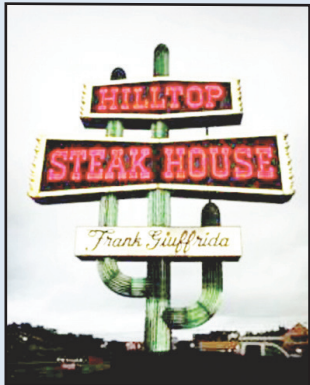




Inside:



Plastic cows and a neon cactus
page 3



Family-friendly comedy
page 9



HONK! Festival 2025
pages 12-13

City leaders, residents convene for Davis Square public safety meeting



Homelessness and public safety in the Davis Square and Seven Hills Park areas were the topic at a public meeting held on October 6.
— Photos by Bobbie Toner

By Jordan Pagkalinawan

Dozens of residents joined Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Deputy Police Chief Jim Donovan, and other city leaders inside the Somerville Community Baptist Church on October 6 to discuss concerns over homelessness and public safety around Davis Square and Seven Hills Park.

In her opening remarks and during a “Frequently Asked Questions” section, Mayor Ballantyne said the city has followed “evidence-based” practices in assisting the unhoused population around Davis Square, which include a “core compassion” for all residents without tolerating violence. The city has also worked with numerous public health services and nonprofits, including the Somerville Homeless Coalition, to assist in providing
Continued on page 4

Arts at the Armory presents ‘The Rocky Horror Picture Show’ 50th Anniversary

Head over to Arts at the Armory October 30 for the 4th annual *Rocky Horror Picture Show* with the Tesseracte Players for a special 50th anniversary screening.

Jump into the 1975 musical comedy horror cult classic in-person and live this Halloween. Costumes and call backs are highly encouraged. The Tesseracte Players will lead the charge and make sure you don’t miss a moment of the raucous ride.

Doors open at 7 p.m., the viewing starts at 8 p.m. Come early and enjoy wine, beer, and snacks from the Performance Hall bar.

The Tesseracte Players of Boston have roamed New England, bringing Dr. Frank-N-Furter and friends to life for 20+ years.

The sh*t bags can be purchased for an additional fee with your tickets at checkout. Continued on page 15



The 50th anniversary screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* will be held at Arts at the Armory on Thursday, October 30.

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

The Ribbon Cutting for Central Hill Veterans Vietnam and Korean Wars Memorial takes place on Thursday, October 16, from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m., 81 Highland Ave. Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Ward 3 City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen invite community members to attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the reinstallation of the Vietnam and Korean Wars Memorials on Central Hill. To learn more, visit www.voice.somervillema.gov/central-hill-memorials.

Attend the Broadway Magoun Reconstruction Project kick-off meeting. Community members are invited to attend a virtual meeting on Wednesday, October 15, from 6 to 7:30 pm online via Zoom. City staff will introduce the project, and attendees are welcome to share their ideas and experiences traveling along Broadway. Get all project information at www.somervillema.gov/broadwaymagoun.

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy birthday to City Councilor At Large, Vice President, Will Mbah. We hope he has a great celebration and enjoys his day. We wish a Happy birthday to former Alderman Maryann Heuston. We hope she has a great birthday. Happy birthday to one of our own, Mike Reis, who is celebrating this week. He makes sure the newspaper gets out on the streets on Wednesdays. We wish him the best. We want to wish Somerville resident and Vietnam Veteran

Continued on page 7

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of October 15 – October 21 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
Wednesday October 15	Partly Cloudy	61°/42°	8%	4%	NNW 13 mph
Thursday October 16	Sunny	56°/42°	2%	1%	NNW 15 mph
Friday October 17	Partly Cloudy	58°/41°	1%	1%	NW 10 mph
Saturday October 18	Partly Cloudy	60°/50°	6%	3%	WSW 9 mph
Sunday October 19	Partly Cloudy	70°/62°	15%	11%	S 11 mph
Monday October 20	Rain	63°/49°	62%	45%	SW 15 mph
Tuesday October 21	Partly Cloudy	65°/50°	22%	13%	W 12 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: A Hidden Risk to Climate Goals: The Transformer Roadblock

Chris Allen says:

The administration needs to also fix the fact that new buildings are being forced to put transformers out front facing the street, which has a strong negative impact on the streetscape. 379 Somerville Ave is a good example of this.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

The Somerville Times

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Dorothy Dimarzo, Bob Doherty
Photographer: Claudia Ferro

The Somerville Times is published every Wednesday

A proud member of the following newspaper organizations:



Granoff Music Center Colloquium: 'The Stoic Mixtape' Melinda Latour (Tufts University)

The Tufts University Department of Music presents "Granoff Music Center Colloquium: 'The Stoic Mixtape' - Melinda Latour (Tufts University)" in the Varis Lecture Hall at the Granoff Music Center on Monday, October 20, at 12 p.m.

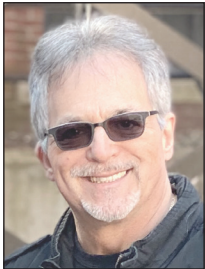
The Stoics are back – and not just in philosophy classrooms. Across the social and political spectrum, ancient Stoic wisdom has been attracting new audiences seeking emotional resilience and mental clarity in these times of instability and change. But did you know the Stoics also had something to say about music? In this talk, Melinda Latour will explore the unexpected significance of music in the Stoic tradition. Revealing ancient insights within modern soundscapes– from rap and metal to country and classic rock, Latour reimagines music not just as entertainment, but as a transformative practice cultivated through the art of listening.



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.

Plastic cows and a neon cactus



Growing up in Somerville over the last few decades gave us lots of delicious dining memories. We had a lot of very good local restaurants. I remember

those Friday nights at The Continental on Somerville Ave. for pizza and orange tonic. There was also Frascatis and The Venice in Davis Square. The Paddock and The Mount Vernon were also great places, among many others.

Every once in a while, for a special treat, we packed up the car and headed up Route 1 North. There were two extremely delectable restaurants, namely Valle's and Hilltop Steakhouses. Valle's was in business from 1933 to 2000, and Hilltop, 1961 to 2013. Hilltop was the best. I remember how excited we were to see that huge neon cactus and brightly colored plastic cows in front. We knew we were in for a delicious feast.

Here are some more memories, in quotes, from my Somerville friends:

"When I was a little kid...nothing in the world I loved more than going to the Hilltop with my parents/family because it was special. I loved loved loved the Hilltop. It was a treat. It was 'cause my dad worked hard to take us. And most of all ... It was delicious. The salad and the steak unbelievable. Thanks, Dad."

Another friend tells us, "We went to Hilltop for special occasions. Usually, it was Friday afternoon, and we would go just after school got out. Two-hour wait, and boy was it worth it. My Mom was smart ... ordered five salads, three without dressing, so we could take them home. We always got at least two meals out of one. I loved the half chicken. Those were the days."

"Loved that Lobster Pie. It was so huge at the Hilltop. What a treat it was going there."

"My mom saved pennies in a plastic poodle, and we went to Valle's once a year!"



"I remember the Hilltop Steakhouse. It was the best steak and salad anywhere. We went there many times. Couldn't get over the girls carrying those big trays."

In the waiting area, we would be waiting to hear "Six for Sioux City" over the

public address system. The dining rooms at The Hilltop had different Western-type names. You would wait to hear your destination called and head for Sioux City or Kansas City.

Speaking strictly local, *Continued on page 15*



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Somerville's Truck O' Treat returns to City Hall

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, along with Somerville's Department of Public Works and Parks & Recreation Department, invites all for a hauntingly good time at the fourth annual "Truck O' Treat" on Thursday, October 23, from 5 to 7 p.m. outside City Hall (93 Highland Avenue).

In the event of inclement weather, the event will be moved to Thursday, October 30.

Costumes are encouraged at the family-friendly event, which will include safe Trick-or-Treating on the City Hall concourse, a spooktacular visit from a decorated City of Somerville truck, lawn games, refreshments, and more.

For more information, please contact Midalys Rosario by emailing mrosario@somervillema.gov or calling 617-625-6600 x2056.



City leaders, residents convene for Davis Square public safety meeting

CONT. FROM PG 1

resources and shelters to the unhoused, as well as monitor and clean up trash and needles in Davis Square.

According to Ballantyne, the city has hired three outreach workers to patrol Davis Square, added a social worker in the library, and continued operating an overnight winter warming shelter. Over the last year, the Somerville Homeless Coalition has found 65 people permanent housing.

"We also have close to 800 housing units in the housing pipeline, including affordable housing units, which is critical because housing first is the absolute best practice for addressing homelessness," Ballantyne added. "These are all resources that lay a foundation for better addressing the root causes of this challenge in a lasting way."

However, the mayor also acknowledged the issues that have come with a rise in homeless populations—including a five-year jump in the Commonwealth from 33,000 to 56,000—and abrupt cuts to federal funding, which caused the 58-bed Transition Wellness Shelter in Cambridge to shut down in June [1]. A lawsuit [2] against the Somerville Homeless Coalition's expanded overnight shelter has further complicated matters.

The Somerville Police Department has also stepped up patrols around Davis Square, engaging in direct patrols, park walk-and-talks, and business and citizen contacts—all of which have increased significantly. According to Donovan, there were more than 2,500 patrols over a three-month period in the summer, leading to around 24 patrols per day. Donovan added that SPD works closely with community outreach partners, communicating concerns and writing up weekly reports about activity in Davis Square, mainly regarding "non-violent calls for service."

Donovan also discussed concerns over drug dealing in the area, adding that narcotics detectives frequently patrol the area

and take action when needed. However, as Donovan says, the city cannot "arrest ourselves out of the situation."

The community also heard from Steve Craig, the city's Director of Constituent Services, who oversees the city's 311 program. Craig noted how the Department of Public Works has actively monitored Davis Square for trash and needles, cleaning trash cans three times a day and removing needles nearly every business day. Among the city's efforts toward the latter, Somerville installed a first-in-the-nation dual sharp disposal container.

"The top drawer is for syringes and sharps, with the bottom drawer for containers and other related items," Craig said.

Chief of Staff Nikki Spencer addressed concerns regarding encampment sweeps and the removal of belongings. She said that sweeps—unless they are carefully planned—are counterintuitive and "not necessarily an effective strategy" since they can "prolong homelessness," with individuals losing items needed to stay safe or documentation that gets them closer to finding permanent housing.

Spencer said that belongings could be removed if they pose concerns to public safety, such as being close to a playground or heavy machinery. In those cases, the city will work with community partners to store items in city buildings and later return them to the individual.

