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City reaffirms equitable approach to implement climate action plan



The goals for Somerville's climate action plan were reaffirmed by the City Council at their latest meeting.

By Harry Kane

The Somerville City Council reaffirmed its support for Somerville's climate action plan that aims to deal with coastal and stormwater flooding, extreme heat events, and other escalating consequences of human-caused climate change that may endanger life and property.

A resolution was approved to continue progress on the goals and strategies of the Climate Forward 2024 plan for reduced climate pollution and dependence on fossil fuels during the November 25 city council meeting.

"Somerville is a leader with our climate priorities," said City Councilor Wilfred N. Mbah. "At our state level, we are watching major debates unfold about affordability, clean energy, and the

Continued on page 4

Time to light up the city

Community members are invited to experience sparkling holiday displays created by their neighbors when they embark on a self-guided Illuminations Tour. Illuminations Tour is set to begin on December 12, 2025, and run through January 12, 2026.

There is still time to add your home or business to the online Illuminations map. The deadline is Thursday, December 11, 2025. Submit your home or business here: www.somervilleartscouncil.org/illuminations-submit-a-listing. Take a self-guided tour using the published map starting Friday, December 12: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/events/illuminations2025/>.

Ride into the holiday spirit with the Somerville Arts Council and the Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee as they tour some of the city's brightest and most cheerful light displays. Join in for a Festive Holiday Lights Bike Ride. Meet and gather at the Somerville High School Reavis

Continued on page 14



The annual highlight of the holiday season, Illuminations Tour, is set to kick off this weekend throughout the city.

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Low-income households may be eligible to receive help with winter heating costs through the **Home Energy Assistance Program**. This program serves residents of Somerville and Cambridge. Participants receive assistance with their heating costs **between November 1 and April 30**. Learn more about the program, check if you qualify, and apply for assistance today at somerville-ma.gov/heatingassistance.

Somerville Illuminations begin **Friday, December 12**. Admire Somerville's best and brightest holiday lights. Take a self-guided tour using the published map. Join the **Illuminations bike tour** on **Sunday, December 13** (rain date: December 14) at 5:45 p.m. Meet in front of **City Hall** (93 Highland Ave.). Visit www.somervilleartscouncil.org/events/illuminations2025 to access the map and for more information.

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy birthday to a great guy and friend, **William Murphy**. We wish Bill a very happy day. Happy birthday to a great photographer and a great person, **Iaritz Menjivar**. We wish her a very special day. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Annamarie Costante**, **Sandy Piccolomini Ryle**, **Barbara Jewers**, **Barbara J Pinnelle Vivian**, **Heather Balchunas**, **Kimberly Pedersen**, **Olivia Huang**, and **Erin Madden Capasso**, a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of December 10 – December 16 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday <i>December 10</i>	Rain	44°/36°	62%	55%	SSW 13 mph
 Thursday <i>December 11</i>	Partly Cloudy	40°/22°	20%	12%	W 14 mph
 Friday <i>December 12</i>	Sunny	33°/25°	4%	2%	W 15 mph
 Saturday <i>December 13</i>	Partly Cloudy	34°/23°	18%	13%	WSW 10 mph
 Sunday <i>December 14</i>	Partly Cloudy	30°/16°	20%	12%	WNW 13 mph
 Monday <i>December 15</i>	Sunny	26°/20°	5%	2%	W 10 mph
 Tuesday <i>December 16</i>	Cloudy	31°/19°	15%	9%	NW 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: **City Councilors pass divestment resolution**

More Nuance Please says:

Thank you Somerville Times for a more balanced coverage of the divestment resolution following overwhelming support from Somerville voters for the Palestine-Solidarity Question (or Question 3), instead of simply running one-sided opinion pieces from those who don't bat an eye over mass torture and massacres in service of Zionism (see the official city council meeting recording—<https://youtu.be/xDyIrVVIIsII>—where those supporting Councilor Strezos' and SUAD's anti-resolution opposition vocally and repeatedly cheered on the evisceration of human bodies by Locke Martin's Hellfire missiles, so loudly that Council Chair Lance Davis threatened to empty the chamber and Council Member Matt McLaughlin openly denounced it).

In that same vein, and to protect the Somerville and greater-Boston-area Jewish Communities from actual antisemitism, it would be great if the ST had also mentioned testimony and support for the divestment resolution from both the Somerville for Palestine Jewish caucus and other Jewish Somerville community members, Synagogues and social organizations so that those who read the ST has a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of the Somerville Jewish community instead of falsely equating Jewishness with Zionism.

