upon to explore possibilities for an ongoing middle school intramural girls’ hockey program.

tivate a self-image that is athletic, healthy and overall positive for girls and teens in Somerville.”

Ward 6 City Councilor Lance L Davis said he was “over the moon” when he saw this item on the agenda. “I completely share the goal ... that would be wonderful,” said Councilor Davis.

Girls’ hockey is a growing sport in the United States and many residents like the idea of intramural hockey for girls, Councilor Davis explained.

If the city moves forward with the new intramural hockey program for middle school girls, one suggestion was to begin with two Somerville teams.

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Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 6

would allow cities and towns to increase local taxes on meals, lodging and vehicle registration; permanently authorize municipalities to permit hybrid public meetings; change state procurement laws; and create enforcement mechanisms to push utilities to more promptly remove double poles.

The tax hike provisions include giving local cities and towns the option to increase the maximum local option lodging tax on hotel, motel and other rentals from 6 percent to 7 percent in most communities, and 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent for Boston; increase the local meals tax ceiling from 0.75 percent to 1 percent; and adding a new local option surcharge of up to 5 percent on motor vehicle excise bills that can be dedicated to local stabilization funds.

“Every Massachusetts resident deserves to live in a community with high-quality local services, from safe roadways to access to good jobs and schools,” said Gov. Healey. “Our administration knows that city and town officials know their communities the best, and that’s why we want to empower them with the tools to make the choices they need to provide the best local services that meet the unique needs of their communities.”

“At a time when Massachusetts is already struggling with affordability and large-scale out-migration of people and wealth, the last thing we need is another round of tax hikes,” said Paul Craney, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance. “These proposals will make it even more expensive to live, work and do business here, pushing more families and employers to states with lower taxes and fewer regulations.”

\$712,500 FOR WELLBEING OF FIRST RESPONDERS – The Healey Administration announced the awarding of \$712,500 to support the wellbeing of first responders. The grants are designed to ensure that services are available to members of law enforcement and other emergency responders in the aftermath of a traumatic incident in the line of duty.

“When police officers encounter life threatening dangers as they work to protect communities, we have a duty to ensure they have access to services and supports as they cope with the trauma they’ve experienced,” said Gov. Maura Healey. “These grants help ensure that first responders across Massachusetts can access these critical – and often lifesaving – resources.”

“These grants are an investment in the wellbeing of law enforcement officers and other first responders,” said Public Safety and Security Secretary Terrence Reidy. “The funding allows us to support critical incident stress management services that will ensure those who protect our communities have access to the vital services they’re entitled to.”

DON’T MISS THIS EVENT – Join Massachusetts energy leaders in government, industry and advocacy at

the MCLE in Boston on March 26 for an important discussion about the state’s energy policy and its goals for a net-zero future, hosted by the State House News Service. With the return of a new Trump administration and policies hindering wind power development, the state’s plan to expand its offshore wind portfolio faces uncertainty.

While solar power offers potential, its scalability is limited by grid capacity issues and requires substantial investment. Other promising technologies like fusion and low-carbon hydrogen have yet to be implemented in the commonwealth. Tickets/more info: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/power-interruption-tickets-1219762716119?aff=oddttdcreator>

\$6 MILLION FOR PROVIDING PRISONERS WITH TECH SKILLS – Tech Goes Home (TGH) and Ameelio, two non-profits dedicated to closing the digital divide, announced the receipt of a \$6 million grant with more than \$4 million earmarked to bring digital skills courses to more than 3,600 adults and youth housed in county jails and Department of Youth Services facilities in the Bay State.

Most prisons have limited and outdated technology, making it difficult for individuals to acclimate to the rapidly advancing digital world upon release.

“We’re incredibly proud that this new partnership, made possible through critical funding provided by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, will make it possible for us to provide incarcerated young people and adults in the commonwealth with digital skills training and tools that will expand access to workforce, community engagement and education opportunities,” said Dan Noyes, CEO of TGH. “This grant is a big step forward for digital equity and justice in Massachusetts.”

April Feng, CEO of Ameelio said, “This grant will enable us to extend our reach and provide critical digital literacy resources to Massachusetts incarcerated individuals, enabling them to develop skills that will allow them to reintegrate into society as responsible and contributing members. This is a significant step towards our mission: Building a more rehabilitative and humane justice system. Ameelio is excited to join TGH to lead the charge.”