"This is an ongoing process to improve these protocols," Spencer continued, "and make sure we have clear coordination and communication across all partners."

An open question-and-answer session followed the leaders' remarks, featuring tense moments between community members and city leaders. Residents echoed public safety concerns while recounting late-night confrontations with unhoused individuals. After initial confusion about why the homeless couldn't be arrested for



trespassing, as was the case at one woman's apartment complex, Donovan clarified that arrests could be made if they violated specific "no trespassing" signs put in place.

Some business owners criticized the mayor's office and police department for a lack of action, claiming the mayor's office has the department's hands "tied." The inaction led to some businesses choosing not to call the police when homeless individuals were causing disturbances near their doors.

In response, Ballantyne invited the city's two mayoral candidates, councilors Jake Wilson and Willie Burnley Jr., to discuss their ideas for addressing public safety. While both of them said they didn't want to turn the meeting into a campaign event, Burnley mentioned the Municipal Industrial Financing Authority [3], "which I don't think the city's used enough of. That's something where we can actually help fund some of these shelters, help people get off the streets more quickly."

Ballantyne also emphasized the city's approach of giving people "a place to go" before guiding them toward available resources and developing their relationships with community partners.

Donovan stressed the need for community members and businesses to "call us,"

adding: "We base everything on calls for service. So it really bothers me to hear the apathy that bothers me. ... I want to hear that, especially from our businesses in Davis Square, because that is the lifeblood."

"I will communicate that to my officers to stop in," Donovan added. "And please tell your managers, residents, call the police department. It may seem like we're not doing anything, [but] please, please, please call us."

Despite various calls to extend the meeting, the session ended just after 7:30 p.m., with some city leaders staying afterward to answer further questions from community members.

Links:

[1] <https://wbznewsradio.iheart.com/content/planning-underway-in-cambridge-after-expected-closing-of-homeless-shelter/>

[2] <https://www.boston.com/news/the-boston-globe/2025/09/05/a-somerville-church-said-it-was-called-by-god-to-open-a-homeless-shelter-neighbors-took-them-to-court/>

[3] <https://www.boston.gov/government/cabinets/planning/boston-industrial-development-financing-authority>

Make Your Voting Plan: Somerville Municipal Election on 11/4

On Tuesday, November 4, 2025, the City of Somerville will hold its Municipal Election. Offices on the ballot include Mayor, Councilor At Large, Ward Councilors, and School Committee members. Local ballot questions also include a question asking voters to accept or reject the proposed new City Charter (<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/charter-review-committee>) and a question on whether to extend the Mayoral term from 2 to 4 years, starting no earlier than 2028.

The municipal election is open to all registered voters in Somerville. Somerville voters can vote early in person or by mail, or on Election Day. Below are reminders as you prepare for November 4:

Register to Vote in the Municipal Election by Friday, October 24

- You can register in one of three ways:
 - Online at [somervillema.gov/register-tovote](https://www.somervillema.gov/register-tovote)
 - In-person at Somerville City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)
 - By phone, by calling the Elections De-

partment (617-625-6600 ext. 4200) and requesting a voter registration form. Or by calling 311 (617-666-3311), and they will connect you to Elections.

The registration deadline is Friday, October 24, at midnight online or in person by 5 p.m. You may also mail in your form, but it must be postmarked by October 24.

Vote Early at City Hall, October 28-30

Vote early in the Municipal Election in the lower level of City Hall from Tuesday, October 28, through Thursday, October 30. The schedule is as follows:

- October 28 – Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- October 29 – Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- October 30 – Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

How to Vote in the Municipal Election by Mail

- **Vote by Mail application deadline:**
 - Applications to vote by mail must be received by 5 p.m. by Tuesday, October 28th

– A postmark alone is not sufficient; it must arrive at the Elections Office by the deadline.

• Where to get an application:

- Download an application or fill it out online at [somervillema.gov/votemail](https://www.somervillema.gov/votemail),
- Pick one up in the Elections office at City Hall, or
- Request one be mailed to you by calling 311 or calling Elections at 617-625-6600 ext. 4200.

– Eligible voters who submit valid applications will receive their ballot in the mail.

• Vote by Mail deadline:

- Ballots must be completed, signed, sealed, and received by 8 p.m., Tuesday, November 4.
- A postmark alone is not sufficient; it must arrive at the Elections Office by the deadline.
- Voters can check the status of their ballot on the state's website: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/WhereDoIVoteMA/>



TrackMyBallot

• How to return your application and ballot:

- Elections Office: Return directly to the Elections Department *Continued on page 10*

LEGAL NOTICE

VOTER REGISTRATION



LAST DAY TO REGISTER

Friday, October 24, 2025, at 5:00pm
or online until midnight

FOR THE CITY ELECTION

held on Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Election Department: Somerville City Hall Hours

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

To request a voter registration form

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

All mail-in voter registration forms must be post-marked by 10/24/2025.

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

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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: *Beacon Hill Roll Call* records local representatives' votes on roll calls from several budget vetoes made by Gov. Maura Healey to the \$60.9 billion fiscal 2026 state budget for the fiscal year that began July 1, 2025. There were no roll calls in the Senate last week.

The House override more than \$70 million of Healey's \$130 million worth of budget vetoes. The vetoes now go to the Senate which is expected to follow the House and override the vetoes.

"The House shares the governor's commitment to fiscal prudence amid the Trump Administration's devastating budget cuts," said House Ways and Means Chair Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston). But he noted that he continues to believe that the fiscal year 2026 budget vetoes can be overridden in a financially responsible manner.

Michlewitz continued, "This belief is supported by the hundreds of millions of dollars in expected revenue that we set aside during conference committee negotiations, providing the commonwealth with the necessary flexibility to manage our finances through this ongoing period of economic uncertainty."

"Beacon Hill politicians spent the better part of a year warning about fiscal uncertainty from Washington, and now that those cuts have arrived, they're ignoring their own warnings," said Paul Craney, Executive Director for the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance. "Instead of learning to live within our means, the Legislature is proving once again that its only solution to a budget problem is more spending."

Craney added, "The governor's vetoes were an extremely small step toward restraint, but the Legislature can't even handle that. When state spending increases by billions year after year, even small, reasonable cuts become politically impossible. That's why Massachusetts keeps lurching from one budget crisis to the next racking up one of the highest debts-per capita in the country."

\$1.5 MILLION FOR SEWER RATE RELIEF (H 4240)

House 143-11, override Gov. Healey's veto of the entire \$1.5 million for the Commonwealth Sewer Rate Relief Fund which was established in 1993 to help reduce the rising costs of sewer services in the Bay State.

Override supporters said this fund has helped, and continues to help, thousands of people pay for expensive sewer costs.

In her veto message, Gov. Healy said, "I am vetoing this

item to an amount consistent with my House [budget] recommendation."

(A "Yes" vote is for the \$1.5 million. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly Yes
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes

\$300,000 FOR PROGRAMS FOR THE BLIND (H 4240)

House 155-0, overrode Gov. Healey's \$300,000 veto reduction (from 8,864,721 to 8,564,721) in programs for the blind.

Override supporters said this funding is important to help the thousands of blind people in the state live better lives, whether they are experiencing current vision loss or have been blind since their youth.

In her veto message, Gov. Healey said, "I am reducing this item to the amount projected to be necessary. This reduction is not expected to impact planned programming."

(A "Yes" vote is for the \$300,000. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly Yes
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes

\$2.5 MILLION FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE (H 4240)

House 147-8, overrode Gov. Healey's \$2.5 million veto reduction (from 8,864,721 to \$6,364,721) in programs for the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services.

Override supporters said the cut will hurt the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services which oversees the state-wide system of prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery support services for individuals, families and communities affected by substance addiction.

In her veto message, Gov. Healey said, "I am reducing this item to the amount projected to be necessary to support continued programming. This operating funding overlaps with significant alternative funding sources to support expansions in low-threshold housing units and related supports."

(A "Yes" vote is for the \$2.5 million. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly Yes

Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes

\$1.5 MILLION FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES (H 4240)

House 139-16, override Gov. Healey's \$1,530,735 veto reduction (from \$39,250,384 to 37,719,649) in early intervention services.

Override supporters said the \$1,530,735 cut will hurt this program which helps infants and toddlers (from birth to 3 years old) who have developmental delays or are at risk of a developmental delay.

In her veto message, Gov. Healey said, "I am reducing this item to align with current utilization trends."

(A "Yes" vote is for the \$1,530,735. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly Yes
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes

\$700,000 FOR CUMMINGS SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY (H 4240)

House 148-7, overrode Gov. Healey's \$700,000 veto reduction (from \$6,200,000 million to \$5,500,000 million) in funding for the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University in North Grafton.

Override supporters said that the funding is important to Cummings and its four-year academic programs which offer a degree in veterinary medicine. They noted that the school conducts groundbreaking research that benefits animals and people and also has hospitals that treat an estimated 28,000 animals annually ranging from cats and dogs to pet rabbits, parrots, iguanas and fish.

In her veto message, Gov. Healey said, "I am vetoing this item to an amount consistent with my House [budget] recommendation." Some supporters of the veto questioned whether the state should be providing millions of dollars to a private university.

(A "Yes" vote is for spending the \$700,000. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly Yes
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

SUNSCREEN LOTION (H 600) – *Continued on page 18*

COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Somerville proudly celebrates Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Our View Of The Times



With the passage of time, more and more cities and states in America are officially recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day in lieu of the traditional observance of Columbus Day.

Somerville has been onboard for a few years now, and more of our neighboring communities across the Commonwealth, including the City of Boston, are joining in each year.

Four years ago, the Biden administration announced its proclamation endorsing the nation's adoption of the occasion.

Not everyone agrees with the abandonment of Columbus Day. Some of those who are of Italian ancestry in particular are taking umbrage with the situation, taking it as a slight to their national heritage. This point of view would seem to be unfairly skewed, however, since the primary rea-

sons for this relegation have everything to do with the explorer's own actions in the New World, and nothing at all to do with his particular nationality.

As the historical record becomes clearer over time, we must learn to adapt and revise our perceptions in regards to figures of historical import.

As Americans we are completely free to celebrate and honor anyone we wish to. Ei-

ther as a society in its entirety or in smaller groups who share common interests.

The history of America's native peoples deserves to be celebrated and honored just as much as those who came to resettle on this continent.

