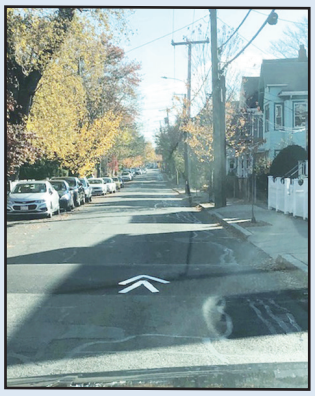
Somerville's original independent newspaper

The Somerville Times

www.thesomervilletimes.com

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Commercial property values continue to slump



According to Somerville's Chief Assessor, commercial properties are experiencing a steady decline in value.

By Harry Kane

The assessed value of commercial properties decreased 10 percent in FY2027, explained Francis Golden, Chief Assessor at the City of Somerville.

"The big difference this year, due to life science, is our commercial values dropped $363 million from a year ago," said Golden. "This is largely because we have five completely vacant buildings."

Golden spoke at the regular City Council meeting on November 12 as part of the FY2027 Classification Hearing that explains the adoption of tax levy percentages.

"New growth slowed down for Somerville," said Golden. Over the last two fiscal years, the slowdown was caused by the higher interest rates, the collapse of the life science market and high *Continued on page 4*

Somerville offers food support throughout the holiday and winter seasons

By Eliot Josti

As the holiday season begins in Somerville, many families struggle to find accessible meals during the winter. Just because the weather cools down does not mean the support of Somerville's food programs does. From food pantries to soup kitchens, everyone has the opportunity to get a great meal this time of year.

Project SOUP, located at 165 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145, has been serving Somerville residents since 1969. Free groceries, meals, and home delivery are provided after a quick registration.

"Our mission is to address food insecurity in our community by providing healthy, wholesome groceries and meals. We serve roughly 900 families per month through our pantry, community meals, and home delivery program for the *Continued on page 4*



Project SOUP's Food Pantry initiative is doing its part to help those in need of nutritional assistance.

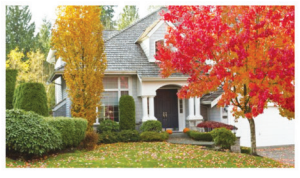
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NEWSTALK

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.

Community members are invited to attend Somerville's annual **Transgender Day of Remembrance and Resilience** on **Thursday, November 19**, from 5 to 6 p.m. at the **Tufts Administration Building, second-floor Council on Aging community room** (167 Holland St). Each year, Somerville gathers to remember the transgender and gender-diverse individuals whose lives have been lost to anti-trans violence, and to honor the strength and resilience of the trans community. The official observance of Transgender Day of Remembrance is **Friday, November 20**. The event is free and open to all. For more information about LGBTQ+ programming, events, and resources, please email lgbtqservices@somervillema.gov or visit somervillema.gov/lgbtqservices.

****

Join the **Somerville Museum** for an evening of objects, memories, and neighbors sharing the history they keep at home. ***Your Home is a Museum*, November 19**, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Every home holds treasures with a story. Bring a special object, like a family heirloom, a keepsake from your travels, or something you can't part with. They will put it on a pedestal, and you'll tell the story behind it.

****

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy birthday to **Tracey Leah Pratt**, who is celebrating this week. We wish Tracey a very happy birthday. Happy birthday to **Bobby Potaris**, who celebrates this week. A great guy and a great father. Happy birthday to **Craig Resmini**. We wish him a great *Continued on page 7*

The Somerville Times

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Somerville Weather Forecast

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

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
Wednesday *November 18*	Sunny	58°/40°	4%	2%	W 10 mph
Thursday *November 19*	Sunny	65°/41°	3%	1%	WSW 8 mph
Friday *November 20*	Sunny	66°/38°	2%	1%	W 11 mph
Saturday *November 21*	Sunny	62°/42°	9%	4%	SW 5 mph
Sunday *November 22*	Rain	62°/52°	34%	26%	SSW 8 mph
Monday *November 23*	Sunny	57°/35°	50%	41%	NW 12 mph
Tuesday *November 24*	Sunny	45°/27°	14%	7%	NNW 11 mph

NOTE: Conditions subject to change. Always check a daily forecast prior to activities that can be affected by the weather.

TheSomervilleTimes.com Comments of the Week

Response to: *City Council overwhelmingly passes boycott and divestment ordinance*

Shmuel says:

Yes, congress holds the foreign commerce power, but Courts have long let governments choose their own vendors and investments as "market participants," and the leading Supreme Court case on that involved Boston doing exactly that. Also, there's no federal sanctions law on Israel for this ordinance to conflict with.

Additionally, the ordinance covers city contracts and directly controlled investments, not private business in Somerville. Sole proprietors are exempt. The Director of Finance can approve an essential purchase when excluding a vendor would leave only one bid or inadequate competition.

Investments are restricted only where equivalent or better alternatives exist, with a separate carve-out for sound financial operation. A severability clause means that if a court strikes one piece, the rest stands.

This bill is not the threat many are making it out to be.

Response to: *Somerville boycott, divestment, and sanctions passing*

Daniel says:

The city's own lawyer said it was illegal, and the city's procurement director said it would be difficult if not impossible to apply fairly and in a standardized fashion. Dont be daft like dylan.

Winter Hill Barney says:

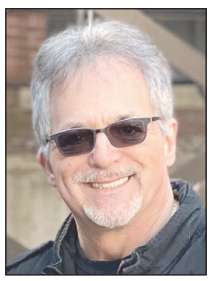
I haven't been active enough to be considered part of any movement, but speaking for myself, I support the ordinance not because I want the destruction of Israel, but because I want an end to genocidal racism. If the latter can't be accomplished without the former (I believe it can) that is entirely the fault of the Israeli government.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

Life in the Massachusetts VILLE "The Spirit of America" 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.*

Before the changes



As you all know by now, this is the place where we talk about the old days while dealing with progress. All I do is gather memories and share them. My job is pretty easy. I try to keep the memories of our past alive. I love being that person who shares these memories and nostalgic commentary.

I asked the following question to my social media friends and city mates. What is your favorite memory of Somerville before all the changes?

- The conveyor belt for grocery pick-up at the Winter Hill Star Market.
- When families could afford living in an apartment, not rooms rented.
- Hanging out at Prescott schoolyard.
- Somerville family. We were all in it together.
- Teele Square Sweet Shop.
- Playing Little League baseball with my dad as my coach.
- Playing on our side street (and at Hoyt Sullivan Park) with all the neighborhood kids.
- I miss hanging with friends, camping, baseball, and band.
- Ice skating in Glen Park every winter!
- Our home and family together on Quincy St.
- When everyone knew all their neighbors and people were friendly.
- Meeting a variety of seniors hanging at McDonald's Davis Square.
- The Venice Café.
- Hanging out at Khoury's State spa and seeing everyone in the neighborhood.
- Affordable rent, family-oriented neighborhoods, egg fights on Halloween, knowing your neighbors.
- Everything closed on Sundays.
- Not knowing how poor we all were.
- Todi's Ball Square … I lived right around the corner on Rogers Ave. The scrumptious sauce scent would make me drool.
- The bowling Alley in Ball Sq. and Harold's Luncheonette.
- No freakin' massive construction.
- The funky old wing of the high school



because the floors were squeaky … I happen to love antiques if you couldn't guess.

- Generations of families!
- Somerville recreation
- Growing up and hanging at Glen Park with all my friends. Met and married my late husband there, and we had 42 years of a great marriage before he passed away from Agent Orange. Thanks to Somerville for having such a great life.
- The Flea market up at the high school
- Broadway theater movies $.50 in 1977.
- Davis Sq before yuppies.
- High school in the 1980s.
- Southern Jr. High 1977 to 1980.
- Right to do whatever on your property without getting a ticket!
- Right to be a collector without being called a hoarder! I sell things online and they labeled my house. Scum. I will never let them in my house ever.
- Coasting down Laurel St. No cars.
- Bonfires in Glen Park.
- Napoli Pizza when we were kids.
- It would have to be way back when all the stores were in Davis Square. So many!
- Family-type neighborhoods where all the parents looked out for the kids, theirs or not.
- Tech Tournaments in Boston Garden.
- When people never locked their doors.
- I recall a time when people smiled a lot more.
- Be extra careful driving on College Ave. Those concrete islands will rip the bottom out of your car.