“CELEBRATE” UNCLAIMED PROPERTY DAY – State Treasurer Deb Goldberg announced that February 1 is National Unclaimed Property Day. She urges all residents to go to findmassmoney.gov or call 888-344-MASS (6277) to see if they can claim any of the \$3.4 billion the state is holding in unclaimed money.

Unclaimed property includes forgotten savings and checking accounts, uncashed checks, insurance policy proceeds, stocks, dividends and the contents of unattended safe deposit boxes. Most accounts are considered abandoned and are turned over to the state after three years of inactivity. There is no time limit for a person to recover their proper-

ty and, in many cases, claimants will receive interest.

In 2024, Treasury processed over 131,000 claims and returned \$191 million in property to its rightful owners.

“It’s Unclaimed Property Day, so take a minute to check for your name or a family member, a friend, and even a business that might be listed,” said Goldberg. “Our team is ready, willing and able to walk you through the process and reunite you with your property.”

\$19 MILLION FOR STATEWIDE DIGITAL EQUITY EFFORTS – The Healey administration and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute announced \$19 million in grants to support participants of the Digital Equity Partnerships Program. The funds will support active digital equity projects focused on delivering training, resources and broadband infrastructure to Massachusetts residents.

Supporters say these projects will distribute upwards of 500 devices, expand the Apartment Wi-Fi program by 4,000 units and increase digital access for nearly 20,000 residents across the state.

“Massachusetts is committed to closing the digital divide through strategic partnerships that focus on the needs of residents,” said Massachusetts Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao. “These grants give us the opportunity to ensure that residents across the state have direct access to their professional, health, and social needs, while at the same time driving long-term economic growth through expanded training and education.”

“The Digital Equity Partnerships program leverages the expertise of high-capacity organizations delivering skills training, devices, and Wi-Fi to the people who need it most,” said MBI Program Executive Jody Jones. “Our targeted efforts are making a real impact with the goal of delivering ‘Internet for All’ in Massachusetts. With these grants, Massachusetts is creating economic opportunity and ensuring all residents can fully participate in society.”

\$325,000 TO RESTORE CRITICAL WILDLIFE HABITAT – The Healey Administration today announced \$325,000 in grants to restore approximately 520 acres of wildlife habitat across Massachusetts. The Department of Fish and Game’s (DFG) Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is awarding grants to several organizations through the Habitat Management Grant Program which provides financial assistance to private and municipal owners of conserved lands to improve habitat for wildlife, steward biodiversity, enhance climate resiliency and promote public recreational opportunities.

“Partnership and collaboration are essential for meeting our ambitious biodiversity and climate goals,” said DFG Commissioner Tom O’Shea. “Most forests and other wildlife habitats in Massachusetts are not state-owned, and we rely on conservation organizations, cities and towns, private landowners, and other

Constellation, a space for movement, support, and creativity

By Jeffrey Shwom

There is something peaceful, welcoming, and make-it-your-own about Constellation. Maybe it is the moveable furniture, the openness of the cozy space, or the windows that host art as well as spots for people to watch the world outside. I had arrived after lunch hour yoga concluded at Constellation, a studio for creative and mindful practices, where I was hosted by Jenn Falk, founder, yoga/movement teacher and group facilitator.

Yes, yoga happens here but it is not a yoga studio. "I did not really want it to be a yoga studio. I wanted to be able to share yoga practices and movement practices of different kinds, with other events going on as well."

Since opening September 2024, Falk's programs and offerings have evolved. Right now, they include things like slow flow yoga and movement, a new parent support group, lunch hour yoga, peri+post menopause support group, a crafting circle (think knitting, crocheting, colageing, something portable), and kids yoga (age 7-10 recommended age). Plus, Constellation hosts one off events like a birthing prep workshop, a creative support group for artists, and a "playing with intuition" class with drawing. Overall, Falk says, "my aim is not for the schedule to be jam packed. It is more about quality offerings with our life schedules."

Falk has lived in the area for over twenty years (she lives within walking distance and one of her children will go to SHS next year), has continuously been a yoga

teacher during that time, and has been involved with other creative communities, like a theater troupe and jewelry making. These experiences inform how she envisions the space going forward.

The biggest draw is how she brings movement into what she does. "The way I teach is a blend of my 25 years of studying yoga but also being an athlete. I grew up as a runner and basketball player. That is what got me into yoga. Mindful movement is blending styles of yoga that I love with certain somatic movements and stretching and even strength shapes. I tend to leave it up to who attends class what I bring in from day to day. People will influence what happens."