In the meantime, Indigenous Peoples' Day provides a much-needed opportunity to shed light on a segment of our society that has for too long been neglected.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

and Marine, **Leo Mingace**, a happy birthday. Happy birthday to another of our own, **Harry Kane**. We appreciate all he does for the paper, and we wish him a great day. Happy birthday to **Barry Rollins**, who is celebrating this week. Happy birthday to **Vicki Potaris**. We wish her a great day. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Laurie Tierno Johnson**, **Bill McCarthy**, **Darell Lee Shanafelt**, and **George Lally**, 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.

Mayor **Katjana Ballantyne** and Fire

Chief Charles Breen invite the Somerville community to the grand opening ceremony for the newly opened **Assembly Square Fire Station** (45 Middlesex Ave.) on **Saturday, October 18**, at 10 am. Festivities will include a hose-uncoupling ceremony (think the fire service's version of a ribbon cutting), tour the state-of-the-art station, "touch-a-truck", and light refreshments.

Join **East Somerville Main Streets** at **Chuckie Harris Park** on **Saturday, October 25**, from 3 to 6 pm (rain date: October 26) for their **Halloween Block Party** and **Pet Spooktacular**. Enjoy the pet cos-

tume contest, live music, delicious food, local vendors, pictures, raffles, and activities for all ages. Grab your costumes (and your furry friends, too), and get ready for an unforgettable afternoon in East Somerville. Free and open to everyone.

The **City of Somerville** is seeking **polling place workers** and **standby poll workers** for the upcoming **Municipal Election** on **Tuesday, November 4**. Many poll workers are needed to support operations and conduct a successful election. Poll workers must be ready to step in as needed on Election Day. The workday starts at 6:30 am and ends after the polls close at

8 pm, with a two-hour break. The compensation is \$240 per day. To apply, please email **Human Resources** at hadmin@somervillema.gov. To learn more, please contact the **Elections Office** at 617-625-6600 ext. 4200.

Voter registration deadline for the **General Election** by mail or in person, or online until midnight (www.registertovotema.com) by 5 pm, **Friday, October 24**.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our **Arts Editor, Doug Holder**, for setting up a **GoFundMe** campaign for **The Somerville Times**. *Continued on page 21*

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#993

1. What is the first official day of autumn called?
2. What Hindu festival known as the Festival of Lights is celebrated in October or November?
3. Which city outside Germany hosts the largest Oktoberfest celebration?
4. What is the traditional toast at Oktoberfest?
5. What instrument did "The Mother" play in *How I Met Your Mother*?
6. What is the difference between broth and stock?
7. What popular fruit is often associated with fall?
8. Which halftime show drew the highest Nielsen rating to date?
9. What is the nut which is typically a key ingredient in the Waldorf salad?
10. What is the name of the butterfly that migrates thousands of miles to Mexico each fall?
11. Which crop's multicolored ears become "Indian corn" décor?
12. What was Beaver Cleaver's real first name on *Leave It to Beaver*?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

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

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD SCARY MOVIES

ACROSS

1. Awestruck
5. Paid player
8. Precedes pedia
12. Oxen connector
13. Sonic sound
14. ____ Dondarrion, "Game of Thrones" Lord of Blackhaven
15. Bibliographical abbr. (2 words)
16. *2025 Pete Davidson horror flick, "The ____"
17. Wear away
18. Movie director of "Knock at the Cabin" fame
20. Manage without help
21. Subway coin
22. Boar's mate
23. Jordan Peele's directorial debut (2017, 2 words)
26. Richard Gere in 1980 movie, pl.
30. Bit of binary code
31. A way to steal gas
34. "It's ____" (1974)
35. Estrogen producer
37. Have a bug
38. Glue on, e.g.
39. Comme ci, comme ça
40. Nice to look at
42. Opposite of WSW
43. Opposite of #40 Across
45. Cordwood units
47. The night before
48. Warm down-slope wind
50. Blood component
52. Trip to Sweden gone wrong (2019)
56. Like certain radiant energy
57. Pakistani tongue
58. "Ill at ____"
59. Not together
60. Ooze
61. Bulgarian, e.g.
62. Like certain grape beverage
63. Get it wrong
64. Shakira's don't lie?

DOWN

1. Roll call answers
2. Visi____ or Ostro____
3. Thumbs-up
4. Italian frozen dessert
5. Southern England's coastal town
6. ____ Polanski, director of "Rosemary's Baby"
7. The story of Damien Thorn, with The (1976)
8. Americans' attacker in London (1981)
9. Pump it!
10. Pirate Captain ____
11. Frozen H2O
13. Devotional worship, in Hinduism
14. Haze over
19. Timid
22. Envy, biblically-speaking
23. Duck follower
24. Diplomat on a mission
25. Badger or bug
26. Happy Gilmore's game
27. Forever prisoner
28. Sheep-like
29. Movie "Battle of the ____"
32. Pay as you earn, acr.
33. Step on it
36. Mia Farrow in Roman Polanski's movie
38. Poetic although
40. Before of yore
41. Depletes (2 words)
44. Manifest
46. Catch in a net
48. Firearm shooter
49. More eccentric
50. Shoshonean people
51. Panache
52. Dante's Beatrice, e.g.
53. Mauritania's Eastern neighbor
54. Hurry up, acronym
55. RPMs
56. James Wan's directorial debut (2004)

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

CROSSWORD												
1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
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62						63				64		



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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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E	R	O	S				E	G	O			E	R	N	S	T

Family-friendly musical comedy show returns to Somerville

The Nova Comedy Collective's show, ADVENTURE IMPROV, is a fun, interactive musical comedy experience for the whole family!

Getting ready for their fourth run at The Rockwell Theater in Davis Square, Somerville, Adventure Improv is an improvised expedition – exploring the bizarre, topsy-turvy landscape of imagination! Every performance will be an entirely unique experience, providing our audience entry into a whimsical world tailor-made just for them. From the moment the lights go up, our stellar cast of comedians will interact with the audience, gathering suggestions to inspire improvised scenes in worlds that have never been seen before. Kids in the audience will have opportunities to join the cast on-stage to participate in our scenes and feel like rock stars! Our Musical Director will be improvising alongside us throughout the show, underscoring every scene and launching our performers

into Broadway-worthy songs.

Whitney Hawkins will be the director of this adventure through imagination. After directing and performing in Improv-Boston's Family Show for 6 seasons, she's excited to lend her talents to The Nova. "We're a little bit 'family entertainment' and a little bit 'clean comedy,'" Hawkins says, "This cast can tailor the show for any audience and have folks of any age rolling in the aisles. Yes, we're here for the kids, but we're also here for parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. This is a show for anyone."

Adventure Improv will be at The Rockwell on November 9th at 3:00 PM, at The Rockwell Theater in Davis Square, Somerville. For tickets and more information, visit thenovacomed.com/adventure, and follow The Nova Comedy Collective on Instagram @thenovacomed, and on Facebook at facebook.com/thenovacomed.

About The Nova Comedy Collective



Comedy is for everyone. Our mission is to create live shows and other adventures in creativity that are unique, daring, and authentic. We promote belonging and community, encourage collaboration and

continuous learning, and celebrate imagination, honesty, and risk-taking. At The Nova Comedy Collective, we're always laughing with you. Learn more at thenovacomed.com.

Dorothy's Corner BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Butternut Squash & Feta Sauce

Creamy, full of flavor, and deeply satisfying. The roasted butternut squash adds a lovely caramelized sweetness that balances beautifully with the tangy feta. A touch of zafra lifts the dish with a subtle herbal note. Perfect over pasta-rich, comforting, and surprisingly elegant.

- 3 Cups of 1/2" Cubed Butternut Squash
- 3 Garlic Cloves, Peeled
- 1 Tablespoon Olive Oil
- 1/2 Teaspoon Salt
- 1/2 Teaspoon Pepper
- 1 Tablespoon Zafra, Plus Extra For Garnish
- 4 oz Feta Cheese, Plus Extra For Garnish

8 oz Pasta, Mezze Rigatoni, Ziti, Or Whatever Your Preference

Preheat oven to 425°. Add the butternut squash, garlic, olive oil, salt, pepper, and zafra to a bowl and blend well. Place the mixture onto a lined baking sheet and bake for approximately 20 minutes, or until fork tender. Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to the package. Place the mixture into a food processor or blender along with the feta. Blend until smooth. It's going to be really thick, so add some pasta water to thin it out a bit. You're looking for a pancake batter consistency. Strain the pasta into a bowl and add about a 1/2 cup of the sauce to the pasta and toss until well coated. Split the pasta between 4 bowls, add the remainder of the sauce to each bowl and garnish



with zafra and feta. Serves 4.

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

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

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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION –
HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

**Project Description: Everett-Somerville – Mystic River Bicycle
Pedestrian Bridge
Project File No. 612004**

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design of the Mystic River Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge in Everett and Somerville, MA.

WHEN: Tuesday, October 21st, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed design for the Mystic River Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of a new bicycle and pedestrian bridge crossing the Mystic River and connecting the path networks on the Somerville and Everett sides of the river. The bridge will connect the DCR Draw Seven Park to the Gateway Park trail and public boardwalk at the Encore Resort. The Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge will provide a vital missing link between the communities of Everett and Somerville, linking mixed use paths with local amenities including Draw Seven Park, Assembly Row and the Lower Broadway District. The bridge will provide a reliable and safe crossing alternative for bicycle users and pedestrians who wish to utilize the trail networks, access public transportation, and these communities.

Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to massdotmajorprojects@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Major Projects, Project File No. 612004. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g. interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This hearing will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE
CHIEF ENGINEER

10/8/25, 10/15/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
IFB #26-14

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

Three (3) Harley Davidson FLTP Electra Glide Motorcycles

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: **Tuesday, October 14th, 2025**. Sealed bids will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **3:00 PM, Wednesday, October 29th, 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

10/15/25 The Somerville Times



Advertisement

The **Somerville Housing Authority** is selling the residential property it owns located at 17 Monmouth Street, Somerville, Massachusetts, 02143, and is requesting proposals from interested buyers. The Property features 6,667 total square feet with 4,154 square feet of living space in 12 rooms. The house was built as residential circa 1896 on a 11,582 square foot lot (.27 acres). Property description can be found under MLS listings 73426189 and 73426191 Real Estate Broker: JacquelineVienneau, Berkshire Hathaway; 603-231-0089. The highest priced proposal from a responsive and responsible proposer will be selected. All proposals must be accompanied by sufficient evidence of the buyer's ability to finance the purchase, e.g., mortgage pre-approval letter. The Authority may seek additional information if needed to determine the proponent's ability to finance. If The Authority determines that the highest price proposal has not satisfied this requirement to provide proof of financing, The Authority will move to the next highest price proposal to confirm proof of financing, and so forth, until the highest bidder with proof of financing is selected as the winning bidder. RFP can be found in listing and at <https://www.sha-web.org/bids.aspx>.