I hope you enjoyed yet another stroll down memory lane.

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The Somerville Times

Money Map Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

Q: I keep hearing advertisements for tax relief companies. When does it actually make sense to hire one?

A: Tax relief companies can be helpful, particularly when you owe substantial back taxes or face complicated IRS collection problems. But they aren't your only option.

- **For straightforward payment problems, start with the IRS.** If you agree with the amount owed but need more time to pay, you may be able to arrange a payment plan directly with the IRS, without paying a company for assistance.
- **For more complicated situations, consider professional help.** A tax relief company may be worthwhile if you face substantial debt, financial hardship, or IRS collection action. These companies may employ CPAs, enrolled agents, or tax attorneys—but you can also hire these professionals directly.

Enrolled agents are federally credentialed tax professionals authorized to represent taxpayers before the IRS. Look for someone experienced in tax resolution.

- **Shop around before hiring anyone.** Compare fees and services, check reviews and the Better Business Bureau, and verify the credentials of whoever will handle your case. Be cautious of companies promising major tax reductions before reviewing your financial circumstances.

Bottom Line: Tax relief companies can provide valuable assistance, but they don't have special powers to erase tax debt. For straightforward payment arrangements, the IRS may be your best starting point. For more complicated problems, compare tax relief companies with qualified CPAs or enrolled agents before deciding whom to hire.

Any questions? I'm Vincent Hicks, a CPA based in the Cambridge–Somerville area. Reach out at vincent@hickscpasolutions.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.

Got a Food Business Idea? Get Cooking with Somerville's Nibble Culinary Entrepreneurship Program

Have an idea for a restaurant but not sure how to get started? Love to cook, share stories, and build community? Applications are now open for the 2027 Nibble Culinary Entrepreneurship Program, a City of Somerville program that gives aspiring food business owners the training, mentorship, and hands-on experience to put their ideas to the test – all while providing opportunities for multicultural exchange and placemaking through food.

Now in its 15th year, the Nibble Program helps members of Somerville's immigrant and historically underserved communities explore culinary careers, develop food business ideas, and share their cultures through food.

Participants receive business development training and mentoring from industry professionals, with opportunities to teach cooking classes, sell food at markets and festivals, and vend at Nibble Kitchen in Union Square. Bilingual workshops and translation for one-on-one mentoring help make the program accessible to participants from different language backgrounds.

The program begins with an eight-week workshop series expected to start in January 2027. The cost is $100, with financial assistance available to cover the full cost for qualified participants.

Applications are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Kreyol with additional languages available upon request. Applications are open now and are processed on a rolling basis. Interested applicants should complete and return the form by December 15. Program staff will follow up to schedule interviews with qualified applicants.

For more information or assistance applying, visit nibblesomerville.com/culinary-entrepreneurship or contact Nibble Kitchen Manager, Anthony Baum, at abaum@somervillema.gov.

Commercial property values continue to slump CONT. FROM PG 1

construction costs.

Additionally, mixed-use residential is down 9 percent in assessed value, added Golden. He said that some big apartment buildings with retail on the first floor have had property tax appeals, which contest over-assessed property valuation.

On the positive side, he said the condominium conversion in Somerville "remains extremely strong" with 140 residential condo units added, and 41 conversions in all.

Residential property assessed valuations are still increasing, with the average condominiums up $12,000, single-family homes up $15,000, two-family homes up $22,000, three-family homes up $8,000, and four-to-eight family homes up $69,000, over the last fiscal year, according to Golden.

"In my career, I've been through these dips, and it always comes back," said Golden. "It can't come back fast enough to tell you the truth, but right now we are in a pretty flat period where our residential properties are driving the bus."

Somerville offers food support throughout the holiday and winter seasons CONT. FROM PG 1

homebound," said Project Soup at https://somervillehomelesscoalition.org/food-security/.

In addition to groceries, they host a Monday night meal every Monday from 4:30–5:30 PM at Somerville Community Baptist Church.

The Somerville's Hispanic Association works closely with Food4AllS Pantry, a program that focuses on rescuing food waste and feeding neighbors in order to build a stronger community.

"Our team of volunteers is the beating heart of our Food Pantry initiative, generously devoting their time and effort to address the growing need for food assistance in our community. Each of them, with a selfless spirit and unwavering commitment, has become a beacon of hope for those facing hardship," said CEO Salvador Demallistre on the website https://sha4cd.org/.

Guests only need to provide their name and town at Food4AllS and are able to visit once a week at Somerville Community Baptist Church.

The Somerville Mobile Farmers Market also provides assistance with accessing fresh food through SNAP and WIC benefits. Families can directly apply at https://www.somervillemobilefarmersmarket.org/services-4 to see if they are eligible.

In addition, breakfast and lunches are offered at no charge for students at the Somerville Public Schools during the year.

Accessing fresh produce, warm meals, and pantry items does not have to be difficult in Somerville. Many resources are available and encouraged throughout the city and year. Be sure to check the pantry's availability and bring proof of residency if required. Volunteers are always encouraged and are what keep the community strong and supportive. Be sure to visit https://somervillefoodcoalition.org/find-food/free-food-to-cook-at-home/ for updated information surrounding food support.

Mayor Jake Wilson is pleased to announce:

Six (6) Income-Restricted Condos Available for Sale at 13 Warwick St. and 8 Melvin St.

Condo Units Available at 13 Warwick Street				
Unit Number and Unit Type	**AMI (Area Median Income)**	**Sales Price**	**Estimated Condo Fee**	**Minimum Downpayment**
Unit 101 (1-bedroom)	80%	$209,855	$120	$6,296
Unit 301 (2-bedroom)	80%	$247,745	$132	$7,433
Unit 204 (Studio)	110%	$256,837	$170	$7,706
Unit 107 (2-bedroom)	110%	$346,668	$209	$10,401
Unit 403 (studio)	140%	$325,237	$265	$9,758[GR1]


Exterior of 13 Warwick St.

Condo Unit Available at 8 Melvin Street				
Unit Number and Unit Type	**AMI**	**Sales Price**	**Estimated Condo Fee**	**Minimum Downpayment**
Unit 3 (2-bedroom)	140%	$489,000	$152	$14,670


Kitchen at 8 Melvin St.

Open Houses	
13 Warwick St.	• Monday, November 16 from 6 pm - 8 pm • Saturday, November 21 from 10 am - 12 pm
8 Melvin St.	• Thursday, November 19 from 6 pm - 8 pm • Sunday, November 22 from 12 pm - 2 pm[GR2]

Questions?

Visit our weekly office hours every Thursday from 5:30-7:30 pm on Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81106664399

Call in: +1 (305) 224-1968
Access code: 811-0666-4399

When is the application deadline?
December 9, 2026 at 4 PM

When is the lottery?
There will be a lottery to decide who has the first opportunity to qualify to purchase this unit on **Thursday, December 17, 2026 at 10AM on Zoom.** View the lottery here: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85601722085.

Who can apply?
Review the income limits for units using the QR code to the right or at https://bit.ly/3W06uok.

There is no program minimum income for 80% AMI, and there is a minimum of 1 person per bedroom. Other exemptions and restrictions may apply, and you can find more information about them in the application packet.

Download the application online at **somervillema.gov/inclusionaryhousing**	To request a paper application Call: (617) 625-6600 X 2566 Email: inclusionary@somervillema.gov	Pick up a paper application at any city building.

Applications can be submitted by:
- Email: inclusionary@somervillema.gov
- Fax: 617-591-3235
- Mail or drop off: 50 Evergreen Ave., Somerville, MA 02145

If you need assistance translating or understanding this information, please call 311 (617-666-3311) or contact us at languageaccess@somervillema.gov. The City of Somerville can provide you with an interpreter for free.

Persons with disabilities can request accommodations to access the programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville by contacting the ADA Coordinator at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or ADA@somervillema.gov in advance of the event.