Response to: **Eat Out in East Initiative continues through the holiday season**

Eileen says:

Thank you for sharing that East Somerville is a great place to have a delicious meal!

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

The Somerville Times

news@thesomervilletimes.com

www.thesomervilletimes.com

Phone: 857-488-5138



Publisher – Somerset Valley Publishing Inc.

Editor – Jim Clark

Assignment Editor – Bobbie Toner

Advertising Director – Bobbie Toner

Arts Editor – Doug Holder

Writers: Jim Clark, Harry Kane,
and Cathleen Twardzik

Contributors: Jimmy Del Ponte,
Dorothy Dimarzo, Bob Doherty
Photographer: Claudia Ferro

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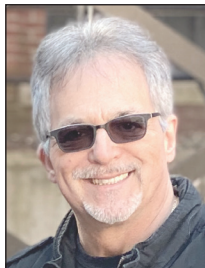
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Life in the **VILLE** by Jimmy Del Ponte

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

The best Christmas gifts



Before all the electronics and video games that the kids today enjoy, toys were pretty simple.

Today, a child's Christmas list looks very different than back in the day. My sister loved her Chatty Cathy doll and her Easy Bake Oven. One year, I got a Mr. Potato Head that you actually used real potatoes or other vegetables with.

We boys enjoyed getting a table hockey set or some plastic soldiers, cannons, and tanks. One of my brother's and my best gifts one Christmas was the Aurora race car set we received. We were so excited to set it up, we broke part of it in our haste.

We got our first color TV one Christmas from Lechmere Sales. One year, I got a cool toy called Mr. Machine. It was a wind-up robot with visible gears that walked.

Our Christmas stockings were always filled with small toys like an egg of Silly Putty, a yo-yo, or maybe a Slinky. The Slinky would last about a week before it

got tangled up and didn't work anymore.

Getting a new sled or one of those flying saucers was pretty sweet. I wasn't keen on board games. Mainly because once you lost pieces, they were basically useless. One year, I got a gizmo called Vac-U-Form. It was a small machine that you plugged in, and it got heated up. Then you would place a thin sheet of plastic over a mold to make a small toy. I can still smell that hot, melting plastic odor. Yuck.

In the 50s and 60s, Hopalong Cassidy put his brand on everything imaginable. There were toy gun sets, lunch boxes, pajamas, badges, jackknives, toys, watches and cowboy hats, and other clothes. It was pretty much the same deal with Roy Rogers.

One of my favorite toys was the Kenner Give-A-Show projector. It was a small plastic camera with a light bulb. You'd put a strip of slides in and project the images on a sheet or a wall. The most popular for me were Superman, Bozo, and Hanna-Barbera cartoon characters. We had grand illusions of charging our friends to watch the movies. I actually purchased another one on eBay a few years ago.



Another gift that was a stocking stuffer was Pick-up sticks. What a dumb toy. After I stuck my brother with one, my mother thankfully took them away from us. The worst things to get in your stocking were socks or underwear.

Any clothes at all were bad presents except for the year I got my black turtle neck sweater. I loved that thing and wore it until it didn't fit. I also loved my black turtleneck "dickie" too. Maybe they were purchased at Anderson Little.

I believe it was 1967 that I received two great Beatles albums. They were Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band and Magical Mystery Tour. The music of my life.

Being within walking distance of Davis Square, my parents got most of our gifts from the stores that were there. My first guitar came from Butler's Music. Other good stores to get Christmas gifts were places like Woolworths, Grants, Mickey Finn, and, of course, the infamous Bargain Center. You knew when *Continued on page 14*

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Money Map Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

Q: Have you ever heard of Occam's Razor—and what does it have to do with your money?

A: Occam's Razor is the idea that the simplest solution is usually the best one. And when it comes to personal finance, simplicity is often the fastest path to clarity, consistency, and long-term success!

Here are three ways to apply it:

♦ **Keep budgeting simple.**

Instead of tracking every line item, look at total monthly spending on your bank or credit card statement. That one number often tells you everything you need to

know about whether you're overspending.

♦ **Choose simple side hustles.**

Service-based work—like tutoring, cleaning, consulting, dog-walking, or handyman help—is often far easier and more profitable than launching a complex product business. Simple = faster + more flexible + more liquid.

♦ **Use simple investments.**

A single ETF that tracks the total stock market or the S&P 500 gives you diversified access to hundreds of companies in one step. Low cost, minimal hassle, long-term growth. Hard to beat.