There is an intersection of folks' personal needs and of the community here. We asked how the mix of people's personal intentions and the idea of creating community blend together. Falk described herself as "an introverted extrovert. It takes me a while to warm up. Once I know people, I am that awkward person that says hi in the coffee shop, even if I barely know you, and I hope to see you again. This space is welcoming that (idea) ... welcoming people to learn faces of the community." Here is where the name Constellation comes in. "We are all made up of the same things that piece together the world. We just might be in different phases, in different times."

She has been intentional about what the space is, to honor the past occupants. "I took over ... from the previous tenant (Amy Lou Stein). It used to be called Craftwork, an artist studio / makerspace. I taught some classes here." Amy hosted artist pop ups as



Constellation yoga studio is a place for creative and mindful practices, according to founder Jenn Falk.

well, which is why Falk says that Constellation "became the studio for creative and mindful practices. I wanted to continue to honor the local artists community."

There are no formal memberships at Constellation, like at traditional wellness centers, gyms and yoga studios, and that is by design. For starters, you can head to a pop-up event or visit Falk and another teacher who works there during open

hours, where people can just come in. "We have free tea and coffee for people. They are welcome to bring a book, a computer, or even use a yoga bolster."

Constellation is located at 259 Highland Ave, next to Jade Moran Jewelry and a couple doors down from Somerville's Engine 7 fire station. Visit <https://www.studioconstellation.com/> or follow @constellation_ville on Instagram.



SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

Medical Equipment Program – Through the generosity of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and from the direction of Mayor Balantyne, 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.

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 ses-

sion will focus on different topics related to internet use and safety.

Cultural Series Event – featuring Comedian David Shikes. Tuesday, February 18th 11:00 a.m. at the Dilboy Post located at 351 Summer Street. \$5 per person. Lunch will be served at noon (ham, mac & cheese, vegetable and salad) - 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.

Valentines Day Luncheon – Thursday, February 13th starting at 11:00 a.m. at the George Dilboy Post located at 351 Summer Street. \$10 per person. Join us for an afternoon of music and a special meal (chicken parmigiana, pasta & salad.) Reserve your spot for the event and lunch by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Trivia & Tunes – Thursday, February 6th starting at 11:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Looking for something fun and new to do? Grab some friends and join us for the upcoming Trivia & Tunes game. Trivia & Tunes combines questions designed for seniors across a broad variety of categories with musical clues from artists like Sinatra, the Supremes, Dean Martin, Ella Fitzgerald and Elvis. Lunch will be served at noon. Lunch provided by Somerville Cambridge Elder Services, City Fresh Caterer. RSVP by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

On the Road with Social Services – Our Social Services Team is heading to Capen Court on Thursday, February 13th from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. If you live at Capen Court, be sure to stop by with questions around food stamps, health insurance or other social benefits you may have or may be interested in learning about.

FDIC Money Smart – Friday, February 14th starting at 11:00 a.m., representatives from Northern Bank will conduct a presentation on financial exploitation. This presentation will focus on computer and internet-based scams and how best to avoid them. RSVP by calling Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov.

Social Security Seminar – Thursday, February 6th at 3:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center or via Zoom. Social Security Public Affairs Specialist, Kentia Torres will be presenting on all things Social Security. This will be a virtual presentation so you can join at home via Zoom or join with a group at the Council on Aging. RSVP to Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318 or email at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov.

Art Therapy – Monday, February 24th at 1:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. Join Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Registered Art

Therapist, Erica Curcio for a relaxing and crafty af-ternoon! Learn how to paint flowers that you will cut and collage on a homemade card. RSVP to Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318 or email Molly at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov

Learn to Manage Chronic Diabetes in a Free Virtual Class – The class begins on Tuesday, February 11th and continues for six weeks, meeting on Tuesdays from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. This is a camera-on, interactive workshop that will take place over Zoom. Registration is required by Friday, February 7th. Participants will need to pick up a book from Somerville Cambridge Elder Services at 61 Medford Street by Monday, February 10th. For more information or to register please call Meghan Ostrander at 617-628-2601, ext. 3172 or email Meghan at meghan.ostrander@eldercare.org. Please contact SCES as soon as possible if you need special assistance to obtain the book.

Movie Day – Friday, February 14th starting at 10:30 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. This month's movie is Barbie starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling. The running time is 1 hour 54 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.