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The Somerville Times

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.*

City Council overwhelmingly passes boycott and divestment ordinance

The Somerville City Council has overwhelmingly voted (10-1) to pass an "Ethical Procurement" ordinance, boycotting and divesting from companies complicit in Israel's genocide, apartheid, and occupation of Palestine. On Thursday, November 12, dozens of community members rallied in solidarity with Palestine. Somerville makes history with the first binding legislative boycott and divestment ordinance that explicitly names Israel and Palestine in its operative language. It includes a concrete path for the city to define complicit companies via two databases from the United Nations (UN) and American Friends Services Committee (AFSC) that target the most complicit companies. This win is a result of years of public pressure by Palestinian community leaders and local organizers to hold Israel accountable for its violent oppression of Palestinians.

The ordinance follows the mandate of over 11,000 Somerville voters who passed the Boycott Ballot Question in November 2025, a non-binding public opinion that called on elected leaders to end city business with companies that sustain Israel's apartheid, genocide, and illegal occupation of Palestine. At the urging of local activists, the City Council passed a resolution shortly after in November 2025, committing to implement an ordinance in line with the language of the ballot question. The now-binding boycott and divestment ordinance codifies Somerville's divestment as city law.

The ordinance was co-sponsored by Councilors Ben Ewen-Campen and Ben Wheeler, with support from Councilors Will Mbah and Jon Link. It was first introduced to the City Council in June of 2026 and then deliberated upon in the city's Legislative Matters Committee where it was voted back into City Council on October 27 for its final approval. The ordinance bars the city from procuring goods or services from entities "provid[ing] material support to, or [that] derive revenue from [actions that further] the systematic violations of international humanitarian law or conduct recognized under international law to constitute apartheid, genocide, or unlawful military occupation, including in Israel and Palestine." It further restricts the city from purchasing financial equities or bonds that invest in the same entities.

Before the vote, Councilor Ewen-Campen called on his colleagues," Our [national] government is actively supporting indefensible atrocities, but we, [elected officials] face such immense pressure to be quiet… all of us collectively deciding to be silent about this does have an enormous impact on the world, and that's why…it is worth the work to take action on this."

Councilor Will Mbah reminded the Council, "This is not a far away problem: we have Palestinians who call this city home who are directly impacted….What is before us tonight is a modest ordinance that seeks to align our city's procurement and investment practices with the values Somerville has long stood for: human rights, accountability, fairness, and the responsible use of public dollars."

Jamal Halawa, Palestinian resident and Somerville school teacher who had his mic turned off by Somerville school committee for speaking about the genocide three years earlier, urged City Council to pass the ordinance, noting "We are here, again, and again … because we are inspired by the fight of other peoples struggling against oppression and erasure. Like them, we have survived, we exist, and we will continue to demand our voice be heard, because in truth we've all been inspired by the perseverance, the steadfastness, the sumud, of the Palestinian people."

Outside the meeting, Palestinian organizer of Somerville for Palestine, Mia Haddad, addressed the crowd: "We are actively holding Israel responsible for the ongoing Palestinian Nakba. We are among over 30 US cities to recently divest. We are turning the tide! And one day soon, we will end the Nakba. We will see a liberated Palestine." Amina Awad, another Palestinian leader, added, "Today we refuse to let martyrs be forgotten, we refuse to be remembered as quiet, we refuse to bow down to a future that will only empathize with us when it is too late, we refuse a future in which Palestine is not free and Palestinians do not thrive."

Many of the targeted companies involve surveillance technologies and weapons manufacturers. For example, Axon Enterprises produces TASERS used by police both in Israel and here in the US, while Palantir sends AI analytics for Israel to use to surveil Palestinians and for ICE to use here in Massachusetts. The city invests over $500,000 in pension funds towards arms manufacturer Lockheed Martin, among other procurement contracts and investments. The boycott and divestment ordinance will reroute those funds away from the oppression of Palestinians. Erin Axelman, co-director of Israelism, emphasized local Jewish support, "This bill was introduced by two Jewish city councilors. Somerville for Palestine has a massive Jewish presence…many Jewish people are beyond horrified that a genocide is being carried out in our name, not even a century since our own people experienced one."

Somerville is part of a sweeping series of divestment wins across over 30 cities in the US, including a similar divestment ordinance in Cambridge, MA, as well as a binding divestment ballot question garnering 76% of the vote in Providence, RI. Ahead of the Somerville vote, Cambridge for Palestine member Malick Abban addressed the crowd outside Somerville City Hall, "Cambridge passed divestment two weeks ago with the strongest language that has been passed so far and tonight, we are honored to be beaten by Somerville.… It is the strongest language we have ever seen in the history of our country condemning Israel's genocide and ending our complicity in it". This historic Somerville win makes it clear that the tide has turned overwhelmingly against Israel's oppression of Palestinians, and that moving public money out of companies that profit off of Israel's genocide, apartheid, and occupation is not only possible, but the popular and just choice.

As while displaced Palestinians drown under the threat of heavy rains that are flooding their tents, and as an independent UN commission has concluded Israel has continued to commit genocide since the October 2025 ceasefire, Somerville has finally made it clear: no more tax dollars for Israel's apartheid, genocide, and occupation of Palestine.

— Somerville for Palestine

Somerville boycott, divestment, and sanctions passing

Thursday, the City of Somerville City Council voted 10 to 1 to pass a boycott ordinance against Israel. This is despite numerous councilors having promised that they would not support the anti-Zionist boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) hate movement, which seeks the destruction of Israel. It is despite Shalom Somerville having communicated in numerous conversations with city councilors the great harm this causes to the community.

What was revealing about the conversations with city councilors was that their primary motivation was not justice; it was fear: fear of the intimidation and bullying of Somerville for Palestine, and fear of losing their jobs. The dereliction of duty and the cowardice here are astounding. President Sam Gechter said, "Our elected representatives decided that keeping their jobs was more important than keeping their word, and more important than our safety. When elected officials are too afraid to do their job, they put democracy at risk."

We are grateful for the bravery of Councilor Kristen Strezo, and we are deeply, deeply disappointed in the rest of the council, who deliberately chose to pass a terrible law, which they know and admit is illegal, and which they deliberately left as calling out only one country, hoping that the Jews of Somerville do their dirty work for them, and sue the city to overturn it. There is one person in our city who can still stand up to this – the Mayor. We hope he has the courage and integrity to speak out against this and keep his word to veto any procurement ordinance that mentions a country.

Shalom Somerville is a grassroots organization standing up for safety, belonging, and civic engagement for Jews and Israelis in Somerville.

— Shalom Somerville

COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Don't forget to shop local this holiday season.

Our View Of The Times

Here comes the holiday shopping season once again, and we are ready to embrace the opportunity to celebrate the only way we know how: with enthusiasm and optimistic attitudes.

Let the political and social pundits doom and gloom themselves into their usual perpetual state of the doldrums. We know how to lift ourselves, to rise to the occasion and make the most of what we have, in spite of whatever challenges may confront us.

While the Thanksgiving holiday reminds us to be grateful for the blessings we have received, likewise, the Christmas and Hanukkah holidays allow us the opportunity to share our bounty and to take stock of all the good things that life here in the 'Ville has to offer.

We know that prosperity of spirit is far more important than the material wealth that may elude us from time to time. It may sound trite, but when you really think about it seriously, the truth of it becomes clear.

As we are so often reminded, "local first" applies to our friends, families, and the occasional stranger as much as it does to our local economy. It's a time to be a little kinder and a little gentler with one another, as well as help local businesses to both survive and thrive.

We are certain that the rewards to be gained from this will soften the effects of whatever excesses we may experience along the way.

So, please try to remember those businesses within our immediate community when making your holiday shopping choices. They will be most grateful.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

birthday. Happy birthday to **Joan Puglia**, a lifelong resident who is celebrating this week as well. She's the wife of former alderman **Andy**. Happy birthday to a great friend of ours, **Malitta Knaut**. A great person. We wish her the very best. Happy birthday to **Diane Johansen**, another friend of ours, a lifelong resident of Winter Hill. A big happy birthday to **Joseph McKeon**, who is celebrating this week. We wish him a very special day. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Dennis Biondo, Philip D'Arcangelo, Peggy Henderson, Nancy Jones, Joe Beckmann, Joellen Guidi, Mary Silvestro, JoEllen Guidi, Suzanne Ferola, Bill McCoy, Todd Easton, Marie Coady**, and **Peggy Ryan Lookliss**, a happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

****

The **Highlanders football team** takes on **Cambridge Rindge & Latin** at the home of the **Red Sox's Fenway Park** this year. Bring your school spirit, cheer on Somerville, and get ready for an exciting Thanksgiving rivalry. **Tuesday, November 24** at 5 p.m. Get your tickets now! https://trst.in/glYW0Y.