10/8/25, 10/15/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
IFB # 26-20

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

Somerville Parks Tree Health Program 2026

An Invitation for Bid (IFB) may be obtained online at www.bidexpress.com, <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or from the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **Wednesday, October 15, 2025**. Sealed bids will be received at above office until: **2:00PM Wednesday, October 29, 2025**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all bids if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

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

5% Bid Deposit required.

Felisa Gárate
Procurement Analyst
617-625-6600 x3406

10/15/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR BIDS
RFQ #2026-11

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

Crack Sealing at DPW Yard

A bid package may be obtained online at: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/procurement-and-contracting-services> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, October 15th, 2025**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **3pm, Thursday, October 30th, 2025**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please email Logan Carroll Lcarroll@somervillema.gov for more info

Logan Carroll
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

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Make Your Voting Plan: Somerville Municipal Election on 11/4

CONT. FROM PG 5

at City Hall

– **Mail:** Send to the Elections Department, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143

– **Email or fax (for applications only):** Completed applications can be emailed to vote@somervillema.gov or faxed to 617-625-5643. Ballots cannot be returned by email or fax.

– **Drop boxes:** Leave it in a drop box at one of the following locations:

– City Hall Concourse, 93 Highland Ave.
– East Somerville Community School, across from 68 Glen St.

– In front of the Argenziano School, 290 Washington St.

– In front of the Somerville Community Baptist Church, 31 College Ave.

– Behind the Mystic Activity Center, 530 Mystic Ave.

– In front of Saint Catherine of Genoa Church parking lot, 182 Summer St.

– In front of the Armory, 191 Highland Ave.

– In front of Dilboy Post, 351 Summer St.

– In front of the Tufts Administrative Building, 167 Holland St.

– In front of the West Somerville Neighborhood School at 177 Powder House Blvd.

• **Sample Ballots and Ballot Questions Information**

– Once ready, closer to the election,

Sample ballots will be available on somervillema.gov/elections

– The text of all local ballot questions will be included on the sample ballots when available

– Information on the ballot questions on the proposed charter and mayoral term can be found at somervillema.gov/charter-review

For more information about voting in Somerville, go to somervillema.gov/elections.

COMMENTARY

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

The Future of Clean Energy Is Right Beneath Our Feet

By Mayor Katjana Ballantyne

In 2024, my administration released the first update of Climate Forward [1], our community's climate action plan. Our vision is to create a carbon net-negative Somerville by cutting emissions to zero and beyond, while adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. To do that, we're taking bold, strategic, and inclusive action to tackle global challenges with local solutions.

Buildings are our largest source of emissions, and most come from multifamily

housing. That's why we're focused on making sure these buildings aren't left behind in the clean energy transition. The future of clean energy will come not only from the sun and wind, but also from right under our feet.

We're exploring underground thermal networks that use the earth's energy to heat and cool buildings year-round. This technology can transform our buildings, protect our health, and help us become carbon net-negative by 2050. It also improves indoor air quality, eliminates on-site combustion, and could ease strain on

the electric grid.

Thermal energy networks already exist around the world and in Massachusetts, but there's more groundwork to do. Our state aims to reach net-zero by 2050, yet we still allow new buildings to install gas lines, locking in costs for systems we plan to phase out. Cities need the authority to end new gas hookups and invest instead in clean, modern infrastructure.

It is important to continue Somerville's leadership in preparing existing buildings for electrification through energy efficiency and grid upgrades, including one of

the biggest and most overlooked barriers: outdated transformers. Transformers are the key to electrification and the bridge to next-generation systems like networked geothermal.

Over the past four years, my administration has laid the foundation for this future, through strong partnerships, innovative planning, and a shared belief that climate justice and housing justice are deeply connected. I'm proud of what we've built together, and I know there are great things to come.

[1] <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/climate-forward>

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The views and opinions expressed in the commentaries and letters to the Editor of *The Somerville Times* do not reflect the views and opinions of *The Somerville Times*, its publishers or staff. Readers are invited to send letters to the editor to *The Somerville Times*. Please email your letters to News@TheSomervilleTimes.com or mail them to 699 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144. *The Somerville Times* Reserves the right to edit letters for style, grammar and length. All letters must include a name and contact information. Contact information will not be shared with the public. We look forward to hearing from you.

VOTE NO on BDS!

The ballot question in Somerville on November 4th regarding the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions/BDS of Israel, is a proposal which, if passed by voters, will stigmatize, delegitimize and isolate Israel. BDS proponents in Somerville are seeking to drive a wedge between Israel and the rest of the world, separating Israel's government, business, universities and people from their partners abroad.

This is an unconscionable move which will NOT affect political change or improve the situation for Palestinians. This ballot question advises your city leaders and cities and towns across America to end current business and future contracts with corporations in Israel that engage in business

sustaining Israel's apartheid, genocide, and illegal occupation of Palestine."

The BDS movement's objective is to delegitimize Israel and undermine its right to exist. Arab Muslim countries control more than 50 counties with a land mass in excess of 100X that of Israel. Why are they so determined to deny Israelis their singular and miniscule home?

Jews are indigenous to Israel and have built the only pluralistic democracy in the Middle East. It is the only country in the Middle East where Jews are able to live as full citizens alongside their Arab neighbors who also enjoy full rights as citizens.

There is only one sustainable path forward in the Middle East and that is a land for peace deal with Palestinians who are also indigenous to the area. Israel has made

five good faith offers. Arabs have responded with wave after wave of military and terror attacks. UNRA has colluded with this dystopian mindset by helping to teach three generations of Palestinians that Israel must be eradicated. BDS is the latest iteration of this philosophy which is espoused by Hamas and underwritten by Iran: delegitimize, weaken and destroy Israel.

Supporters of Somerville's ballot initiative should ask themselves what would happen if Hamas returned Israeli hostages, laid down their arms and accepted Israel's right to exist. The answer is peace. One need look no further than Jordan or Egypt for proof.

And what would happen if Israel were to do the same in relation to Hamas? Look no further than the Hamas founding char-

ter, the statement of Hamas leaders or the actions of October 7, 2023. There would be no Israel.

When the citizens of Somerville and the global community turn their efforts toward condemn-ing and delegitimizing Hamas, acknowledging Israel's right to exist as the only Jewish state and supporting Palestinian civil society, there will be progress toward peace.

BDS accomplishes none of this. It does not seek a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. A NO vote AGAINST this ballot question is a step toward bringing Jews and Palestinians together in a society that supports health, welfare and democracy for all.

— Sylvia B. Belkin

Winter Hill Bank earns 7th consecutive 'Outstanding' CRA rating

Winter Hill Bank has once again received an "Outstanding" rating under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) from the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. This marks the bank's seventh consecutive top rating—an achievement that reflects its strong performance in community development lending, affordable housing finance, and providing accessible banking and financial services. This achievement underscores the Bank's continued leadership and commitment to serving all segments of its communities.

Enacted by Congress in 1977, the CRA encourages insured depository institutions to meet the credit needs of their communities, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, while maintaining sound banking practices. Federal regulators assess banks on their performance in lending, service, and investment.

"Receiving the highest of ratings is an honor at any time," said Sandra L. McGoldrick, President/CEO of Winter Hill Bank. "To be recognized with such a distinction validates our commitment to serving every neighborhood responsibly. That's been our mission since 1906, and everyone at the bank shares in this honor."

Winter Hill Bank is a Mutual Federal Savings Bank serving eastern Massachusetts.

HONK! 2025

The 20th Annual Honk Festival of Activist Street Bands took to the streets of Somerville this past weekend, featuring a wide variety of musical/activist events at Tufts University, in Medford (HONK! U Conference on Thursday), Davis Square, in Somerville (street music, workshops, lantern parades on Friday and Saturday), and Harvard Square, in Cambridge (with a vast parade out of Davis Sq., then participating in Oktoberfest on Sunday).





Photos by Bobbie Toner



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lion timeshare debt/fees cancelled in 2019. Free info package. Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. 833-308-1971

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Ms. Cam's

From page 8

Olio

Answers

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Autumnal Equinox | but stock is made with bones |
| 2. Diwali | |
| 3. Kitchener, Ontario, Canada | 7. Apple |
| 4. "Prost!" – meaning "Cheers!" in German | 8. Kendrick Lamar |
| 5. The bass | 9. Walnut |
| 6. Broth is made from meat and vegetables, | 10. Monarch butterfly |
| | 11. Flint corn |
| | 12. Theodore |

COMMENTARY

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

Why I will vote against the proposed city charter



By William C. Shelton

"I know of no safe repository of the ultimate power of society but the people." — Thomas Jefferson

American democracy is now under constant assault and is contracting. Yet the proposed City Charter that will be on the November 4th ballot would deny Somerville's citizens a critical right that is enjoyed by voters in 83% of Massachusetts' cities.

It is the right of direct democracy. New Englanders pioneered direct democracy in the 1600s. They discussed the issues of the day in town meetings, culminating in votes on policy.

As theirs and other colonies became restive under British domination, American leaders worked to become the world's most learned citizen-scholars regarding political philosophy and practice.

Two hundred and fifty years ago this fall, they were writing colonial constitutions that would eventually guide them as states. Thomas Jefferson argued that the people themselves were sovereign. James Madison would subsequently elaborate on this principle in *Federalist Papers* 41 [1].

Massachusetts was the first to hold a statewide referendum. In 1778, its citizens ratified what is the second-oldest constitution in continuous effect on the planet. (Vermont's was the first.)

Over the next century, the essential long-term dynamic of the economic system that had created individual freedom's possibility produced its opposite. Conditions created by all-powerful robber barons curtailed the choices of ordinary Americans, producing stark inequality and debased democracy.

By the 1890s, Gilded Age corruption dominated many state and local governments. The Populist and Progressive movements emerged to demand secret ballots, direct election of Senators, women's suffrage, and above all, direct democracy through initiative and referendum.

In 1897, Nebraska became the first state to allow cities to place initiative and referendum in their charters. South Dakota's voters adopted it statewide the next year. Twenty-four states would eventually follow.

Teddy Roosevelt told the Ohio constitutional convention [2], "I believe in the Initiative and Referendum, which should be used not to destroy representative government, but to correct it whenever it becomes misrepresentative."