Bottom line: You don't need complex systems to build wealth. The simplest habits

and tools often deliver the biggest impact—because they're the ones you'll actually stick with.

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 vchicksconnect@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.



City reaffirms equitable approach to implement climate action plan

CONT. FROM PG 1

future of climate commitments.”

The Climate Forward 2024 plan “establishes priorities and strategies for implementation through 2035,” according to the resolution. The updated version of the plan builds on the aspirations and the successes of the first climate forward plan from 2018.

“Here in Somerville, we have always been clear about who we are and what we stand for,” said Councilor Mbah. “So, we believe the climate crisis is real. We believe that clean energy transition can and must be equitable, and we believe that affordability and climate action are not competing priorities.”

Mitigating, adapting, and alleviating climate-related problems across different

sectors in Somerville is the basis for a progressive plan that harnesses the collaborative spirit and tests the resilience of the city's ambitious goal.

Councilor Mbah said climate progress is facing “significant headwinds” on a national level, with some leaders questioning the rollback of longstanding environmental protections.

The Obama and Biden-era environmental policies have been reversed under the Trump administration's climate policy. This has led to deregulation of the fossil fuel industry to boost the economy, thereby accelerating the climate crisis and endangering the health of communities.

“Many of our residents are hearing

mixed messages and are understandably concerned about what this means for their families, their bills, and their future,” said Councilor Mbah.

Councilor Naima Sait said she feels it is essential, now more than ever, for leadership to act and set high standards.

“Our national government is overrun by the deadly corruption of the fossil fuel industry, and their lies,” said City Councilor Sait.

The commitment by the city to achieve carbon net-negative emissions by 2050, started in 2014 with the SustainaVille brand, is aligned with the Commonwealth's Decarbonization Roadmap.

Christine Blais, Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE)

addressed the city council with a report on the climate action plan.

“We have a lot of data to create science-backed recommendations for how we can not only mitigate our emissions, but how we can adapt to our changing environment,” said Blais.

Approximately 50 percent of Somerville's critical facilities and infrastructure are projected to be exposed to one or more climate hazards through 2070, according to a City of Somerville Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.

Coastal flooding may affect Assembly Square, Union Square, and Davis Square with up to 10 feet of flooding by 2070 in a major storm, said Blais.

Somerville Public Schools hosting school tours

Somerville Public Schools' (SPS) school enrollment period for prekindergarten and kindergarten students begins on Friday, January 2, preceded by a series of school tours for prospective families.

Schools open for tours are the Capuano Early Childhood Center (PK-K), Arthur D. Healey School (PK-8), Benjamin G. Brown School (K-5), East Somerville Community School (PK-8), Albert F. Argenziano School (PK-8), John F. Kennedy School (PK-8), West Somerville Neighborhood School (PK-8), and Winter Hill Community Innovation School (PK-8).

All SPS Pre-K to Grade 8 schools will conduct drop-in public tours at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m., and 12 p.m. on the following dates:

- ♦ Thursday, January 8
- ♦ Tuesday, January 27

Somerville High School tours for prospective families will be held at a later date.

The enrollment portal for Somerville Public Schools will open on Friday, January 2. Students who will be 4 years old by August 31, 2026, are eligible for the district's Pre-K program. Students who will be 5 years old by August 31, 2026, are eligible for Kindergarten.

The SPS Enrollment Office staff is available to answer questions and support families who are unable to access online services and/or families needing additional support. Parents and guardians are encouraged to schedule an appointment by calling 617-629-5670. The office is located at 167 Holland Street in Somerville.

For more complete information and office hours, please visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/enrollment.



Committee hears updates on rodent control practices

By Jordan Pagkalinawan

The Rodent Issues Special Committee convened on December 1 to hear from the Inspectional Services Department's Environmental Health Coordinator, Alicia Privett, and Environmental Health Manager Colin Zeigler, who updated councilors on the latest rodent control practices around Somerville.

Fertility control study and 311 complaint data

Privett first brought up a fertility control study currently underway at Somerville High School, where rats have been baited into traps containing peanut butter. She noted that there's been a consistently high level of activity at the school, with nearly 60 rat events—instances where rats have gone into the boxes—reported earlier in August. Residents at Lincoln Park have seen similar levels of activity, according to Privett.

"Likely it is the same rat going into the box many times, because when I went and baited the traps, I would see the regulars in there once in a while," she said.

Privett added that these numbers will be compared with 311 complaint data and numbers from SMART boxes—above-ground trapping units—to have more context for the product's effects on the overall population.