****

Around Hear presents ***Odd Couple***, a free chamber music concert on **Saturday, December 5**, from 2–3:30 p.m. at the **Mystic Activity Center**, 530 Mystic Ave., Somerville. Performers **Rebecca Sullivan**, jazz vocalist, **Marji Gere**, violin and drums, and **Dan Sedgwick**, piano, will share a program that celebrates the ties that bind sun to storm, story to sonata, violin to piano, skunk to ... badger? Opposites attract in a program of joyous Schubert and furious Poldowski, alongside music by female songwriters of Tin Pan Alley and, pending permission, scenes from **Amy Timberlake's** hilarious and tender children's novel ***Skunk and Badger***.

****

Illuminations 2026 applications are now open. Illuminations is a month-long lights extravaganza where you can take self-guided tours using our handy-dandy online map, featuring the brightest holiday displays around Somerville. Whether you live in a house, a triple-decker, or an apartment, or run a local business, you can be part of the map. Apply by **Thursday, December 10** at 11:59 p.m.: www.somervilleartscouncil.org/illuminations.

****

The artists of **Brickbottom Arts District** are opening their doors this weekend, **November 21 and 22**, *Continued on page 13*

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's Olio #1047

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

1. What are the only two NFL teams to win the Super Bowl at their own home stadiums?

2. Who was the first player ever drafted into the NFL?

3. When was the first NBA game played?

4. What tree is the main source of the spices nutmeg and mace?

5. What was the initial name of the online retailer Amazon?

6. When is Thanksgiving celebrated in Canada?

7. Which board game features properties like the Boardwalk and Park Place?

8. Who sang the 1967 hit *Brown Eyed Girl*?

9. What's the nickname of the iconic British model whose real name is Lesley Lawson?

10. Which singer played Catwoman in the Batman TV series in 1967?

11. Seltzer is made by dissolving what gas in water to make it bubbly?

12. Filo pastry, chopped nuts like walnuts and honey, are the layers in what dessert?

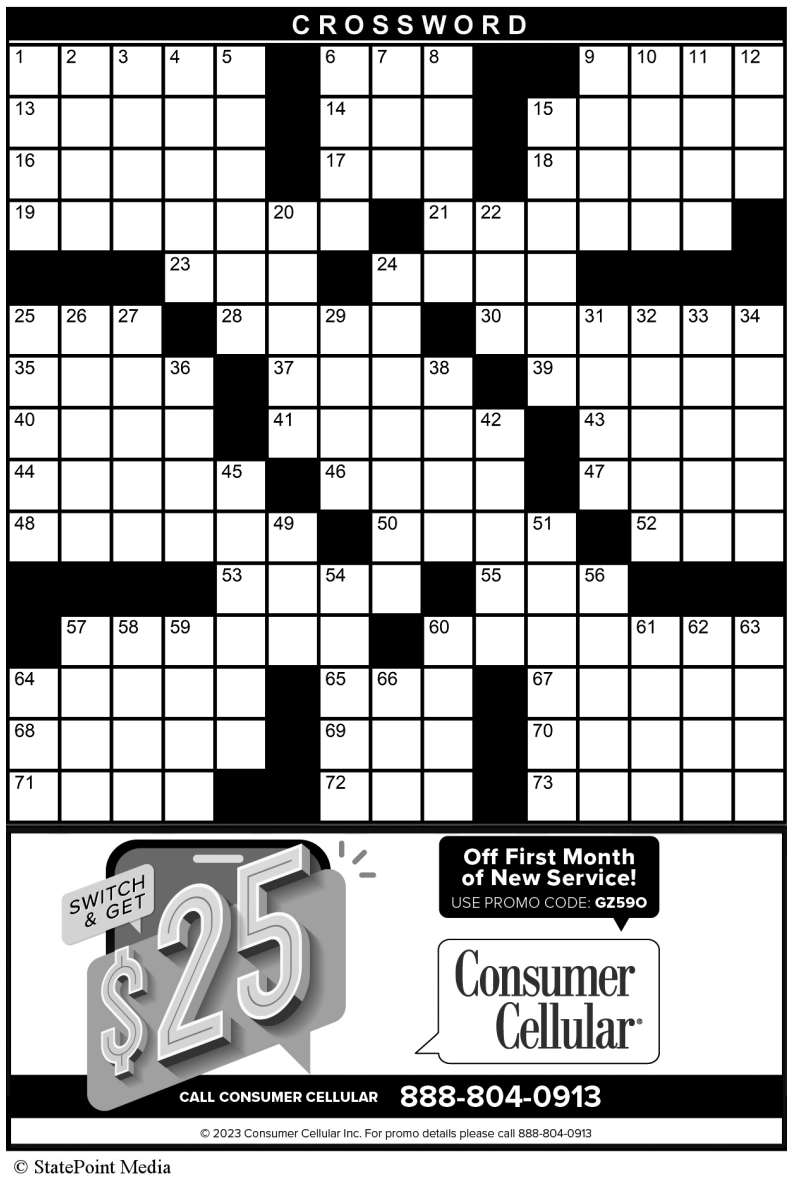
Answers on page 10

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. A Greek-Canadian man invented the "Hawaiian" pizza.
2. Antarctica is the largest unclaimed territory on Earth.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

CARTOON CHARACTERS



ACROSS

1. Had, with thou
6. Not NFC
9. Sinbad's seven
13. Intense
14. George Gershwin's brother
15. Exclamation of regret, arch.
16. Speed ____ in the 1960s cartoon
17. Neither's partner
18. Aggressive
19. Electric-type Pokemon
21. The Sailor Man
23. Grazing field
24. Marge to Homer
25. Amazon's entertainment acquisition, acr.
28. Ocean motion
30. Remote
35. Miscellany
37. Narc's unit
39. Russian money
40. "Atlas Shrugged" author
41. Adam Sandler's "____ Gems"
43. One of three square ones
44. More true
46. Do like goo
47. Hindu dress
48. Approvals
50. Express complaint
52. Witch's work
53. Location
55. Cow chew
57. Road Runner's nemesis
60. "Peanuts" protagonist
64. Young eel
65. "He ____ and drank the precious Words..."
67. African antelope
68. Tarnish
69. Message in a bottle, acr.
70. Plasters, as on a ship
71. Puts two and two together
72. Emergency responder, acr.
73. Hollywood director Lubitsch

DOWN

1. "Jack and the Beanstalk" strings
2. Popular smoothie berry
3. Donald or Baby Huey
4. What Gru does to the moon
5. Three-line poem
6. Japan's indigenous people
7. To's follower
8. Carpus, pl.
9. Uncontrolled swerve
10. "Piece of cake!"
11. Advil target
12. Limit, to some
15. Come into view
20. Kind of #5 Down
22. Mosquito enemy!
24. Wilkommen, in U.S.
25. Grandson of Rick Sanchez
26. Sunlight interference
27. Subtraction sign
29. Pet of Bedrock City
31. Eggnog spiker, pl.
32. West African spiritual practice
33. Bell-bottoms bottom
34. Cat of silent animation era
36. Lyric poems
38. Anis-flavored aperitif
42. Mold a mind
45. Vacation location
49. Use a chair
51. Subtlety
54. Bug
56. Laundromat device
57. Clothed
58. "Metamorphoses" poet
59. Strong desires
60. What access and recess have in common
61. Been in bed
62. Bodily disorders
63. NYC coas
64. 7th letter of Greek alphabet
66. Jerry's scheming pursuer

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

© StatePoint Media

Soulution to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

City enforces strict dumpster rules to fix rat problem

By Harry Kane

Public health and safety officials are working diligently to rid the city of rats, according to a recent status report from Colin Zeigler, Public Health Division Director.