SOCIAL MEDIA

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

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

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

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

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

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

Book review: 'Murder in the White House' by Margaret Truman

By Dennis Fischman

A lot of authors have come out of the White House. There is a whole shelf of Presidential memoirs, some more readable than others – and some less self-serving than others.

Ron Reagan Jr. wrote a memoir of his presidential papa, *My Father at 100* [1]. (An amusing side note: Ron the younger was a freshman at Yale in the Fall of 1976, the same semester as I started there. Because he didn't submit a photo for the freshman yearbook, above the name "Ronald Reagan" appeared a portrait of Karl Marx.)

In the mystery genre, Hillary Clinton, former First Lady and Secretary of State, co-authored *State of Terror* [2] with noted author Louise Penny [3]. It's an international thriller involving a President who appoints one of his critics as Secretary of State. Sound familiar? The book received mixed reviews, but no one could deny that Clinton was writing about a world she knew

firsthand.

You could say the same about *Murder in the White House*, by Margaret Truman [4]. The daughter of former President Harry Truman (1945-1953) began her career as a writer by penning biographies of her father and her mother, Bess Truman. In this book, Margaret turned her hand to murder mysteries set in Washington, DC. It's the first in a series she called *Capital Crimes*.

The murdered man is Secretary of State Lansard Blaine. The scene of the crime is the White House, fairly late at night, when only a limited number of people would have access to the room in which his garroted body is found.

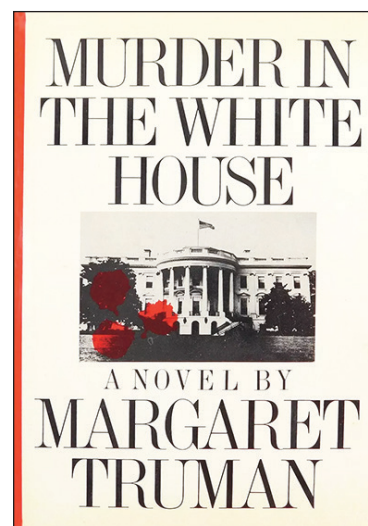
That sounds like the setup for a cozy mystery [5], in the style of Agatha Christie or Dorothy Sayers. But Special Counsel Ron Fairbanks, whom President Webster assigns to head the investigation, soon finds out that nothing is as it seems. Not the Secretary of State himself, who has a secret life full of sex and bribery. Not

the Secret Service, which may be trying to get Fairbanks off the case. And not the President, his psychologist wife, or their beautiful young daughter, Lynne, who's been romantically linked with Ron Fairbanks for a while before the case begins.

Will Ron be able to solve the murder? To do so, will he have to ruin the First Family (or else betray the ethical independence that made him a trustworthy White House counsel in the first place)?

Murder in the White House is not a bad debut to a mystery series. The pace is a bit uneven – it really speeds up toward the end – and the Washington, DC it portrays is a world where nearly every important person is a WASP male, usually from either an elite college or military background, and the biggest political differences are over how much free trade vs. how much protectionism to allow in international economics. That makes the story feel dated today.

But the female characters are



Murder in the White House, by Margaret Truman. G.K. Hall & Co., 1980, 409 pages.

not mere plot devices: they are full characters with motives and powers of their own. And the female author, the daughter of a former President, was in a unique position to bring us behind the scenes of power politics in the U.S. capital.

Will Malia Obama or Barron Trump write murder mysteries someday? If so, they can only hope they do as well as Margaret Truman did.

Links:



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

[1] <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/308623/my-father-at-100-by-ron-reagan/>

[2] <https://www.simonandschuster.com/p/state-of-terror>

[3] <https://www.simonandschuster.com/authors/Louise-Penny/184974455>

[4] <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/3433615-murder-in-the-white-house>

[5] <https://www.thesomerville-times.com/archives/131574>

Mimi's Chūka Diner celebrates Grand Opening

Rafi Properties, Owner and Operator of Somernova, announced that Mimi's Chūka Diner celebrated its grand opening in the Aeronaut Foods Hub at Somernova. Designed to be a welcoming neighborhood restaurant, Mimi's Chūka Diner, founded by local Chefs Ted Woo and Jon Awerman, will bring Japanese-adapted Chinese cuisine ("chūka ryori") blended with the American diner concept to Somerville.