So in 1918, Massachusetts voters adopted Article 48 [3], giving them the power to propose and approve new laws and reject existing ones. Since then, Massachusetts voters have, among other things,

- Surtaxed incomes over \$1 million (2022);
- Established the right to a clean environment (1972);
- Identified and cleaned up hazardous waste sites (1986);
- Invested highway taxes in mass transit (1974);
- Legalized and taxed cannabis (2016);
- Eliminated MCAS as a graduation requirement (2024);
- Regulated dental insurance (2022);
- Audited the legislature (2024); and
- Protected free speech (1948).

The people produced these reforms because the legislators couldn't or wouldn't. Too many legislators see direct democracy as an affront to their power. They resist the understanding that the people only lend their sovereignty to them for the length of their terms in office. They are vulnerable to special interests in a way that individual citizens are not.

The current Somerville Charter was shaped by such special interests. It is a Gilded Age document, adopted in 1899 when real-estate interests dominated our city government. But by 1913, Villens were already chafing under a government that invested almost all power in a strong mayor. So they designed a commission form of government, but their proposed charter died in the Legislature the next year.

In 1981, Somerville's Board of Aldermen again produced a comprehensive charter revision. But State Senator Dennis McKenna killed it when it came

to the legislature. It would have eliminated elected tax assessors, which included Assessor Bobby Campo. Campo's daughter was married to Dennis McKenna's son, Alderman Michael McKenna. Bobby and Michael were subsequently convicted on corruption charges [4].

The charter now before the voters reproduces many concepts and long verbatim passages from the 1981 proposed charter. Unlike that document, it excludes the right of direct democracy that is guaranteed in 49 of 59 Massachusetts cities' charters.

As these numbers suggest, the right of initiative and referendum seems to be popular. Among the current field of Somerville Councilor-at-Large candidates, only Ben Wheeler opposes it.

But Somerville's Charter Commission excluded it from consideration. The only argument that I have heard is that ballot initiatives may be too divisive. As if voters are impulsive children who require legislators' adult supervision to prevent us from savaging each other. Voters in those 49 Massachusetts cities appear to have avoided such a fate.

Of course, most Somerville voters will never know what has been denied them. They will never receive the summary of what's in the charter and arguments for and against that are required for all state-level ballot measures.

City officials somehow overlooked [5] explaining to voters the document that will define their city's government. When the City Council realized this

oversight, its response amounted to, "Oops" [6]. This alone should discredit the coming Charter vote.

American democracy is under attack from gerrymandering, voiding the Voting Rights Act provisions; eliminating voting locations, times, and methods; silencing government watchdogs; assaults on academic freedom and mass media; prosecutorial persecutions; disinformation campaigns; domestic military deployments; blatant violation of legislative mandates; and mass mendacity by government officials.

Although democracy's domain is contracting, we could expand it at the local level. But approval of the proposed charter would deny us that opportunity. I will not collaborate.

Links:

- [1] https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed49.asp
- [2] <https://coolidgescholars.org/a-charter-of-democracy/>
- [3] https://ballotpedia.org/History_of_Initiative_%26_Referendum_in_Massachusetts#:~:text=This%20article%20does%20not%20contain,the%20electoral%20campaigns%20of%201912.
- [4] <https://www.thesomerville-times.com/archives/3652>
- [5] <https://www.thesomerville-times.com/archives/142760>
- [6] <https://www.tuftsdaily.com/article/2025/10/somerville-city-council-delays-ballot-mailer-information-statute-ahead-of-november-election>

'The Rocky Horror Picture Show'

CONT. FROM PG 1

They will contain all the props you need (like confetti and noisemakers) to dive into Janet and Brad's wild sojourn at the castle.

Recommended for Ages 17+.

The Center for Arts at the Armory Performance Hall, 191 Highland Ave Somer-

ville, MA 02143.

For tickets and more information go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/arts-at-the-armory-presents-the-rocky-horror-picture-show-50th-anniversary-tickets-1617114726679>.

Plastic cows and a neon cactus

CONT. FROM PG 3

we have some great family memories from the aforementioned Mount Vernon, Continental, The Venice, and, more recently, Redbones. Let's not forget Memory Lane, La Hacienda, Dapper Dan's, and too many

more to mention.

The only thing that made a trip to Hilltop Steakhouse better was a couple of rounds of miniature golf where the big orange dinosaur was.

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Advanced De-Cluttering – Thursdays, October 16, October 23, October 30, November 6, November 13, and November 20 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. Have you taken our beginners de-cluttering group, and are you looking to improve your de-cluttering skills in a group format? Are you a resident of Somerville or Cambridge and are over the age of 60? The Somerville Council on Aging has free advanced de-cluttering group sessions to help support you as you continue to de-clutter. Please RSVP to Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317, or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov.

Drop-In Hours with the Somerville Council on Aging Board of Directors – Thursday, October 16, from 9 to 10 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. The SCOA has been hard at work making sure the voices of Somerville's seniors are heard. Together with UMass Boston, the City of Somerville conducted the Somerville Community Needs Assessment. Since the results were shared in May of this year, we have been working to implement recommendations. While we are introducing new programs, we want to make sure you still have opportunities to share your views and opinions. Each month, a member of the Board of Directors will be at the Holland Street Senior Center to meet with you individually. This October, meet with COA Board Member Brad Bortner.

Virtual Reality Travel – Friday, October 17, at 11:30 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. In this session, we will travel to different destinations and learn interesting facts about each place. RSVP by contacting Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318, or email Molly at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov.

Living Well with Hearing Loss Part 1 of 2 – Monday, October 20, starting at 1 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. This program is presented by Speech-Language Pathologist, Cheryl Bakey. Hearing loss can cause difficulty with communication for both the person who has hearing loss and the communication partner. Hearing devices (ex., hearing aids, cochlear implants) can help, but they do not completely fix the problem. Research supports that the use of specific strategies, either alone or in addition to hearing devices, can help to improve participation and enjoyment in activities. These classes will review strategies to use, along with reviewing hearing technology to improve communication. Family & friends are welcome to partake in this program with their loved ones. Presentation is in person, with closed captioning available. Free of charge. RSVP by contacting Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600 ext. 2318 or at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov. Grab & Go lunch available upon request.

Landscape with Meaning – Wednesday, October 22, from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the Community Room of the West Branch Somerville Public Library. For senior citizens interested in art therapy, we invite you to attend Landscapes with Meaning with Erica Curcio! Using collage materials, you'll create a unique land-

scape from a place you've been in your life or hope to go. Please bring a photo of a place that has meaning or interest to you. Together, we will look at the colors of your photo and turn it into its own abstraction. This free program is presented in collaboration with The Somerville Library. Space is limited. RSVP by calling Molly at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318.

Presentation and Lunch with District Attorney Marian Ryan – Wednesday, October 22, at 11:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Join District Attorney Ryan as she addresses many different scams that target older adults in our community. DA Ryan will discuss how to protect yourself from these schemes and what to do if you are targeted. Following the presentation, enjoy a lunch of chicken, potatoes, and vegetables. Grab-n-Go lunch is available upon request. Please RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Tufts University's Hooked Club at the COA – Thursday, October 23, from 2 to 3 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. Hooked is a student-led club at Tufts that spreads awareness of the mental health benefits of the fiber arts, such as knitting and crocheting, through semester-long service projects. Join Hooked, and together you will crochet little circular animals known as amigurumi. Please RSVP to Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317, or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov.

Mobility Informational Session – Friday, October 24, from 11 a.m. to noon at our Holland Street Center. Creating Safer Streets Together: What's this on the Street? Are you curious about the different transportation features on your street? Join the city's Mobility Division as they talk through new types of transportation features the city has installed around Somerville and why we put them there. Grab-n-Go lunch is available upon request. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321, or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Beginners De-Cluttering Group – Meeting on Mondays, October 27, November 3, November 10, November 17, November 24, and December 1 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. Free of charge. Please RSVP to Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317, or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov.

Celebrate Halloween at the Council on Aging – Thursday, October 30, starting at 10 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Enjoy music, a costume contest, and trick or treating with the COA staff. Lunch to be served at noon, following the Trick or Treating. \$5 per person. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2323.

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

Bingo – Every Tuesday in October at our Ralph

and Jenny Center located at 9 New Washington Street, starting at 10 a.m. \$1. per bingo card. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2323, or emailing Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Bingo – Thursday, October 16, and 23, starting at 10 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. \$1. per bingo card. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2323, or emailing Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

LCR Game Day – Friday, October 17, starting at 10:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. LCR is a fun dice game, where you hope you are the last one holding chips! RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321, or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov
Music & Munch with Laura Zoll. Tuesday, October 14, starting at 12 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. This one-hour session will treat you to a playlist of diverse musical offerings: a little jazz, some "oldies but goodies," a smidgen of classical, a dip into barbershop, and a trip to Broadway. Learn a little, sing-along, relax, and enjoy some Music while you Munch. Grab & Go lunch available. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2323, or emailing Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Virtual Reality Travel – Friday, October 17, at 11:30 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. In this session, we will travel to different destinations and learn interesting facts about each place. RSVP by contacting Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318, or email Molly at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov.

Portuguese Senior Coffee Social – Tuesday, October 21, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Ralph & Jenny Center located at 9 New Washington Street. Join us and learn about services and programs offered by the city and local organizations. Come, drink coffee, see friends, and talk to our staff. Free to all. For more information, please contact Rafael Peruzzo by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2123.

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

COMMENTARY

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

Vote NO on Question 3

By Somerville United Against Discrimination

We are writing to respectfully ask that voters across Somerville vote NO on Question 3.

This ballot question does nothing to constructively help Palestinians, and instead hurts our neighbors and our city itself. Implementing the question is illegal, sows division in our community, and takes our attention and resources off urgent issues facing our city.

It's illegal. Question 3 is discriminatory, and has even been deemed illegal by the City Solicitor because it violates several non-discrimination, procurement, and fiduciary laws in Massachusetts. It would unfairly discriminate, inviting lawsuits and wasting city resources.

It sows division in our community. Signature collectors have been overheard describing the ballot measure as a "boycott of Jewish businesses." At a time when the inclusive and welcoming nature of our country is being challenged, is this what we want Somerville to be known for?

It takes attention and resources off urgent issues facing our city. Somerville families are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living. Immigrants from all walks of life and countries of origin are be-

ing deported off our streets. Our schools and health care are at risk from federal budget cuts. Our local government should not be focused on foreign policy questions that turn neighbor against neighbor and will actually make it harder to solve these important problems.