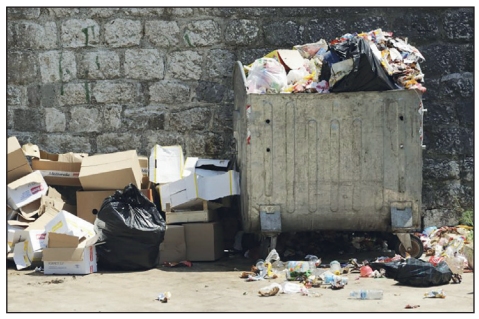
As a result of the proliferation of rats in Somerville, the inspection of all known dumpsters is part of a citywide effort to enforce compliance.

"There is plenty of room for the city to improve its practices on education and enforcement work on dumpsters and continuing to lessen the activity of rodents near them," said Zeigler at the November 10 Public Health and Public Safety Committee meeting.

There are 603 actively licensed or in the process of being licensed dumpsters in the city, said Zeigler. 14 known dumpsters remain unlicensed.

Much of the "dumpster activity" is associated with the 445 food establishments in the city, he explained.

While enforcement is typically "complaint-driven," there is an annual dumpster audit, mainly for those who have not



"Dumpster delinquents" who fail to follow guidance regarding rodent abatement can expect to be penalized by the city.

renewed their dumpster licenses. He says that the dumpster audit is a program that includes notices followed by ticketing.

For dumpster delinquents who ignore the warnings, Zeigler says he sends the list of names on a weekly basis to the code enforcement officer who oversees dumpster compliance and issues violations.

At the beginning of August, there were 68 unlicensed dumpsters that Zeigler was aware of. The list has shrunk to 14, so progress has been made, he said.

"The objective is always compliance and education for long-term success," said Zeigler.

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

Veterans Day Ceremony





On Wednesday, November 11, Veterans Day, the Ancient & Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts, HM 10th Regiment of Foot, and 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, as well as Mayor Jake Wilson, City Councilors, and the Somerville Office of Veterans' Services, honored our veterans at the 1863 Civil War Monument and the gravesite of an unknown British Soldier. The brief ceremony and speaking program honored all Somerville veterans, including paying tribute to the Somerville veterans buried at or commemorated by the 1863 Civil War Monument in Milk Row Cemetery.

Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO

Cranberry Raspberry Sauce

I never purchase store-bought cranberry sauce anymore because homemade is easy to make, and tastes so much better. The rosemary and orange essence complement the tartness of the cranberries perfectly. Feel free to substitute a cinnamon stick for the star anise.

12 oz. Fresh Cranberries
1 Medium Orange, Zested & Juiced
1 Rosemary Sprig
1 Star Anise, Optional
1/4 Cup Maple Syrup
1/2 Cup Sugar
1 Pint Fresh Raspberries

In a 3-quart saucepan, add all the ingredients except for the raspberries, mix well, and cook over medium/low heat. Stir often. When the mixture slowly boils, you will hear the cranberries popping. Cook for about 10 minutes. Add the raspberries and stir thoroughly. Turn off the heat and let the mixture cool down. It will thicken while it cools down. Discard the rosemary and star anise. Transfer to a well-sealed container and refrigerate. This can be made a couple of days before the big meal.

This recipe was amended by adding the raspberries on behalf of my dear friend Ross. Thank you, Ross, what a fantastic addition! Yield approximately 2 1/2 cups.

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



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CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
8 BONAIR STREET
SOMERVILLE, MA 02145
REBID #S2027-06

The School Committee of the City of Somerville invites sealed bids for:

A 2026 or Newer Hybrid Refrigerated Box Truck With Power Tailgate for the Somerville Public Schools Food Service Department

The IFB package may be obtained by emailing Leah Arredondo in the Finance Office, larredondo@k12.somerville.ma.us or can be picked up at the Somerville School Department, Finance Office, 167 Holland Street, 3rd Floor, Somerville, MA 02144 on or after November 17, 2026.

Sealed bid responses will be received no later than **2 p.m., Tuesday, December 8, 2026** at the Finance Office Somerville School Department, 167 Holland Street, 3rd Floor, Somerville, MA 02144 at which time and place they shall be publicly opened and read aloud.

The School Committee of the City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part or parts thereof, waive any minor informality in the Bid process and to award the Contract that is deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Somerville School Department.

Robert A. Berretta
Chief Financial Officer
Somerville Public Schools

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE
CITY COUNCIL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

There will be a public hearing at a regular meeting of the **Somerville City Council** on **Thursday, December 10, 2026, at 7:00 PM**, on the Order of President Lance L. Davis, to convey the Fiscal Year 2027-2031 Captial Investment Plan.

This meeting of the City Council will be conducted both in person and by remote participation, using the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person at the City Council Chamber, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.

2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link into your internet browser any time before the meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ETEDZ3BXRqaXQbr40v48VA

3. You can also find this link on the City Council's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.

4. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may email your comments to publiccomments@somervillema.gov, send them by US mail to the City Clerk, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA, 02143. Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Council.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.

COURTNEY HENDERSON
CITY CLERK

11/18/26 The Somerville Times

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www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

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

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The **Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)** will hold a virtual public hearing on **Wednesday, December 2, 2026**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be conducted via remote participation. A recording of these proceedings can be found online here:
Agendas, Minutes, & More.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GDaXDKpwQB6Wok2YIn7O2w

TO CALL IN

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

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

64 Hooker Ave	Jared Gardiner proposes to convert an existing nonconforming rear projecting porch into habitable space in the Neighborhood Residence (NR) zoning district, which requires a Section 6 finding.
599 Somerville Ave	599 Somerville Ventures LLC is requesting relief of ground story entrance spacing Per SZO 4.1.9.d., which requires a Variance.
199 Elm Street	Mapu Development LLC seeks relief from SZO 4.2.8.c. for number of stories, which requires a Variance.
199 Elm Street	Mapu Development LLC seeks relief from SZO 4.2.8.c. for building height, which requires a Variance.
199 Elm Street	Mapu Development LLC seeks relief from SZO 4.2.8.d. for the density factor for number of residential units, which requires a Variance.
2 Quincy St	Stefanov Architects Inc. is requesting relief of minimum lot width for an Apartment Building per SZO 3.2.10.a, which requires a Variance.
2 Quincy St	Stefanov Architects Inc. is requesting relief of ground story elevation requirements per SZO 3.2.10.c., which requires a Variance.
2 Quincy St	Stefanov Architects Inc. is requesting relief of setback requirements per 3.2.10.b, which requires a Variance.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at
https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions.
Interested persons may provide comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov.
Persons with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication (i.e., CART, ASL), written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures in order to access the programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville should contact the ADA Coordinator in advance at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or ADA@somervillema.gov.

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BY 12 PM MONDAY
PHONE: 857-488-5138

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
JAKE WILSON
MAYOR

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Somerville City Council's **Land Use Committee** and the **Somerville Planning Board** will hold a joint public hearing on **Thursday, December 3rd, 2026** at 6:30 pm. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this hearing will be conducted via remote participation.

REGISTER ONLINE
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_eemlwqHESsyCidaLBdTvSA

You have two ways to be heard at this meeting:
1. Enter the link exactly as it appears into your internet browser. You will then be asked to register for the meeting.
2. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may email your comments to publiccomments@somervillema.gov, or send them by US mail to the City Clerk, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA, 02143. Your comments must arrive no later than 4:00 PM on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Council and Planning Board for inclusion with the Hearing testimony.

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

- Councilor Scott requesting an amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to establish the Upzoning Overlay (UO) District at Davis Square, Porter Square, and Ball Square.36 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend Zoning Ordinance Section 12.1.2 regarding affordable dwelling units.
- Mayor Wilson requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 2.4.6, 3.1.13, 3.2.12, 4.1.10, 4.2.10, 4.3.10, 4.4.10, 5.1.11, 6.1.8, 6.2.9, 6.3.8, 6.4.11, and 6.5.8 of the Zoning Ordinance to simplify regulation of building components.
- Mayor Wilson requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 2.1.1, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 4.1.14, 4.2.14, 4.3.14, 4.4.14, 5.1.15, and 6.2.13 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow greater adoption of sustainable development elements.
- Mayor Wilson requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 2.1.1, 2.3.1, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.6, 3.1.6, 3.2.6, 9.2.11, 9.2.13, 9.2.14, 10.2.1, 10.2.2, and 14.1.5 of the Zoning Ordinance to simplify regulation of accessory structures.
- Mayor Wilson requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 3.1.16, 3.2.15, 4.1.13, 4.2.13, 4.3.13, 4.4.13, 5.1.14, 6.1.11, 6.2.12, 6.3.11, 6.4.14, 6.5.11, 8.2.4, 9.1.1, 9.2.8, and 9.2.9 of the Zoning Ordinance to amend use tables and standards.
- Mayor Wilson requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 3.1.5, 3.2.5, 6.3.5, 6.4.6, 7.3.5, 8.3.6, 10.10.3, 15.2.1, 15.3.2, 15.7.2 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to streamline the jurisdiction of review boards.