Woo and Awerman were drawn to the location of the Aeronaut Foods Hub at Somernova because of its direct proximity to Somerville's vibrant food and beverage community and its broader connectivity to Somernova's innovation campus. The 38-seat retro diner will offer locals and visitors alike satisfying yet affordable dishes that are further complemented by the welcoming environment.

"We're excited that our dream of opening a restaurant is finally here, and we're thrilled to bring our vision for Mimi's Chūka Diner to the Aeronaut Foods Hub at Somernova," said Ted Woo and Jon Awerman, Owners of Mimi's Chūka Diner. "Our goal is to create a welcoming space

for the community – to be a neighborhood restaurant where locals, Somernova tenants, and visitors alike can enjoy inventive yet comforting dishes inspired by our combined culinary heritages. We can't wait to invite our neighbors in and become a part of the vibrant fabric of Somernova and Union Square."

Mimi's menu features some standout dishes such as the chūka-inspired Ebi Chili, as well as Karaage and handmade Gyoza, available in either a classic pork or vegan option. Mimi's diner-inspired menu items include a mouthwatering house-ground burger with Mimi's own yaki-bbq sauce, a matzo ball wonton soup that warms and nourishes the soul, and perfectly crispy hand-cut fries tossed in "chuka fine herbs."

"Mimi's Chūka Diner brings something special and different to the Aeronaut Foods Hub and will be a great neighborhood restaurant for the Somerville and Somernova community," said Ronn Friedlander, Founder and Co-Chief Executive Officer of Aeronaut Brewing. "Ted and Jon have worked tirelessly to bring their vision for a



neighborhood restaurant to life and are an exciting addition to the Aeronaut space."

"Mimi's goal of bringing people together through food resonates deeply with our mission to cultivate a collaborative and inspiring place for entrepreneurs," said Kristin Phelan, Vice President of Real Estate Development for Rafi and Somernova. "We couldn't be more excited for this addition to our growing ecosystem of innovators and creators and are thrilled to welcome the Mimi's Chūka Diner team to Somernova."

Mimi's is located on the Somernova campus in the Aeronaut Foods Hub at 14 Tyler

St. in Somerville, MA, alongside other local food entrepreneurs including Carolicious Venezeulan Food and Somerville Chocolate. The restaurant will be open for dine-in eating Tuesday through Thursday from 5 to 10 p.m., Friday from 5 to 11 p.m. and Saturday from 12 to 11 p.m. Mimi's will be open for takeout on Sunday through Monday from 12 to 8:30 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday from 12 to 10 p.m., and Friday through Saturday from 12 to 11 p.m. Final food orders must be placed 30 minutes before the restaurant closes.

For more information on Mimi's Chūka Diner, please visit mimischukadiner.com.



Somerville Fair Housing Commission
Question of the week



Q: Why does the city have a Fair Housing Commission? Isn't preventing discrimination in housing a federal issue?

A: Two reasons: First, there is a national-level Fair Housing Act, but both Massachusetts and Somerville have added protections that the federal law doesn't include. We have to take care our local laws are respected. And second, we can't leave enforcement up to D.C. Even when we had a Secretary of Housing and Urban Development who believed in affirmatively furthering Fair Housing, federal investigations could take years. Somerville won't wait that long for justice.

The 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.

Sunday Concert Series: Anticipation

The Tufts University Department of Music presents Sunday Concert Series: Anticipation at the Perry and Marty Granoff Music Center on Sunday, February 9, at 3:00pm. Music by Jacob Kremberg, Johann Schenk, and J.P. Rameau with Pamela Dellal, voice, Catherine Liddell, Baroque lute and the-orbo, Frances Conover Fitch, harpsichord, and Jane Hershey, viola da gamba.

The Granoff Music Center is located at 20 Talbot Avenue on Tufts' Medford/Somerville campus. For more information, please visit as.tufts.edu/music/musiccenter or call the Granoff Music Center Box Office at 617-627-2253.

Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Illuminated emissions...

— Photo by Denise Provost

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



I gave my handyman a to-do list, but he only did jobs 1, 3, and 5. Turns out he only does odd jobs.