Supporters of the ballot measure claim they are just focused on Somerville boycotting companies like Caterpillar and HP. But we know that's just the tip of the iceberg. The national boycott movement wants to boycott other construction equipment manufacturers like Volvo and Hyundai, tech companies like Dell, Microsoft, Google, Apple, and Intel, Teva Pharmaceuticals (maker of a generic Narcan), Amazon, Reebok, Disney, McDonalds, Coca Cola, Burger King, Papa John, Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza... The list goes on and on.

Supporters of the ballot measure are already trying to block a new partnership between Massachusetts and an Israeli hospital helping startups working on life-saving advances in radiology, stroke treatment, cancer treatment, heart surgery, and more.

The language in the ballot measure is so vague and so broad that the city wouldn't be able to work with anyone who works with these companies. Stu-

dents will lose their HP Chromebooks. The city won't be able to rebuild the Winter Hill Community School, repair our streets, or build new bike lanes. The city would have to run without Microsoft, Google, or Apple technology. And Somerville would lose the opportunity to be part of the next job-creating wave of lifesaving healthcare innovations.

Let's not drive people apart. Let's keep Somerville moving forward. Please vote NO on Question 3.

Sincerely,

Michael Switkes - Ward 6

Leiran Biton - Ward 7

Anna Biton - Ward 7

Judy Pineda Neufeld - Ward 7

Joseph Sousa - Ward 3

Sarah Blum - Ward 3

Evan James Fontana - Ward 1

Nathaniel Sugarman - Ward 3

Carl Hoffman - Ward 7

Natty Hoffman - Ward 7

Ariella Honig-Stern - Ward 2

Benjamin Honig-Stern - Ward 2

Vicki Lynn Merritt - Ward 6

David Lichter - Ward 3

Gideon Kliensky - Ward 3

Daniel Engel - Ward 3

Lumina Gershfield - Ward 2

Michael Tsabar - Ward 3

Samantha Joseph - Ward 5

Nataly Cabili - Ward 2

Elisha Gechter - Ward 3

Elana Bloomfield - Ward 7

Lia Sokol - Ward 2

David Gordon - Ward 7

Richard Maidman - Ward 7

Rachel Goldberg - Ward 2

Joshua Gensler-Steinberg - Ward 5

Emma Lebwohl - Ward 3

Marjie Polster - Ward 5

Jeffrey E. Green - Ward 3

Jodi Nemser-Abrahams - Ward 5

Cynthia Graber - Ward 5

Bruce Kaplan - Ward 3

Jonathan Dovev - Ward 3

Emma Stellman - Ward 6

Noa Kligfeld - Ward 2

Yael Langer - Ward 6

Simson L. Garfinkel - Ward 7

Shari Lowin - Ward 2

Lauren Smith - Ward 4

Jess Torres - Ward 3

Sam Gechter - Ward 3

Amitay Kalmar - Ward 2

Mark Paskind - Ward 6

Kate Heilman - Ward 3

Beth Green - Ward 3

Todd Easton - Ward 5

Ariane Torres - Ward 3

Justin Klekota - Ward 7

Jack MacKinnon - Ward 3

Bob Maxmen - Ward 6

Somerville Latin American and Caribbean Heritage Month celebration on October 18

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA) are inviting community members to celebrate Latin American and Caribbean Heritage Month on Saturday, October 18.

Event Details:

What: Latin American and Caribbean Heritage Month Celebration

When: Saturday, October 18, 2-5 p.m.

Where: Healey School, 5 Meacham St.

The event will showcase the rich cultural traditions and contributions of Latin American and Caribbean communities through live music, dance, and art. This free community event is open to all ages. Light refreshments will be provided.



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Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 6

The House gave initial approval to legislation that would allow any person, including students, parents and school personnel, to possess and use a topical sunscreen product without a physician's note or prescription while on school property or at a school-related event or activity, to avoid overexposure to the sun.

"Exposure to sun during childhood and adolescence is a significant risk factor for skin cancer later in life," said sponsor Rep. Kate Hogan (D-Stow). "Regular use of sunscreen substantially reduces the risk associated with the sun's ultraviolet rays. Outdated policies treat sunscreen as an over-the-counter medication requiring medical authorization. This antiquated policy creates barriers to a basic, preventative health practice."

Hogan continued, "[My bill] ensures that sunscreen is not to be treated as medication for the purposes of school policy and that sunscreen can be used, without imposing on school staff. The bill also gives school districts the opportunity to incorporate sun safety education into their wellness efforts, which will foster lifelong healthy habits. This legislation is particularly important as outdoor school activities such as recess, athletics, field days and field trips expose students to the sun. Enabling access to sunscreen is a common sense and evidence-based step that supports student health."

EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION FOR ABUSE VICTIMS (H 2143/S 1294) – The House gave initial approval to a proposal that would prohibit discrimination against an employee based on their status as a victim of abusive behavior. The measure requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure employees are able to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and address the situation, while remaining productive in the workplace.

"I filed this legislation because Massachusetts needs stronger employment protections for individuals in the commonwealth who are either experiencing abusive behavior or have a family member experiencing abuse," said Senate Majority Leader Sen. Cindy Creem (D-Newton), the Senate sponsor of the bill. "The reforms included in this bill will help ensure victims of abuse and their family members are not unfairly penalized in the workplace for requesting reasonable accommodations to protect themselves or a loved one from a dangerous situation."

Rep. Jay Livingstone (D-Boston), the House sponsor of the bill, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll asking him why he filed the measure and how he feels about its approval.

BAN MASK USE BY LAW ENFORCEMENT (HD 4886) – Rep. Jim Hawkins (D-Attleboro) has filed a bill that would prohibit police and other law enforcement officers from wearing masks or personal disguises while interacting with the public in the performance of their duties. The measure was referred to the Judiciary Committee

and the date for a public hearing on the proposal has not yet been set.

"Reports are on the rise and becoming increasingly alarming of masked, non-identifying individuals and groups approaching and disappearing people throughout the country," said Hawkins. "This behavior erodes public trust, which ultimately puts everyone, including law enforcement officers, at risk. It's unscrupulous, unethical and leads to further threats to democracy, deeply harming our communities. The traumatic experience of unwarranted and aggressive approaches by masked strangers, especially for women and girls, has proven terrifying. Often, they are in unmarked vehicles, stalking our neighborhoods and failing to produce a valid judicial warrant or explanation."

Hawkins continued, "Spokespersons for ICE and the current administration have tried to frame our bill as an attempt to grant sanctuary to dangerous criminals and intentionally put law enforcement personnel in harm's way. The truth is contrary. This bill is a step toward mending the divide and fostering trust between law enforcement officers and the public. With transparency, identification and reason, there should be no need for disguises while performing their duties to the communities they serve."

RENAME COLUMBUS DAY (S 2113) – A bill filed by Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) would designate the second Monday in October, now known as Columbus Day, as Indigenous Peoples Day and recommend appropriate exercises in schools to acknowledge the history of genocide and discrimination against Indigenous people.

The State Administration Committee held a hearing on the proposal on June 4 but has not yet taken action on the measure. This year, Columbus Day is on October 13 so any name change, if approved, would have to wait until 2026 to take effect.

"Christopher Columbus did not discover the Americas," says Comerford. "That long-perpetuated myth — rooted in racism and violence — has allowed generations to credit a European man with discovering a land already teeming with societies. Indigenous communities and tribal nations in the commonwealth and across the United States call us to act. It is thanks to their courageous truth-telling that we recognize Columbus' legacy of colonization as one not worthy of memorialization or celebration."

She continued, "Massachusetts remains one of only 15 states that still singularly observes the second Monday in October as Columbus Day. Currently, 35 U.S. states and territories have chosen a different path — recognizing Native American or Indigenous Peoples Day solely or in conjunction with Columbus Day, or by moving away from the holiday altogether. In 2021, Former President Joe Biden became the first U.S. president to formally recognize Indigenous Peoples Day. It's time for Massachusetts to do the same. Celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day is an act of respect, recognition, and reconciliation. It honors

the first stewards of this land — past, present, and future."

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"The Trump Administration's portrayal of Portland as 'war ravaged' and 'under attack' is inaccurate and inflammatory. By sending in the National Guard, the President is provoking disorder where it otherwise does not exist. These actions attempt to instill fear in our communities and silence dissent. I stand firmly with Oregon in resisting this egregious abuse of power." — *Attorney General Andrea Campbell joining a coalition of 24 attorneys general and governors in submitting a brief in support of Oregon's challenge to the Trump Administration's attempt to use the military for civil law enforcement.*

"Today's event showed just how prevalent PFAS is in many products we use in our daily lives, from cookware to kid's car seats. But we also showed that there are alternatives. Thankfully, more information on the harmful impacts of these chemicals, combined with the passage of state laws banning or restricting them, means that PFAS-free versions of many products are now available." — *Deirdre Cummings, Legislative Director for MASSPIRG, at a Statehouse rally against dangerous per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The event included a "show and tell" of common products containing PFAS, such as cookware and child car seats, make-up and personal care products, fabric sprays, paint, outdoor gear and clothing; and similar products that do not.*

"Boston Logan Airport is often the first and last impression that millions of travelers have of Massachusetts, and now, thanks to this new program, it's also one of the most welcoming. We want everyone who travels through Logan to know that we prioritize mental health here in Massachusetts." — *Gov. Healey announcing that passengers at Logan can look forward to meeting some furry friends, thanks to a new program called "BOS PAWS." In partnership with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Massport is introducing trained therapy dogs to the airport to help reduce stress and enhance the overall travel experience.*

"Beyond acknowledging the world-class education UMass Lowell provides, these rankings speak to the university's impressive return on investment, which reflects academics as well a commitment to giving students opportunities for meaningful career-connected experiences that serve as a launchpad for their professional lives." — *UMass Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen on the Wall Street Journal rating UMass Lowell the best public higher-ed institution in Massachusetts, the state's number 1 best value school and Number 1 among all colleges and universities in Massachusetts in fostering social mobility among students.*

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 *Continued on page 23*

Money Map Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

Q: Are there any changes in the 2025 tax law that could meaningfully affect my taxes as a homeowner or full-time employee?

A: Yes — one of the most helpful changes is an increase in the SALT deduction cap.

• SALT stands for State And Local Taxes, and it includes what you pay in state income taxes and property taxes.

• In 2025, the deduction cap for these taxes jumps from \$10,000 to \$40,000 for both single filers and married couples filing jointly.