Zoning amendments may be viewed online by searching for the Somerville City Council's online meeting calendar for the meeting or request information.

Final language of the above amendments may be modified by the City Council during the legislative process. The Chair(s) may opt to extend the period for written comments, in which case additional comments will be accepted until the date indicated. This information can be found in the minutes of the meeting.

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Ms. Cam's Olio Answers

From on page 8

1. Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Los Angeles Rams
2. Jay Berwanger, in the inaugural 1936 NFL Draft
3. New York Knicks and the Toronto Huskies in 194
4. Myristica fragrans
5. Cadabra, Inc.
6. Second Monday in October
7. Monopoly
8. Van Morrison
9. Twiggy
10. Eartha Kitt
11. Carbon dioxide
12. Baklava

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Section 00 11 13
ADVERTISEMENT TO BID
MGL c.149 Over $150K

The **SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY**, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids from Contractors for the Vestibule Addition and Renovation - Bryant Manor at Bryant Manor (667-4) in Somerville, Massachusetts, in accordance with the documents prepared by **REVERSE ARCHITECTURE**.

The Project consists of but not limited to: Work consists of a new accessible entry vestibule and repairs and replacement of accessible exterior walkways, ramps and stairs. The work includes:

•Selective demolition of storefront systems, entry doors, flooring finishes, glass and gypsum board partitions, ceiling systems, lighting and misc fittings and devices in the area of work.
•Selective demolition of exterior concrete stairs, railings, and walkways.
•Modifications to fire alarm and fire protection systems as indicated.
•Modifications to intercom system, security system, and access control system.
•Relocated and new interior and exterior lighting.
•Vestibule extension on new slab on grade on new footings.
•New automatic sliding entrance doors and new fixed storefront glazing.
•New interior partitions, door, floor and ceiling finishes and painting.
•New wall-mounted convective heater.
•New exterior concrete walkways, ramps, paving, and stairs.
•New galvanized steel and stainless steel handrails.

The work is estimated to cost **$440,000.00**.

All bidding Requests for Information (RFIs) shall be submitted online by 11/30/2026 at 9:00AM EST for filed sub-bids and by 12/11/2026 at 5:00PM EST for general bids.

Bids are subject to M.G.L. c.149 §44A-J & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §§26 to 27H inclusive.

THIS PROJECT IS BEING ELECTRONICALLY BID AND HARD COPY BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please review the instructions in the bid documents on how to register as an electronic bidder. All Bids shall be submitted online at www.biddocs.com and received no later than the date and time specified.

General bidders must be certified by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) in the following category of work, **General Building Construction**, and must submit a current DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility and signed DCAMM Prime/General Contractor Update Statement.

General Bids will be received until **18 December 2026 at 3:00PM EST** and publicly opened online, forthwith.

Filed Sub-bids for the trades listed below will be received until **03 December 2026 at 3:00PM EST** and publicly opened online, forthwith.

Filed sub-bidders must be DCAMM certified for the trades listed below and bidders must include a current DCAMM Sub-Bidder Certificate of Eligibility and a signed DCAMM Sub-Bidder's Update Statement.

TRADES
Miscellaneous and Ornamental Metals
Glass and Glazing
Electrical Work

General bids and sub-bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount (including all alternates), and made payable to the **SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY**. Note: A bid deposit is not required for Projects advertised under $50,000.

Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available for review at www.biddocs.com (may be viewed and downloaded electronically at no cost).

PRE-BID CONFERENCE / SITE VISIT: Scheduled
Date and Time: 11/24/2026 at 10:00AM EST
Address: 75 Myrtle St, Somerville, MA 02143
Instructions: Meet at front entrance

The hard copy Contract Documents may be seen at:

Nashoba Blue Inc.
433 Main Street
Hudson, MA 01749
978-568-1167

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www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

Free Inclusive Dance class: An amazing opportunity for people with disabilities

By Keith Foster



Everyone dancing to the K-Pop Demon Hunter song *Golden*.

The Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities hosted the first Inclusive Dance class at the Tufts Administration Building (TAB) on November 14 for people with disabilities. The event included both in-person and Zoom dancers.

Kaylee Bayes, the first wheelchair dancer from the FOX reality show *So You Think You Can Dance*, was the instructor. She has Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS), a multi-systemic, degenerative connective tissue disorder. She started dancing at three, was diagnosed at 21, and was told she'd never be able to dance again. That was not going to be her reality. She needed to find a way to dance, and she did.

Nicole Cannon, Associate Commissioner at the Commission for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), who attends biweekly commission meetings and serves on the Events Committee, was in attendance. Her daughter knew about the event and was one of the dancers attending.

Mayor Jake Wilson was also in attendance. He was greeted and thanked for his support and presence at the event. The mayor said that the money for the class was made possible by people who illegally park in handicapped spaces.

The event was held to bring people of all ages and abilities together to dance. The Commission expressed its enthusiasm over growth, new ideas, and support from the Somerville Council on Aging and social media community members who helped to promote the event widely. Organizers hoped for strong Zoom participation, and they got it.

The class was a demonstration. Attendees learned basic dance movements to the chorus of the wildly popular K-Pop Demon Hunter song, *Golden*, which to this day has garnered nearly two billion views on YouTube.

After the class, Bayes was asked what inspired her to have this class. She lived on the East Coast for a little bit and saw how big the need was for a continuation of accessible spaces. As a dancer who "grew up not quite fitting the box," she recalled being 11 years old, using a wheelchair, and being removed from her studio's recital.

Her disabilities have progressed. She now relies on her wheelchair for daily living. She sought a space to dance without fear or rejection and aims to ensure others are not only seen but also pushed and accepted. Her mission is to "never, ever, ever let there be another recital where a dancer doesn't get to perform or have the opportunity to."

Bayes is "forever growing" in her accessible offerings in teaching and is always "going to be a student." The class originates from "a true need" she experienced as a child.

2nd Annual Somerville Cat Tour

Nearly 1,000 people came out to celebrate our feline friends, explore the neighborhood, and help raise thousands of dollars for Broken Tail Rescue (https://www.brokentailrescue.org) at the 2nd Annual Somerville Cat Tour. Surprise guest tour guide Matt Shearer joined in on the fun as attendees followed the route organized by Tandem Veterinary Clinic. Participants stopped off at designated homes to show their appreciation for some of Somerville's finest feline residents.





Somerville Fair Housing Commission
Question of the week

Q: On the list of protected classes, you have both sex and sexual preference. What's the difference between them?
A: Sex is whether you are male, female, or don't find either of those labels applies to you. (And that's true whether your sex is the one stated on your birth certificate or not). Sexual preference is whether the people you are attracted to are male, female, or both, or it's irrelevant to you. Discriminating against people because of their sex OR their sexual preference is illegal, and it is not Fair Housing.

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.
To donate visit:
https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-somerville-times
Share with your friends and neighbors!
Let's keep local news alive, together.
And to advertise in The Times, call **857-488-5138**

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and speak to the Assignment Editor

Somerville through the eyes of Denise



The path ahead… — *Photo by Denise Provost*

Bobby's Dad Jokes Corner



By Bobbygeorge Potaris

What kind of key can't open doors?
A turkey.

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

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

On This Day in History
November 18

1477 – William Claxton publishes the first dated book printed in England.

1865 – Mark Twain's first story *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* is published in the New York Saturday Press.

1906 – Anarchists bomb St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

1921 – New York City considers varying work hours to avoid long traffic jams.

1928 – Mickey mouse makes his film debut in *Steamboat Willie*.

1936 – The main span of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco is joined.

1949 – The U.S. Air Force grounds B-29s after two crashes and 23 deaths in three days.