When evaluating complaints made to the city's 311 hotline, Privett noted there's been a "steady decrease" of rodent-related complaints. As of Nov. 20, there were 529 such calls to 311 this year, marking a 14.8% decrease compared to 2024. She cautioned that the data isn't perfect, noting that people's tolerance and location affect those numbers.

As part of the city's Rodent Assistance Program [1], Privett reported that 834 unique properties were visited this year in light of 311 complaints, higher than 2024 (723) and 2023 (761).

"It really shows how much work the inspectors are going out to all these properties," she said. "We've also established more in our system. When we are doing outreach efforts, we are trying to get more properties in a certain block on the Rodent Assistance Program at the same time. It's

just more effective, we're treating multiple properties at the same time."

Since the Rodent Assistance Program requires four visits to each property, this year saw a total of 3,336 visits, a jump from the 2,892 made in 2024.

Rodent-Related Violations

This year saw an increase in numerous violation types except for vegetation and overgrowth. Privett mentioned that 2,875 violations were related to residential trash, "the highest rodent-related violation," while 559 were for vegetation and overgrowth, and 490 were for commercial trash. There were also 228 rodent control violations, ones that include the presence of boroughs on properties or excessive droppings.

Regarding a decrease in vegetation violations from 774 last year, Privett said it "might be a good sign that people are being more aware of this and taking care of landscaping."

As for rodent control violations on public properties, Privett advised residents to call 311 to route the issue to the Department of Public Works and, eventually, a local pest control company. When Councilor Jake Wilson brought up a November 23 borough sighting at Somerville City Hall [2], Privett said that building administrators should file a 311 complaint unless the general public does so first.

Integrated Pest Management Projects

Ziegler then highlighted future Integrated Pest Management projects by the ISD that "guide internal policy and procedure across departments" and "add a level of accountability to project managers" that are related to pest control measures.

The first project is a residential education campaign that aims to engage the public through yard signs and trifold mailers, telling them that some properties are "going the extra mile" to reduce rodent activity.

"It's the added level of peer pressure and collaboration that we're looking for in our communities," Ziegler said. "And in many cases, we've seen successful situations where folks band together, they pressure each other, they work together, and ultimately reduce rats in their neighborhood."

The project also hopes to educate



This year saw an increase in numerous violation types 2,875 violations were related to residential trash.

landlords on proper pest control and explore resources to help low-income households with rodent exclusion and energy efficiency work.

A second measure would improve and expand the Residential Rodent Control Program [3]. Those efforts include analyzing bait consumption, automating Residential Program reports and scheduling through CitizenServe, and monitoring rodent-related information in areas that participate in a curbside compost pick-up program.

The ISD's third project is a "best practices" guide for commercial permit and license applicants, a joint effort with the city of Cambridge. Ziegler said the guides will be available on the CitizenServe permitting portal and included in various licenses, including vacancy, building, food, and outdoor seating. The department is also exploring incentives for restaurants and commercial properties with dumpsters.

The fourth project centers around increasing several types of trash bins and alternative treatments. The ISD is working to expand the number of Bigbelly Trash Receptacles—trash cans with horizontal doors that open when pulled down—as well as more SMART boxes in schools. They are also looking into

purchasing a carbon monoxide machine with participatory budget funds, intending to place it away from buildings in order to kill rodents. Other efforts aimed at long-term mitigation are installing underground trash collection basins and public dumpsters for compost, recycling, and trash.

In addition to these projects, Ziegler said the ISD will develop a system to regularly monitor rat activity and the success of intervention efforts based on a variety of data, including 311 reports, CitizenServe baiting and tracking data, and tracking rodent-borne infections and diseases through 311 and Health and Human Services.

"We're exploring these things, and if they can be deployed," Ziegler said. "But all of it will be important information and data in the future."

Links:

[1] <https://www.somervillema.gov/news/somerville-expands-free-rodent-control-assistance-program-issues-guidance-prevent-rat-activity>

[2] <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1333819771329603>

[3] <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/rodent-control-and-public-education>

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

SPS Communications Department presents new media strategic plan

By Harry Kane

The Communications Department at Somerville Public Schools is making some changes in the new year with the launch of a print newspaper, a new strategy for social media integration, the rebuilding of the SPS website, and much more.

Following an informal audit for enhancing and evolving communications and marketing districtwide, Chief Communications Officer Darryl Nash presented a summary of the changes to come at Somerville Public Schools for next year during the School Committee meeting on December 1.