• That means more people — especially here in places like Massachusetts — may be able to itemize their deductions again instead of taking the standard deduction.

• And remember: bigger deductions = lower taxable income = lower taxes owed!

• If your income is around or above

\$500,000, the benefit starts to phase out — but even then, it's worth checking.

• Most tax software should catch the change, but it's smart to double-check or consult a tax pro.

Bottom line: If you're a homeowner or pay a good amount in state or property taxes, this SALT cap change could mean real savings on your 2025 return.

Any questions? I'd be happy to help. I'm Vincent Hicks, CPA, based in Somerville with over 20 years of experience. Reach out at vhicksconnect@gmail.com or (859) 553-0788.

Disclaimer: This column provides general financial information and should not be considered legal, investment, or tax advice. Individual situations vary. Always consult a qualified professional for personalized guidance.



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Somerville Fair Housing Commission
Question of the week



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

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

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

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.

A **GoFundMe** has been launched by our own **Doug Holder** to help keep **The Somerville Times** free and thriving. Every dollar helps us stay independent and serve our community.

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BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



How did the ghost haunt three houses at the same time?

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Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Pride of place... — Photo by Denise Provost

On This Day in History

October 15

- 1582 – The Gregorian calendar is adopted in Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal; and the preceding ten days are lost to history.
- 1783 – Francois Pilatre de Rozier makes the first manned flight in a hot air balloon.
- 1813 – During the land defeat of the British on the Thames River in Canada, the Indian chief Tecumseh is killed.
- 1878 – Thomas A. Edison founds the Edison Electric Light Co.
- 1917 – Mata Hari, a Paris dancer, is executed by the French after being convicted of passing military secrets to the Germans.
- 1950 – President Harry Truman meets with General Douglas MacArthur at Wake Island to discuss U.N. progress in the Korean War.
- 1966 – Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale establish the Black Panther Party.
- 1990 – Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the USSR, receives Nobel Peace Prize.
- 2011 – Protests break out in countries around the globe, under the slogan "United for Global Democracy."

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

With the cost of printing going up and a lack of businesses having the resources to advertise, free papers feel the effect. We sincerely thank all who have already contributed and thank any future contributors. If you are interested in helping, please visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-somerville-times>. Or if anyone is interested in advertising, please contact Bobbietoner@aol.com. We offer great discounts to help our advertisers be able to advertise. Thank you all so much for your support!

We have a new tab on our website, "Campaign Releases." Go there to see the latest endorsements, letters, campaign press releases and campaign info for this year's election candidates.

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA) are inviting community members to celebrate Latin American and Caribbean Heritage Month on Saturday, October 18, 2 – 5 pm, at the Healey School, 5 Meacham St. The event will showcase the rich cultural traditions and contributions of Latin American and Caribbean communities through live music, dance, and art. This free community event is open to all ages. Light refreshments will be provided.

Community members are invited to join Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, the City Council, and the School Committee at the 2025 City Hall Community Meetings. These meetings are held every fall in each of Somerville's seven wards to share the latest city and neighborhood updates – and more – with community members. The in-person meetings kick off with a social half-hour with free pizza and healthy kid-friendly snacks, where you can chat one-on-one with elected officials, including the mayor, your Ward and At-Large City Councilors, and School Committee members, as well as staff, about issues important to you. The final meetings will be on Thursday, October 16, Ward 2, Somerville Community Baptist Church, and All Ward. <https://www.somervillema.gov/communitymeetings>.

Join in on the East Somerville Fall Clean Up 2025. Enjoy community time, meet your neighbors, and take a walk through

a brand-new East Somerville. Join them on Saturday, November 1, from 10 am to 12 pm. They will provide delicious coffee and pastries from Ola Café, meet at 115 Broadway, East Branch Library.

Somerville's biggest spooky party is back with SomerStreets: Monster Mash. Sunday, October 19, from 2 to 6 p.m. (Severe weather date, October 26) in Union Square. Get ready for a spooktacular afternoon of activities, food, music, and more: www.somervilleartscouncil.org/events/monster-mash.

The Somerville Museum will host Ghosts of Somerville at the Milk Row Cemetery, Somerville Ave., Sunday, October 19, 2 – 4 p.m. Visit the city's oldest burial ground, where friendly ghosts will tell you about their lives in 18th-century Somerville. Discover our city's history through the eyes of those who lived it. Part of Somerstreets: Monster Mash.

Western Pearl Street Reconstruction Street Virtual Office Hour, Friday, October 17, 12 pm. Talk to city staff about the Update Design for the Western Pearl Street Reconstruction project and share your questions and feedback. Participants can join anytime during the office hour. Register in advance. Learn more at www.somervillema.gov/westernpearl.

The Somerville Community Growing Center is starting to plan for its annual Winter Wreath Project. This critical end-of-year fundraising effort is also a fun way to come together in the fall and winter. Pop-up work sessions for flower and cone prep take place on October 19 and 24 and November 1 and 2. Help prep the dried flowers and pine cones in preparation for wreath assembly, and learn how to make bows. Sign up to help on their Sign Up Genius page <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B4AA9AC2DA5FDC07-59207939-wreath#/>.

Free Flu and COVID-19 vaccine clinic, Thursday, October 16, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Argenziano School Cafeteria, 290 Washington St. Both flu and COVID-19 vaccines are conveniently offered at multiple locations across Somerville, improving access for all residents with no out-of-pocket costs. Visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/vaccinations> to see more clinic dates.

[somervillema.gov/vaccinations](https://www.somervillema.gov/vaccinations) to see more clinic dates.

Join the Somerville Museum for a 100th Anniversary Cocktail Party Fundraising Bash. Rewind, Record, PLAY! Thursday, October 23, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., Crystal Ballroom, 55 Davis Square, with TJ the DJ and Joe Lynch, emcee, and surprise special guests. Food, Music spanning the past 100 years, time-traveling interactive stations, and more. Tickets: \$100 per person. <https://www.somervillemuseum.org>.

The Somerville Community Baptist Church, 31 College Ave. near Davis Square, is holding a Holiday Craft Fair on Saturday, October 25, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. With a theme of "Spooky—Thankful—Merry," the fair will offer handmade treasures, unique gifts, and festive items you can buy for Halloween, Thanksgiving, or Christmas. There will also be a Bake Sale, lunch for purchase, raffles, a silent auction, a chili contest, and lots of fun activities for children, so families and people of all ages can enjoy SCBC's Holiday Craft Fair.

Dilboy Post will be holding its third Annual Comedy Fundraiser, Elaine Pelino & Friends, hosted by John Harrington. The event will be held on November 9, 2 – 5 p.m., 351 Summer St. For tickets (\$25) and more information: www.dilboypost.com, dilboypost@comcast.net, 617-666-8794.

Somerville Media Center and The Somerville Beacon will host candidate debates for Somerville's City Councilor At Large and Mayoral races on Monday, October 20, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Crystal Ballroom at the Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square. Admission is free and doors open to the public at 5:30 p.m. for drinks and refreshments from the cash bar (ID required for alcohol). No signs, banners, backpacks, or oversized bags will be permitted. The At Large debate, 6 – 7 p.m., will be moderated by Keri Rodrigues, founder and president of the National Parents Union. The Mayoral debate, 7:30-8:30 p.m., will be moderated by Ben Orenstein, founder of The Somerville Beacon.

The Somerville Renters' Committee

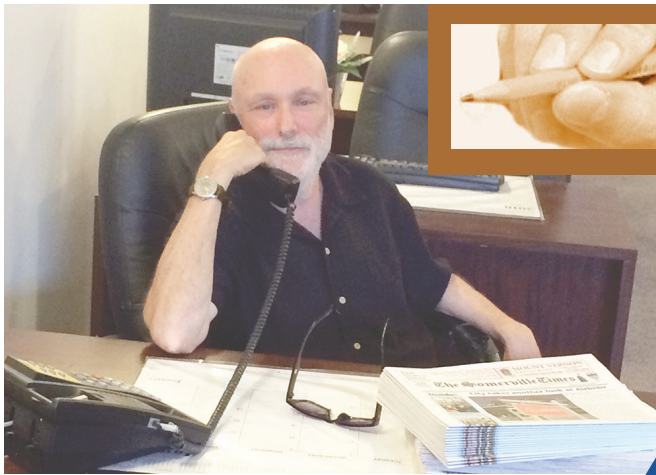
and the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) will host a Mayoral Candidate Forum on Housing on Wednesday, October 22, at 7:00 pm at the East Somerville Community School. The event is free, open to the public, and will also be streamed live on Zoom. Simultaneous interpretation in Spanish and Portuguese will be available via Zoom only. Interpretation into other languages must be requested in advance. Public Registration Link: <http://bit.ly/SomervilleHousingForum>

On Thursday, October 23, join in on the City Hall concourse (93 Highland Ave.) at 5 p.m. for the fourth annual Truck O' Treat. Attendees can trick-or-treat on the concourse and enjoy lawn games, activities, and more. Rain date is Thursday, October 30.

Registrations are now open for Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services' fall Savvy Caregiver course. Savvy Caregiver is an evidence-based training program designed to help family caregivers best support a loved one with dementia and care for themselves. The course has been proven to decrease caregiver distress, burden, and depression, while increasing a caregiver's sense of competence and confidence in their care role. Participation is free. Savvy Caregiver will be held virtually via Zoom each Wednesday from 12 to 2 p.m., through November 12. To register, call 617-628-2601 ext. 3153 or email katherine.bonilla@eldercare.org.

Through the generosity of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and under 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. 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

'My Messy Mistake: Dying Taught Me I Feared Life More Than Death' by Diana Kouprina

Article by Off the Shelf Correspondent Diana Kouprina

I met poet/writer Diana Kouprina at a meeting of my literary group the Bagel Bards, which meets every Saturday at Cafe Zing in Porter Square. She has had a hardscrabble background, but has overcome this, and now she is a prolific writer and social media personality.

My Messy Mistake: Dying Taught Me I Feared Life More Than Death

It wasn't supposed to happen that way. I wasn't suicidal, per se—I just didn't mind if I died. There was nothing to live for, my life at the time was stuck in a survival loop. I was a "high-functioning addict." I had convinced myself that snorting heroin wasn't addiction—it was medicine which I needed to sustain myself, especially when my prescription to benzodiazepine was just not doing the trick.

At the time, I worked retail and was going to school at Suffolk University. The paychecks couldn't cover the drugs my ex-husband and I consumed. To make ends meet, I turned to escorting. That was my double life: folded sweaters and bright store lights by day, quiet transactions and blurred nights by necessity. All of it in service to an addiction I kept convincing myself wasn't real.