1978 – Peoples Temple cult leader Jim Jones leads his followers to a mass murder-suicide in Jonestown, Guyana.

1983 – Argentina announces its ability to produce enriched uranium for nuclear weapons.

2002 – UN weapons inspectors under Hans Blix arrive in Iraq.

2003 – Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court rules the state's ban on same-sex marriages is unconstitutional

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

12 – 5 p.m. Visit **Brickbottom Artists Building & Gallery, The Loov, Joy Street Studios** and **Triangle Gallery & Cafe**. Wander through the studios. Connect with the art. Meet the artists. Whether you're looking to grow your collection, discover emerging talent, or simply enjoy a weekend filled with creativity, there'll be art in every corner. Good vibes, good people, and plenty to discover. For more information: https://brickbottom.org/.

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Somerville's **Next Wave Middle School and Full Circle High School (NWFC)** are holding their **annual wreath sale**. Proceeds from the sale directly support student activities and enrichment opportunities. Wreaths are $28 each and are available for purchase through November 24. Orders can be placed online at tinyurl.com/NWFCwreathsale. Community members are encouraged to place their orders soon, as the wreaths typically sell out quickly. Pickup begins **December 1** at NWFC, located within **Somerville High School.**

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The city is offering f**ree COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics** at locations across the city this fall to help community members protect their health. The next free vaccine clinic: (ages 6 months or older), **Thursday, November 19**, 4 – 6:45 p.m. **City Hall Annex**, 50 Evergreen Ave. Appointments are strongly encouraged, and walk-up availability is limited. To see the most up-to-date clinic schedule or make an appointment, visit www.somerville-ma.gov/vaccinations. You can also call 311 (617-666-3311) for information or to make an appointment.

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Somerville-made **Taza Mexican Style Chocolate Classic Collection** is among Massachusetts' three candidates for **GreenerFriday's 2026 Holiday Gift Awards**. They invite the public to discover 150 candidates across all 50 U.S. states and vote. There will be one global winner and one winner per state; no winners have been selected. The public vote is separate from editorial evaluation. Voting closes **December 20**, at 11:59 p.m. Explore Massachusetts and vote: https://greenerfriday.com/.

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The final week for **residential yard waste collection** in 2026 will be **Monday through Friday, December 7–11**. Place yard waste curbside for pickup on your scheduled trash collection day. After December 11, yard waste may be brought to the **DPW yard** (1 Franey Rd.) on weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. or between 1 and 3:30 p.m. To learn more, please visit somerville-ma.gov/trash.

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Thinking about **Pre-K or Kindergarten** for your child? Explore **Somerville Public Schools**. There are a couple of great opportunities to get a firsthand look at our SPS Pre-K–Grade 8 schools. Families are invited to drop in for a school tour on any of the following dates: **Thursday, December 3** – 9, 10, 11 a.m. and 12 p.m. **Wednesday, January 13** – 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, and 4:30 p.m. **Tuesday, January 26** – 9, 10, 11 a.m. and 12 p.m. Visit the Enrollment Office webpage for more information: https://somervillepublicschools.org/enrollment.

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Take part in the **Somerville Recreation Kickoff Fair** on **Saturday, January 9**. They're bringing the fun with an afternoon full of activities, entertainment, and opportunities to connect with your community. Meet their staff, try out some of their programs, and play. Bounce houses, face painting, a magician, and music. Visit tables of local businesses and our vendors. Discover upcoming programs, events, and activities. **Somerville High School**, 81 Highland Ave., 1 – 4 p.m. Free activities for all ages.

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2026 Davis Sq. Farmers Market, closing date will be **November 25**, 12 – 6 p.m., **Day and Herbert St.**, Somerville. This market has more than two dozen Massachusetts farmers and food producers selling fresh produce, meats, baked goods, ready-to-eat meals, and other local products. It's held *Continued on page 15*

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The Somerville Times



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Lyrical SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder



Our poet writes: "My name is Allison Jordan. I grew up in Amherst, NH, with my parents, brother, and sister. I am currently a junior at Endicott College. I am studying Exercise Science with an Allied Health concentration and play on Endicott's women's lacrosse team."

AUTUMN

Red leaves float peacefully to the ground,
Their time has come,
The end is near,
They descend to their final resting place
condemned to wither away
on the ground.
Left behind an empty branch,
Cold, lonely, lacking color,
Once a beautiful red masterpiece,
Now a barren sign
all things must end,
Would the beauty be as profound,
If it never came and never left,
Or would no one spare a glance,
At a sight so common
it does not need admiration,
Yet the world does change,
Constant and never-ending,
Nothing ever lasts,
Would we want it to?

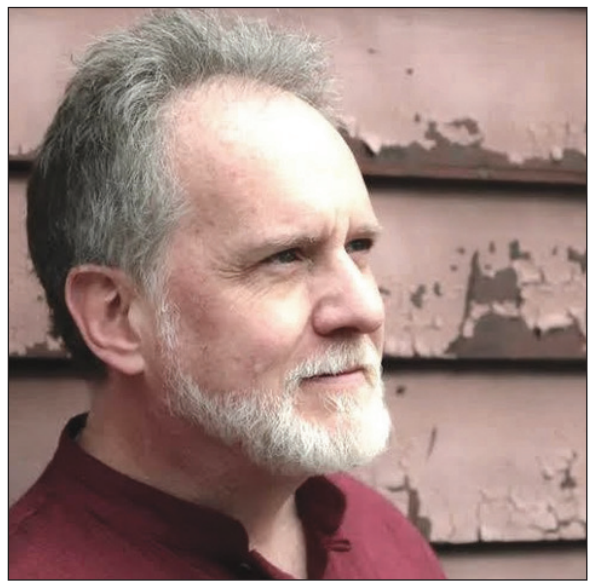
— Allison Jordan

To have your work considered for the Lyrical send it to:
Doug Holder, dougholder@post.harvard.edu

A Handpicked Poem presented by Michael Steffen

A Handpicked Poem
Presented by Off the Shelf Correspondent Michael Steffen

By Daniel Tobin, from *Dusk, Empire: New and Selected Poems 1987-2024*



The Creature Has a Purpose

Incongruities of the "English Palace,"
And a rush of Ohio River air,
That smells of millwork and the driven flange,
Mingle in the great poet's brother's room
Where he lies, dying of the family complaint,
The rusted bellows of his lungs giving out.
Penniless, he has become his debtors,
Having braved the Great Western Road across
The Alleghenies' broad and fordable sublime,
Their expendable grandeur mastered in flat
And keelboat, broadhorn and ark, to make
His name: two fortunes won, two sawyered
In the roiling confluence of the New World.
No death is a death of luxury—not this life
That pioneered "the Dark and Bloody Land,"
Nor the boy pent, opaque, in a Hampstead room.
Or the one who stayed and wrote and broached
His end in a far country consigned to the past,
Fountain, Forum, sun-burnished piazzas
Where posthumous lives encounter their ruin
In catacomb and column and shuttered light—
This brother absent all ends but his own.
On the mantle, the poet's portrait, wreathed
In hyacinth, Apollo's flower, looks off,
Akin to a figure on that antique vase—
All unmoving activity and scope; though
Where the poet is, now, is not the place
He sat to have his minor image drawn.
Margate is gone, and Cheapside, and Wentworth.
Which makes the brother fading here, alone,
Or tended by his slaves, a dreaming thing.
Without the social thought of thee, the poet wrote
Nothing could stay life from the vastness,
The vagrant expanse of sea and sky.
And this, amid the great outpouring,
The poet against all likelihood breeching
The conditions:—the Moon is now shining full
And brilliant—she is the same to me in Matter,
What you are to me in Spirit—the hurt belied
On that letter's fraught, disconsolate seal:
Qui me néglige, me désole—"Who neglects
Me, torments me," the gem signaling
The poet's final letter to the beloved,
How short is the longest life. And, at the crux:
We cannot be created for this sort of suffering.
But to have stayed, or turned back, to have
Chosen sacrifice, owned that capability,
Unlike the stoat the poet glimpsed, its head
Peeping from a patch of withered grass—
The creature has a purpose and its eyes
Are bright with it ? Though how to make a soul
The poet asked, but through the medium
Of a world like this, the elemental space
That schools and scars till each becomes oneself?
He shifts a little on the bed, the one
Whose body was electric with leaving,
So his might be again at sea, sails flown
In pursuit of the Narrows, the continent
Beyond, its wonders and wealth, his offices,
Parlor life brimming with Old World ways—
The nagging neatness of a well-made life.
Under him the waters lift, purgatorial
In the predatory depths, dolphin, shark,
The greater bodies cruising, thrashing,
Scale after scale in the moon-washed swell,
A nautilus scenting currents, scavenging,
All mother-of-pearl chambers spiraling
Logarithmic, prized, rise to the surface,
The pinhole camera of its eye open, blind
To this teeming speck of a firmament.
A breath. One more. His mouth opens,
Wider now, as if he had begun to sing.