There are four main goals in the team's strategic plan. Goal A grows its social media presence. Nash says that social media is the "single most effective way to communicate with a contemporary audience."

Their goal here is to develop platforms with a specific audience in mind, aimed to increase a following that establishes "an appropriate cadence to engage, but not overwhelm."

Nash says, "Interaction with the audience, I believe, is the best litmus test for

how we are delivering content."

Goal B is a complete rebuilding of the SPS website. Nash says this may be a lengthy process, and the team will gather feedback from stakeholders to create a more modern site for a streamlined user experience.

Goal C is a plan to engage with the community through impactful storytelling by highlighting student and staff achievements and advances in the curriculum.

"When we place these stories on digital and print platforms, we follow the resulting data, track the interactions, and then we see what kinds of stories are resonating with our audience," said Nash.

Goal D prioritizes in-house development that provides quality guidance and leadership across the district with best practices in communicating and presentation, brand consistency, and departmental support for district administrators.

"While this is behind the scenes, our efforts here are impactful, and our work at the central office level trickles down to school offices across the district," said Nash.

Other highlights include a podcast about

Strategy Highlights

Multimedia

SPS Podcast: Teachers and Learning

SPS Newspaper: In Print

Communication & Technology

SMS Text Viability

Crisis Communications Plan



Somerville Public Schools is planning expansive changes in its usage of multiple media platforms.

teachers and learning, and the launch of a paper publication. Nash says the newspaper will allow for greater reach in the community and will result in more investment, input, and interest in the school system.

Lance L. Davis, President of the City Council, was at the school committee meeting and responded by reminiscing about his background in journalism, commenting that he is "tickled and thrilled" with the upcoming launch of a print news-

paper for students.

Additionally, the team discussed the viability of SMS texting as a means of communication, added Nash.

Laura Pitone, School Committee member from Ward 5, expressed interest in the usefulness of texting. "I don't think we've tapped into that as well as we could ... I really look forward to hearing more about that, because I feel like that's a missed opportunity."

Somerville community encouraged to plan ahead for snowstorms

The City of Somerville is encouraging the community to get ready now for potential snowstorms by signing up for City Alerts and reviewing protocols for snow emergencies. Preparing now will help keep the community safe, as well as reduce ticketing or towing for snow emergency parking violations and ticketing for failure to follow shoveling requirements.

All information below can also be found at somervillema.gov/snow.

Alerts

Snow emergencies are announced in various ways, including through phone, text, and email alerts. Those who live, work, or own a business or property in Somerville are encouraged to sign up for City Alerts. Alerts are also available in multiple languages. Sign up at somervillema.gov/alerts.

In addition to Somerville City Alerts, snow emergencies are announced the following ways:

- City website: somervillema.gov
- City social media feeds: somervillema.gov

gov/social

- City TV: somervillema.gov/somerville-city-tv

- Flashing blue lights at major intersections

- Information is shared with local media

Street Parking

Because this winter begins in an odd-numbered year, snow emergency parking is on the odd side of the street all winter. There are a small number of exceptions to the park odd rule, which will be noted by signs on those streets.

Once a snow emergency is declared, everyone has four hours to move their car to the odd-numbered side of the street, or to municipal lots that are available for use during a snow emergency. Parking is not allowed in school lots during snow emergencies.

Parking is allowed at meters on the odd-numbered side of the street during a snow emergency, as long as there is no sign stating otherwise. Meters and time-parking rules are not enforced during snow



emergencies. The City also does not enforce an ordinance prohibiting cars from being parked in the same spot for more than 48 hours during snow emergencies.