On This Day in History

February 5

- 1631 – A ship from Bristol arrives with provisions for the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- 1783 – Sweden recognizes U.S. independence.
- 1846 – The first Pacific Coast newspaper, Oregon Spectator, is published.
- 1917 – U.S. Congress nullifies President Woodrow Wilson's veto of the Immigration Act as literacy tests are required.
- 1918 – The Soviets proclaim separation of church and state.
- 1922 – The Reader's Digest begins publication in New York.
- 1947 – The Soviet Union and Great Britain reject terms for an American trusteeship over Japanese Pacific Isles.
- 1952 – New York adopts three-colored traffic lights.
- 1961 – The Soviets launch Sputnik V, the heaviest satellite to date at 7.1 tons.
- 1971 – Two Apollo 14 astronauts walk on the moon.
- 1985 – U.S. halts a loan to Chile in protest over human rights abuses.

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Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

Important tips for **staying safe and warm in the current cold weather**: 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.

Join a public **Community Meeting** regarding **231-249 Elm Street and 6-8 & 12 Grove Street** (the Development project from the Burren to Dragon Pizza). **Wednesday, February 12**, at 6 p.m. **Somerville Community Baptist Church**, 31 College Ave. The property owner and developer will be engaging in a discussion regarding the project. This is the 5th conversation and meeting notes from the previous four meetings can be found here: <https://allevents.in/somerville/community-meeting-re-231-249-elm-street-and-6-8-and-12-grove-street/200027806790629>.

The **Somerville Public Library** is starting a **Seed Library** at all 3 locations. They are offering two **“Seed Packing Parties”** that they wanted to share: (1) **Monday, February 10**, 6-8 p.m. at the **West Branch**; and (2) **Saturday, February 15**, 2-4 p.m. at the **Central Branch**. Hang with your fellow community members and help repackage native, herb, and vegetables seeds into take-home size packets as part of this new initiative. <https://www.facebook.com/share/1EHpC2k1zB/>

Join the **Somerville Museum** for an unforgettable night of music with **The Muss**. The Muss is a vibrant Nepalese folk rock group that blends the raw energy of rock with the soulful essence of traditional Nepali folk music. With their electrifying tunes, heartfelt lyrics, and stirring performances, they aim to unite generations and celebrate Nepal’s rich cultural legacy. **Somerville Jatra! The Ultimate Nepalese Folk Rock Experience** with The Muss, **Sunday, February 9**, 4 – 6 p.m., **Arts at the Armory**, 191 Highland Avenue Somerville, Admission Free. RSVP <https://www.somervillemuseum.org/>.

The **Boston Science Fiction Film Festival** celebrates 50 years. The fest returns to Somerville’s **Davis Square**, 55 Davis Square, February 12–16 with local premieres, visiting filmmakers, and 24 hours of genre favorites. Visit <https://www.bostonscifi.com/2025festival>.

Abstract painter and **Brickbottom Artists’ Building** founding member **Diane Novetsky** has assembled a cohort of three inventive painters for a new exhibit of current abstraction at Brickbottom Gallery, opening **February 9** and running **through February 28**. Brickbottom Artists Association, 1 Fitchburg St., Somerville, MA.

The **Somerville High Trivia Team** is competing on **GBH’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. Somerville’s first match will air on GBH and Youtube on **February 22**.

LEGO® Brick’s 67th Birthday and **LEGO Discovery Center Boston** is celebrating by launching a brand-new event called **LEGO Creativity Academy through March 3**. Event URL and tickets: <https://www.legodiscoverycenter.com/boston/whats-inside/events/creativity-academy/>.

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.

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.eastsomervillemainstreets.org.

The **Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development** has released a draft version of the city’s **Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)** and is inviting feedback until **February 12**. This document will guide city work on

parks, sports fields, open space, conservation land, and recreational programming. Visit <https://voice.somervillema.gov/open-space-and-recreation-plan-update> to read the draft version of the plan, and be sure to submit feedback via email at amaurer@somervillema.gov, or by leaving comments under the “Questions & Comments” tab.

Enjoy this weekend’s events at the **Somerville Community Growing Center**, 22 Vinal Ave: **Community Introduction to Nature Monitoring in the City, Saturday, February 8**, 2 – 3:30 pm. **The Earthwise Aware** naturalist team introduces how to document and help the Growing Center’s plant and insect communities. All welcome to join—beginners welcome. Register on their website <https://www.thegrowingcenter.org/> for limited spots and for background information and suggestions for downloading free data recording apps. **DIY Milk Jug Greenhouses, Sunday, February 9**, 1-2 p.m. February and March is the perfect time to get a head start on planting by doing some winter sowing. Growing Center volunteers will walk you through the process of making and planting your own mini greenhouse to take home. Seeds, Soil and empty jugs will be provided. **Family Winter Play Date, Sunday, February 9**, 12– 2 p.m. Enjoy the winter garden while playing and exploring. Winter fun activities will be available, suited for ages 2-10. Bring a mug for herbal tea.