Henry David Thoreau had a vision of his pond near Walden and its millennial origin as a glacier. Local stories by the natives had passed this down, over the thousands—tens of thousands—hundreds of thousands of years it would take for a glacier to subside into a pond—unless under drastic climatic conditions that would make short order of such dramatic changes. Still the tectonic shifts of the glaciers creeping across the continent to foist up the great North American mountain ranges would not happen over such proverbial nights. 19th-century *Continued on page 15*

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 13

weekly on **Wednesday** in the municipal parking lot next to Davis Square Plaza, across from American Flatbread. Stop by and support your local food system at davissquarefarmersmarket.org.

****

Mayor Jake Wilson's 50th birthday celebration and reelection campaign fundraiser will take place at the **Crystal Ballroom** at **Somerville Theatre, Friday, November 20**, 7 p.m. to midnight. Enjoy a night of great food, live music, dancing, and good company. Live band, DJ, food and cash bar. Tickets: $50, can be purchased here: tinyurl.com/jakes50th.

****

Registration is now open for the **2026 Gobble GOBBLE GOBBLE race**. The 30th annual race takes place on **November 26** at 9 a.m. Presented by the **Somerville Road Runners**, the Gobble Gobble Gobble road race starts and ends in Davis Square (at the heart of Somerville), features a unique 4-mile course. Proceeds benefit the **Somerville Homeless Coalition, Somerville Track PAC, Stride for Stride**, and the **Dilboy VFW Veterans Relief Fund**. For more information, visit https://www.srr.org/.

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We would like to take this opportunity to thank our **Arts Editor, Doug Holder**, for setting up a **GoFundMe campaign** for ***The Somerville Times***. With the cost of printing going up and a lack of businesses having the resources to advertise, free papers feel the effects. 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!

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Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 14

naturalists (John Muir also comes to mind) and their fabulists the artists, especially in the majestic panoramas they encountered in the New World, had a special term for the feeling of awe undergone when beholding the grandeur of a natural landscape, and the imponderable ages of its creation—well beyond what humans, basing their beliefs on Biblical figures, had imagined for our earth's existence. This word, "sublime," carried a middle sense both for the profound feeling as well as the object of grandeur. It primarily pertained to a work of art of extraordinary mindful and emotionally responsive beauty. When we come upon the word in the ninth line of this poem, the poet is referring to the geological "wonder" or "splendor" of the Allegheny Mountains, which George Keats would have crossed getting over into Illinois and Kentucky, then the "far west" of America. Tobin's word here so aptly resonates with his tangential reference, the poet John Keats, able with such lofty language, "beauty," "truth," which we in our local poetry share groups are warned to stay away from, for their likely hyperbole and imprecision. In Tobin's hands, the word can hardly be more historically or emotionally grounded and exact. Even if the passage might not inspire the next Big Ocean boys band hit.

The occasion of this steeple chase gallop of a poem by Daniel Tobin is the death of George Keats, the younger brother of the famous Romantic poet John Keats. George and his wife Georgiana emigrated to America, making their way to Louisville, Kentucky, where he eventually established himself as a land developer and civic leader. From the year of his older brother's death in 1821 for his remaining twenty years, George led a philosophical society intended for the cultural betterment of the young raw then western frontier town. A Lyceum emerged from Keats's salon, which became the board of Louisville College, the cornerstone of Louisville University. George's extensive library housed many of John Keats's important letters along with Audobon's Ornithology.

Historical inspirations for American writers have become prominent as the nation has grappled for its identity in this early 21st century, between the radical proposals of cosmopolitan sophistication and inclusiveness, in a tug-of-war with notions of citizenry and patrimonial heritage and rights. The opening lines of Tobin's poem address this pressing dilemma, yet with a reminder that our staple modern identity as Anglophones is a foreign-import to start with, which created and endured shock with its native elements:

Incongruities of the "English Palace,"
And a rush of Ohio River air,
That smells of millwork and the driven flange,
Mingle in the great poet's brother's room
Where he lies, dying…

When working with "historical" materials, author's choices emerge with their creative challenges, such as Tobin's choice to have George the younger brother also dying of tuberculosis—"the family complaint, The rusted bellows of his lungs giving out." It isn't a matter of scruple that George Keats in fact succumbed to a stomach disorder. It is remarkable to note Tobin's poem appears in this New and Selected volume under the chosen 2018 Blood Labors, written before that publication date with some dark intuitive anticipation of the shuttering world event of COVID which found so many afflicted with severe respiratory failures. In that sense Tobin has made history a sort of project as well as topic of this remarkable poem.

The tone around the death bed, rooted in American poetry's New England mother voice, Dickinson, is elegiac. One of Tobin's more immediate fathers or uncles in the Anglo-American inspiration, W. H. Auden, surfaces in the line "Penniless, he has become his debtors," an unexpected twist on, yet deftly stemming from "He became his admirers," Auden's dark pronouncement on Yeats in the sublime elegy for the latter on his death.

The versification is American pentameter, a term emerging under my breath as I've scanned mainline American 20th and early 21st century poets, noting the English standard with definitive American allowances of skipping anapests and mid- and endline spondees—a verse of, well, versatile possibilities for innovation and originality within a recognizable basic line pattern.

The verse, as well as the chosen material of the poem here, reflects its author's concerns about national identity, but also deeply personal trade querying by Tobin as to the brunt to identity America poses to its own children helpless but to be curious about and somewhat attached to the mother traditions of their tongue.

The Elizabethan metaphysical poet John Donne, a prime inspiration for Tobin, provides a luminous epigraph for Tobin's 2014 collection, The Net, with its remarkable conceit of human ingenuity's compass on the world, long before the Internet, in the net-like coordinates lined up and down and crosswise on globes and maps:

For of Meridians, and Parallels,
Man heavens weaved out a net, and this net thrown
Upon the Heaves, and now they are his own.
("Anatomy of the World")

To cultivate (and inherit) the world reach of art comes with a heavy cloud-exacting price of remoteness, graying in shades to solitude, desolating loneliness, a palpable air and feeling in Tobin's poem about George Keats. At the same time the effort allows Tobin (and his readers) a rare intimacy with the genius of the Odes who so drove home the ultimate impersonality and coldness of images on artifacts (a Grecian urn) and even of the calling fathomless song of a thrush deep in the woods on a sleepless spring night.

On a mantle, the poet's portrait, wreathed
In hyacinth, Apollos' flower, looks off,
Akin to a figure on the antique vase—
All unmoving activity and scope…
Margate is gone, and Cheapside, and Wentworth…
Nothing could stay life from the vastness…

The recovery the poem makes from this dark pass into a vital sense of imaginative transcendent voyage is a trademark of Tobin's resilient spirit and invention, containing much of the tenor, music and historical character of The Mansions, the poet's epic trilogy. Dusk, Empire New and Selected Poems 1987-2024, gives us the rare vista of a generous companion career for ready reader, scholar and apprentice of poetry—the generous gift of a true master in his own right with a coveted bone to be fetched and gnawed on and contested.

Daniel Tobin's poems have appeared in a myriad of journals, from The Times Literary Supplement to The Paris Review to Poetry, and hundreds of others on both sides in America and Europe, and in more than fifty anthologies, including The Norton Introduction to Poetry. His many prestigious awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Daniel will be reading with Lloyd Schwartz for The Hastings Room November reading, on Thursday November 19, 2026, at 7pm, in the Harter Room at First Church Cambridge, 11 Garden Street, at the back of Cambridge Common.

Simon Walsh will also be reading from his new collection "A Kentish Lad."



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