Vehicles may be ticketed and towed if in

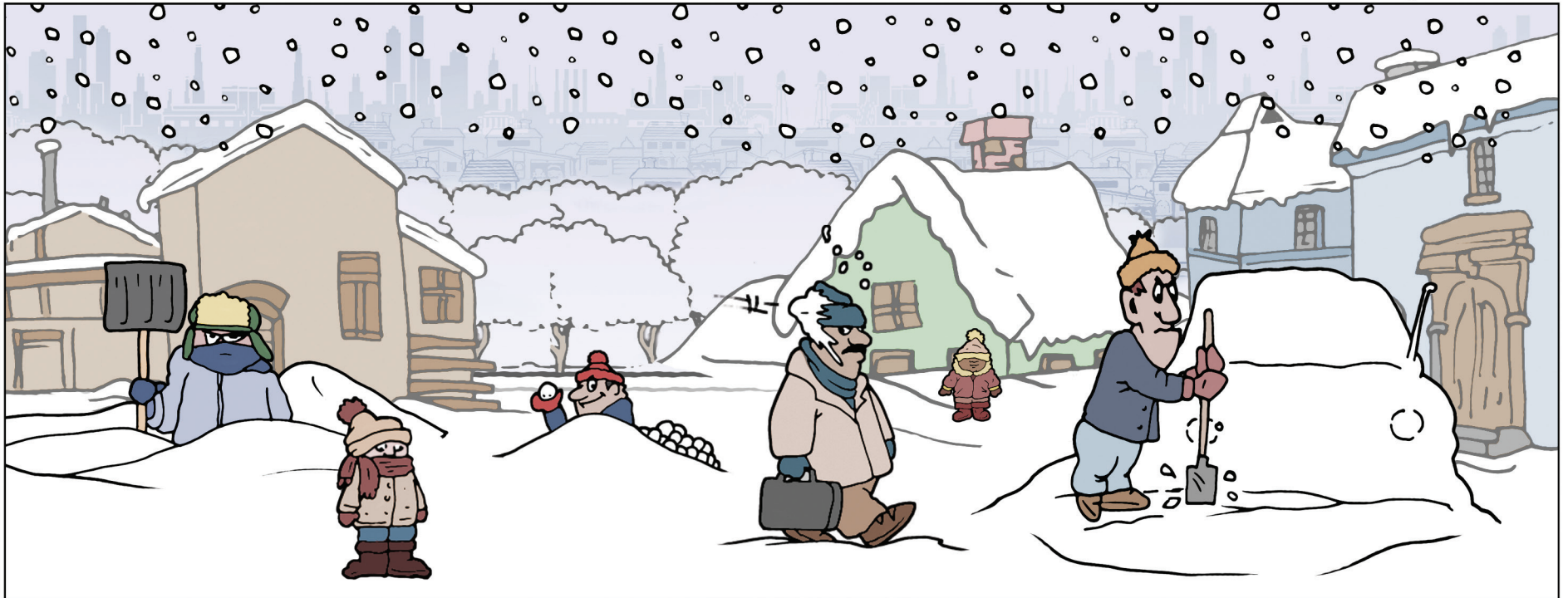
violation of snow emergency parking rules. **Municipal Lot Parking**

Municipal lots are available for parking during snow emergencies. Once the emergency is lifted, all cars *Continued on page 10*

COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Snow is coming.

Our View Of The Times



So, the first significant snowfall of the season may soon be here, leaving us with a picturesque Currier and Ives-type dusting of the region just in time to serve as decoration for the holiday season.

Does everyone love it? No. Does anyone hate it? Maybe. Some can live with it, while others wouldn't live without it.

There are folks who just love feeling and hearing the crunch beneath their feet as

they take a brisk walk after fresh powder has fallen. Children grow up playing in it – sledding, building snowmen, throwing snow (or slush) balls.

Some of us would rather not have to deal with all the digging out, the hassles connected with parking our vehicles, and sometimes bailing them out of impoundment, if we're not good boys and girls.

Most of us seem to take the good with

the bad, and the majority seems to have made their peace with the vicissitudes of the weather angels and demons.

This is probably how it should be. Since Washington at Valley Forge, Americans seem to take a certain sense of pride in braving the icy elements. As New Englanders, we are particularly adept at breathing in that crisp winter air, shaking our fists at the heavens and crying, "Bring

it on!" That's a special brand of pride.

In the meantime, let's all be smart and prepare for the icy onslaught as well as we can. The city has wisely put together a useful collection of tips and resources aimed at helping us through the wintery season. Go to <https://www.somerville-ma.gov/snow> to find it all out. We'll all get through it fine if we take heed and act accordingly.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

Menorah Lighting, December 15: Community members are invited to a ceremonial Menorah Lighting. Enjoy traditional songs and sing-alongs. Special gifts will be available for children, and light refreshments will be served. The Menorah will be lit each night of Hanukkah. Monday, December 15, **City Hall Concourse** (93 Highland Ave.) at 6 p.m.

Somerville Police have issued a warning of **identity fraud**. In the past few months, several residents have reported becoming

victims of identity fraud, specifically involving fraudulent applications for FAFSA (Federal Student Aid). In these cases, victims had never applied for FAFSA and had no connection to the schools listed in the fraudulent applications. Please remain vigilant by regularly reviewing your credit reports and staying alert to potential scams. If you notice any suspicious activity, report it immediately.