SCES is teaming up with **City Fresh Foods** to offer a **five-pack of frozen home delivered meals**. This new meal delivery option is ideal for consumers who want the convenience of home delivered meals but are not able to be at home each weekday to receive deliveries. Meal recipients can choose which weekday they would like to receive the frozen meals, with up to five meals in each bulk delivery. Each meal comes with bread, milk, and a dessert. Current SCES clients who are interested in receiving meals should call their office at 617-628-2601 or contact their case manager for more information.

COA’s Valentine’s Day Luncheon, Thursday, February 13, starting at 11 a.m. at the **George Dilboy Post** located at 351 Summer Street. \$10 per person. Join us for an afternoon of music and a special meal (chicken parmigiana, pasta and salad.) Reserve your spot for the event and

lunch by calling **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

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: somerville-ma.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 somerville-ma.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 *Continued on page 22*

V66 Documentary to Screen at Somerville Theatre

CONT. FROM PG 13

England and when MTV was scarcely available.

Told from the perspective of radio legends and channel co-founders, John Garabedian and the late great Arnie "Woo Woo" Ginsburg, as well as a who's who in the Boston 80s music scene, the film provides a comprehensive behind-the-scenes view of what it was like to be a part of the magic happening at this station that still brings back a flood of enthusiastic emotion for those fans who were glued to their TVs 40 years ago.

The documentary team tracked down and interviewed over 30 former V66 employees including David O'Leary (who is now on MAGIC 106.7-FM), Greg Hill (who is now on WVEEI 93.7-FM), Bill Stephens, and Bob Rivers (who is heard on The Pike 100-FM), over 30 musicians who were either on V66 or influenced by V66 (including members of The Cars, The J. Geils Band, New Edition, 'Til Tuesday, Extreme, The Del Fuegos, The Lemonheads, Dropkick Murphys, Puddle of Mudd, Letters to Cleo and Morphine),

and over 15 fans. Interviews were filmed in people's homes, workplaces, rehearsal spaces and music venues.

"To mark the 40th anniversary of this piece of music and broadcast history in Boston, I am absolutely thrilled to return to Somerville Theatre" says Life on the V director Eric Green. "There's a reason this venue is still going strong over 110 years later and our screenings among my favorite: the projection, the sound, the classic cinema's history. Could not be happier to have it return for an anniversary screening!"

This marks the third screening of Life on the V: The Story of V66 at Somerville Theatre. In April 2014, the documentary had its World Premiere at Independent Film Festival Boston, where hundreds of fans lined the block to catch it in the main cinema. In August 2015, after screenings festivals and being distributed by MVD Entertainment Group, the documentary returned for a packed one-night screening. The screening will take place on the 40th anniversary of V66 premiering the channel 66 TV airwaves in February 1985.

Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 6

partners to greatly expand our impact. This program provides us with the unique opportunity to improve habitat for at-risk wildlife while also bolstering outdoor recreation opportunities for all."

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"The number one issue facing the American people is high costs. The President's tariffs represent nothing more than a giant price hike on the cost of groceries, clothes, phones, housing and energy. We estimate that electricity costs in New England alone will go up by as much as \$200 million a year. Additionally, we rely on these countries for lumber and building materials, which means housing costs will rise, and housing production could stall. We need a partner in the White House who will lower costs for families and businesses in Massachusetts, and all we've seen thus far from this new administration are actions that will do the exact opposite." — Gov. Maura Healey in response to the White House's announcement that President Trump will

implement a 25 percent tariff on goods coming into the United States from Canada and Mexico and a 10 percent tariff on goods from China.

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. 27-31, the House

a met for a total of 17 minutes while the Senate met for a total of 25 minutes.

Mon. Jan. 27	House 11:02 a.m. to 11:08 a.m. Senate 11:14 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.
Tues. Jan. 28	No House session No Senate session
Wed. Jan. 29	House 11:02 a.m. to 11:03 a.m. No Senate session
Thurs. Jan. 30	House 11:03 a.m. to 11:13 a.m. Senate 11:02 a.m. to 11:21 a.m.
Fri. Jan. 31	No House session No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 21

signing up? You can call 3-1-1 (617-666-3311) for assistance.

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.

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. 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.