One ordinary day in 2007, at 23, I wanted to unleash my creative spark. I was preparing an assignment for a creative English class. I remember how the words were hard to access. I wrote best when I was high or drunk. I preferred to write high. It started like a slow progression sneaking over to the safe, punching in the code, taking out the little plastic container and taking a tiny sip, then putting it back, going to the computer, trying to write, voice not coming through, needing more and repeating this process over and over again until, I had poured almost all of my ex-husband's 200 mg cherry-flavored methadone into myself. I wrote furiously, believing I was channeling Hemingway. When I finished, I crawled into bed, floating in euphoria. To make the high last, I popped a few benzos. I thought I was going to sleep. Instead, I slipped into death.

What happened next is hard to describe because it felt more real than any dream or reality I have lived in. It felt like my soul returning home, consumed by a magnitude of feelings. My great-grandmother, who had passed in 1994, was there. So was my Babushka Hasmik, who had died just a few years earlier. I never had a chance to say goodbye to either of them, since my arrival in the U.S. at the age of nine from



the Former Soviet Union and although I entered the country legally, I didn't have permission to travel outside the U.S. Thus, I never had closure from their deaths; instead, their absence had left a wound inside me, which had consumed me into a bubble made up of fear of abandonment.

And now, there they were. In my death, I saw them. I felt them. It was as though I had just woken from a nightmare and in my purest form, surrounded by love.

In that moment, I realized something shocking: I didn't fear death. I feared life.

Waking up was the terrifying part. Cold fluorescent lights. The sharp, sterile smell of the ER. My body was shaking uncontrollably, as though it had frozen stiff while I was gone, and now that I was back inside myself, I couldn't get warm. Doctors and nurses hovered, their voices clipped and urgent. One said it was nothing short of a miracle that I had come back.

When the machines were finally removed from me, I asked for more blankets with chattering teeth, when they offered me ice chips for my throat.

I didn't feel like a miracle. I felt ripped away. Ripped from love, from peace, from the only place I had ever felt completely safe. Coming back to life meant being dragged once again into the weight of my shame, my addiction, my trauma. It was not relief I felt in those first moments, but grief.

Yet, though I didn't know it then, something had shifted. In death, a seed of light had been planted in me. Slowly, stubbornly, it pushed me toward transformation. The losses, the addictions, the trauma, the abuse—all of it became essential material for a long and brutal process of self-reclamation. Reflecting now, it is hard to even

Continued on page 23

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Richard Wilhelm is a painter and poet who was a founding member of the Ibbetson Street Press and one of the co-editors of the 2000 anthology, *City of Poets: 18 Boston Voices*. His poems have appeared in *Spare Change News*, *The Somerville Times*, *Ibbetson Street*, and several other journals and anthologies.



THE GRAVEYARD IN SANDWICH

Nestled near the roadside in a graveyard obscured
by maple shrub, a row of cedar and pine,
are bleached markers succumbed to moss and vine,
some stones so weathered no names can be conjured.
A few flags flutter over Grand Army men
who fought at Gettysburg, Antietam, Second Bull Run—
all rest by the roadside, their duty and lives done.
Some lives were long; most were shorter then.
I stopped at a low stone of a family long gone—
a father, mother, twin babies survived one day.
A sorrow filled my heart, and turning my head,
I imagined the grief, then lives that went on--
My eyes were tearing over stones that display
just a name, two dates from which we conceive the dead.

— Richard Wilhelm

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

Tufts University Department of Music Presents 'Tufts Composers: New Sounds Now #1'

The Tufts University Department of Music presents "Tufts Composers: New Sounds Now #1" in the Distler Performance Hall at the Granoff Music Center on Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at 11 a.m. Time Gaps. From earliest possible historical models, Tufts Composers enter ancient structures through new doors. Past+Future=Present.

The Granoff Music Center is located at 20 Talbot Avenue on Tufts' Medford/Somerville campus. For more information, please visit go.tufts.edu/musicevents or call the Granoff Music Center Box Office at 617-627-3679.

Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 18

only one aspect of the Legislature's job and that a lot of important work is done outside of the House and Senate chambers. They note that their jobs also involve committee work, research, constituent work and other matters that are important to their districts.

Critics say that the Legislature does not meet regularly or long enough to debate and vote in public view on the thousands of pieces of legislation that have been filed. They note that the infrequency and brief length of sessions are misguided and lead to irresponsible late-night

sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding the end of an annual session. During the week of October 6-10, the House met for a total of four hours and 36 minutes and the Senate met for a total of 31 minutes.

Mon. Oct. 6 House 11:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.
Senate 11:04 a.m. to 11:28 a.m.

Tues. Oct. 7 No House session
No Senate session

Wed. Oct. 8 House 11:02 a.m. to 2:51 p.m.
No Senate session

Thurs. Oct. 9 House 11:01 a.m. to 11:33 a.m.
Senate 11:13 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.

Fri. Oct. 10 No House session
No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 22

understand how I did it all on my own, that type of healing capacity and rewiring could have only occurred because of divine intervention.

Recovery wasn't linear, but neither is life. There were jagged moments, relapses, and heartbreak. I had to lose people, illusions, and versions of myself I thought I couldn't survive without. But every loss became necessary for healing—past the drug addiction, past sexual abuse, past the deep trauma that had kept me caged.

Dying was my messy mistake. But living—choosing to keep living—became my revolution.

I don't romanticize the chaos. I don't call it beautiful. But I acknowledge its role. Without those mistakes, I wouldn't be here. Without death and return, I wouldn't understand how precious life is—or how fiercely transformation can happen.

There was no one mistake that led me to my fall. As much as I always wanted to pinpoint one moment, it is not possible. My mistakes were created out of immense self-hate. I believed myself to be a worthless human. It has been a journey of reclaiming myself, my worth, and my confidence. I am learning now to stop questioning myself, and the universe in doubt. I am embracing the fact that my life is a mosaic of mistakes. In my death, I learned about the value of my life lived steeped in purpose from within.

About, Letting Go

I have hang ups, I hold on too tight,
A broken record playing on the loop,
I seek to find my flaw, my fault, my failure.
I play it all on repeat mode inside my brain.
Always too terrified to seek the truth
Thinking it's me,
the problem,
the flaw,

the failure.
Believing that I am the monster in the mirror,
Too scared to look and see, of what I would find staring
back at me.
But, it's over now, I hope. I let it go, I broke the cycle of
repetition.
I rinsed the dread out of my hair,
I felt the truth, the fault, the flaw, the failure
It wasn't me it was someone else I had tried so hard to be.
I let it go, I know my fault,
I was naïve, a frightened child with no love to feel.
I trusted easily, always believing everyone else was better
off than me.
As the years would passed, rolling into one season after
another,
I remained caged in, to escape the prison, I was forced to see,
My choices made of terror, had tarnished me complete.
To revert back to me, to wash the tar out off my body,
I had to see, my mistakes were mine to own,
Mine to learn from and to let go,
Only then did the windows of my prison began to open
letting in an airy breeze
Within this healing road I've chosen, of loving me complete.

C'est La Vie

This is life, I am forty-one,
I pedal one sandaled foot after another, pushing down on
flower pedals, in shape of petals
The number frightens my mind made up of stress, awak-
ening my fear of loss.
Luckily my soul is there to provide solace to the mind, I
trust the words,
That a little voice utters from within,
Age is just a number, what matters most is hidden from
the eyes to see.

The freeing feeling takes on flight, as my mind retires and
my soul takes charge,
C'est la vie, I like this life, I am grateful for the second chance,
To be past the brinks of death
I ride my bike, I pedal on,
I unclench my grip from leather handle bars,
Blue and white flowers all over, woven wicker basket in
the front, propel me on.
I go back in time of childhood self, of bikes and friends,
of reading books,
never free, mistrusting the body, and the soul, as shame
and guilt ate away at me,
All before my teenage self was able to emerge, a perfect
child I forced myself to be.
I know it doesn't matter, what age I turn this year,
The enchantment with perfection is not a part of this life
I lead,
I ride my bike, I pedal on, pushing down in confident stride,
Making my way through the color scented leaves of fall,
Past the bunnies jumping through the yards
Through the tree tunnels made up of branches
I find my wings, I take on flight,
I soar through the moonlit nights listening to crickets
chirp their lust.
I feel it now, this is life, a fluid soul traveling between
realms, of past, of present and future self,
Within the vastness of the universe,
Always knowing what matters most is hidden from the
eyes to see.
C'est la vie, I tell myself, I feel it now.

Diana Kouprina is the author of [Borderline: A Poetic Memoir](#) (Wild Press, 2025). She writes about statelessness, survival, and self-reclamation. She is the host and producer of [W.I.L.D the Podcast](#)

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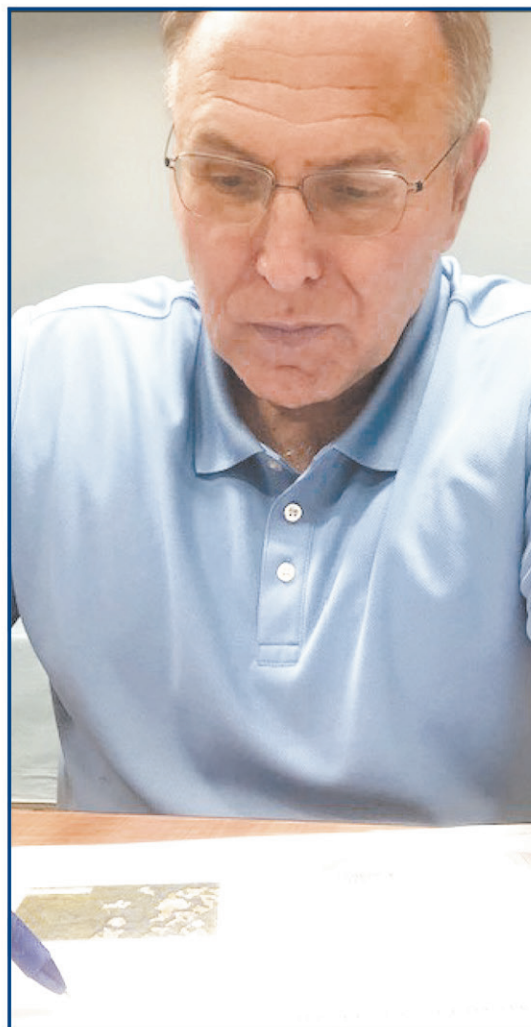
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