The Somerville Department of Public Works (DPW) wishes to remind residents that the final days for **yard waste collection** this season will be **this week through Friday, December 12.**

Yard waste can be left out for pickup by DPW on residents' scheduled trash collection days. Please note: Yard waste cannot be collected if it is put in plastic bags. DPW collection of these materials will resume in Spring 2026 as per the usual seasonal cycle. To learn more, please visit somervillema.gov/trash or call 311 (617-666-3311).

Each December, the city celebrates the season of giving by supporting **local holiday gift drives**. Check the city website (somervillema.gov/news) or sign up for the city e-newsletter at www.somervillema.gov/subscribe for details on how you

can contribute.

Support local businesses this holiday season. There are lots of ways to support small businesses, and not all of them require purchases. Sharing your favorite places with friends, showing support on social media, and even window shopping are all low-cost ways to support your local businesses. Learn more about shopping small this winter by visiting www.somervillema.gov/loyaltolocal.

Both **flu and COVID-19 vaccines** are conveniently offered at multiple locations across Somerville, *Continued on page 14*

Book review: 'The Cold Dish' by Craig Johnson

By Dennis Fischman

Sheriff Walt Longmire of Absaroka County, Wyoming, is a melancholy man, despite flashes of humor that illuminate him and his best friend, Henry Standing Bear, at intervals like desert lightning. It's not clear to me why every woman he meets either wants to be his lover or his mother – but I frequently question fictional women's taste in men, especially in mysteries.

This mystery [1] kept me guessing until the last chapter, and the resolution made sense but also made me sad.

A young man is found dead, with what looks like an eagle feather lying by his body. A few years ago, he and three other high school students were convicted of

the brutal rape of a mentally challenged Cheyenne woman.

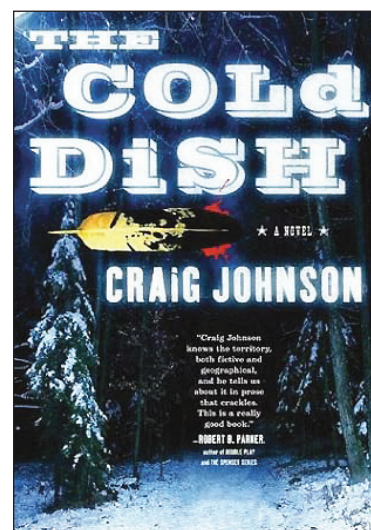
Is the murderer trying to take revenge for that crime? It would seem so, from the title. "Revenge is a dish best served cold," as the saying goes. But who is seeking retribution? Is it Henry who is related to the young woman? Is it someone else in her family, or tribe? Is it the father of one of the other convicts? Or someone else?

Whoever it is, there's an unusual gun involved, and if you are interested in learning about historical weapons, you're in luck. If not, you may enjoy the banter between Longmire and his deputy, Victoria Moretti, and some of the other cops and townies who will surely be recurring characters in the series.

I wonder why all the characters seem to recognize literary references except for the few who are certifiably stupid. As for me, I don't recognize the names and capacities of the many guns and vehicles that play as big a part in the book as many of the characters!

Why is there a trope in mystery fiction about policemen who are widowers? There's and DI Jimmy Perez in the Shetland series [2], also on TV, and I'm sure there are more.

My guess is that if you want to have a heterosexual man who's been around and seen a few things, and yet not currently married, you have to show that he was attractive enough to have been married before. Having the first wife die is a convenient way



The Cold Dish by Craig Johnson
Viking, 2005



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

for the author to make him dark, moody, and full of hidden depths, AND available. I still dislike it, though. Sacrificing a woman for a male character, once again!

Links:

[1] <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/657713722>

[2] <https://www.goodreads.com/series/54148-shetland>

Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Baccalà

The practice of salting and drying Cod has been around for hundreds of years. It was used to preserve large quantities of fish for long periods of time while out at sea. Many cultures use this technique for preservation, including those located in the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, the Caribbean, and Brazil just to name a few. Of course, with the celebration of Christmas upon us, that brings us to the Italian-American tradition of what is called the Feast of the Seven Fishes served on Christmas Eve.

This recipe was passed down from my grandmother's family who came to the United States from Calabria in the early 1900's. My Aunt Dot has preserved this recipe and has made this dish on Christmas Eve for many years. I hope you enjoy this hearty dish as my family does every year.