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

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

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



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Poet Ellen Steinbaum finds beauty in simplicity

Lyrical
SOMERVILLE
edited by Doug Holder

Recently, I caught up with poet Ellen Steinbaum to interview her about her new collection, *Leavings*.

Steinbaum wrote me: “*Leavings* is my fifth collection and I’ve also written a one-person play. My work has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize and is included in anthologies including Garrison Keillor’s *Good Poems, American Places*; *The Widows’ Handbook*; *A Mighty Room: A Collection of Poems Written in Emily Dickinson’s Bedroom*; and *CavanKerry’s Waiting Room Reader II*. An award-winning journalist and former *Boston Globe* columnist, I write a blog, *Reading and Writing and the Occasional Recipe*, which can be found at my web site, ellensteinbaum.com.”



This is the final poem in *Leavings*:

“**The Intervening Day**” we call it:

the day between his birthday and our anniversary, between the beginning of his days and the formal beginning of our days together, between these two occasions for cards and cakes, good wishes, celebrations, this one day that has no ritual, just an everyday day, a day we notice perhaps only because it sits sandwiched between the two momentous ones, a day when nothing further is required than our simple gratitude for one more ordinary day.

Doug Holder: Poet Charles Coe wrote of your poetry collection that your poetry evokes “profound truths in the smallest, quite corners.” Could one say you find the profound in the mundane – the minutiae?

Ellen Steinbaum: I love that Charles said that. I hadn’t thought about that but, yes, it feels right. Though I admire poets who can wrestle with huge subjects and bring them into a scale for human observation, I think I am more comfortable with the very small thing that might almost escape notice.

DH: Your lead poem *Commitment* deals with – of all things – cockroaches. You have a knack for seeing the ugly/beauty – the romantic gloss of this roach couple?

ES: I think “ick – cockroach,” but I did like learning that these creatures I consider loathsome actually have this behavior I find – write it – charming!

DH: Regarding your poem about the doomed Donner Party, I can’t help but think of Donald

Trump – a ham-fisted, carnival barker and snake oil salesman, who leads his hapless flock to their death.

ES: Exactly what I hoped you’d think of, including the happy coincidence of the two names.

DH: In your poem *What Happiness Is?*, you explore the “limp gifts” – the little things – that are indeed consequential in a relationship. This brings us back to the profundity of minutiae.

ES: Yes. What I was thinking of here was how, when we are lucky enough to spend our days with someone we care about, the tiniest observations become little “gifts” of noticing to offer for sharing. Noticing is something I’ve written about specifically, because noticing is what poets need to do – right? – in order to find something worth turning into metaphor, worth thinking about.

DH: Do you feel your years as a journalist informs your poetry?

ES: I’m sure they do. When I turned to poetry it was out of a desire to say something in a way I couldn’t do in prose, but I think it’s all of a piece, different ways of putting into words and sharing what I find interesting.

DH: Why should we read your book?

ES: There’s a wonderful line by Willa Cather: there are only two or three human stories and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.

I really believe that’s true. We each have our own details, but the basic outlines of our stories are easily recognizable to one another. And I think the more our individual stories are told with our specific details, the easier they are for someone else to see their own stories in. And isn’t that what we all crave, especially after a lockdown that isolated us from one another and societal divisions of all kinds – a point of connection, of commonality? My story – or the things I’ve noticed enough to bring into my poems – are mine, but I think others can find themselves in what I’ve noticed and written about, and then maybe feel connected to others through that.

Emma Colmary is an aspiring author and illustrator of children’s literature and is currently attending her final semester at Endicott College. Her poetic and artistic works are closely tied to her appreciation for earthly and celestial wonder. She enjoys storytelling, glitter glue, and little trinkets.



Not long ago, you were a sound.

Listen and remember:

You were there in the wind and waves.
You were chimes– caressed– and the humming bee
and the squelch of wet earth under the laughing child’s rain boots.
You were the distant thunder on one summer night.
You were the joyful chord from the aged piano.
And also, you were the dull note in its sea of ivory.
How expansive you were.
You saw traffic whiz
And couples kiss
And bottles swig
And bodies rinsed
And sleepless parents rocking cribs
And dandelions blown
And daisies picked
Before you, the entire world unfolded.
Once some endless spirit, never contained.
But here you are with your eyes closed:
listening, recalling.
The leaves rustle your name.

Womb

I want to carry me
and feel mothered inside
like swimming in the night lake.

— Emma Colmary

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