2 to 2-1/2 lbs. Baccalà (salted, dried cod)
4-5 Medium All Purpose Potatoes, peeled and cut into bite size pieces
3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
1/4-1/2 Teaspoon Peperoncino, Red Pepper Flakes

1 Medium Onion, small dice
3 Large Garlic Cloves, finely minced
3 Medium Bay Leaves
1-28oz. Can Crushed Tomatoes
Salt and Pepper to taste

This dish takes 2 days of preparation in advance. You need to soak the Baccalà prior to cooking and serving. Place the dried cod fish into a large bowl and cover with cold water. Cover and place in the refrigerator. Change out the water about every 4-6 hours. When approaching the 36-hour point of soaking, taste the water and check for saltiness. If the water is not salty, you're ready for the next steps.

Drain the water from the fish and pat dry with paper towels. Be careful not to break apart the fish. Cut into approximately 2"x3" pieces and set aside in the refrigerator.

Rinse and peel the potatoes and cut into bite size pieces. Place the potatoes into a pot large enough for all the potatoes to fit and add cold water covering the potatoes by about an inch of water. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 10 minutes.

In another pot, (6 quart), add the olive oil and red pepper flakes. Heat for



about a minute on medium heat, lower the heat to medium low and add the diced onion and sauté for 5-7 minutes just until translucent. Add the minced garlic and sauté for 30 seconds. Add the crushed tomatoes and bay leaves. You should add a pinch of salt and pepper at this time to season the tomatoes.

Gently add the pieces of fish into the sauce. Add the drained potatoes into the sauce. Make sure all the ingredients are covered by the tomato

sauce. Cover and simmer on low for 30-45 minutes checking on it periodically making sure it doesn't boil. You may gently move the potatoes and fish with a spoon, making sure nothing is sticking to the bottom of the pot. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper to taste. Ladle out into a bowl and serve with crusty bread.

Visit Dorothy's website at <https://ddimarzo2002.wixsite.com/thymethief>.

LEGAL NOTICES

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

City of Somerville
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a virtual public hearing on **Tuesday, January 6, 2026**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be conducted via remote participation. A recording of these proceedings can be found online here: <https://www.somervillema.gov/meetingdocs>.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZoBdwDF8Sx-8D0h_jJ30xg

TO CALL IN

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

The Historic Preservation Commission will consider the following pursuant to the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties

25 Atherton Street Applicant: Christine Strout- IRB Real Estate
Owner: Carr Schoolhouse Condominium Trust
The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter an LHD property by constructing a retaining wall and two patios.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases>.
Interested persons may provide comments to the Historic Preservation Commission at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to historic@somervillema.gov.

12/10/25 The Somerville Times



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 17, 2025**, 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. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4h4qXh6SnSgnVCt852H5w
Webinar ID: 884 6980 0271

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:

66 Union Square Plaza Sign Design Inc. seeks to install a noncompliant sign in the Commercial Core (CC) district, which requires a Hardship Variance.

248 Elm Street Somerville BBQ Inc. seeks to establish a Formula Business principal use in the Commercial Business (CB) district, which requires a Special Permit.

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.

12/3/25, 12/10/25 The Somerville Times



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF BANKS

Brazil Starr, Inc., Somerville, Massachusetts has petitioned the Commissioner of Banks for permission to operate as a check casher at 29 Bow Street, Somerville, Massachusetts, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 169A. The Division of Banks is establishing a public comment period on this petition from Monday, December 15, 2025 through Monday, December 29, 2025. Any objections or comments concerning this proposal must be filed with the Division of Banks by Monday, December 29, 2025 via email to Deputy Commissioner Aimee Desai at Aimee.Desai@mass.gov. The petitioner's application and all communications relative to the application are available for public inspection upon request.

Mary L. Gallagher
Commissioner of Banks

12/10/25 The Somerville Times

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PH: 857-488-5138

Somerville community encouraged to plan ahead for snowstorms

CONT. FROM PG 6

must be moved from the lots within two hours.

For the 2025-2026 snow season the following lots are available for parking:

Municipal Buildings

- City Hall Concourse (93 Highland Ave.)
- All metered municipal parking lots

Off-Street Municipal Parking Lots

- Buena Vista Lot (Buena Vista Road at Holland St.)
- Cutter Square Lot (Elm St./ Summer St. at Cutter Ave.)
- Day Street Lot (Day St. at Herbert St.)
- Foss Park Lot (Broadway at McGrath Hwy.)
- Grove Street Lot A (Grove St. west side at Elm St.)
- Grove Street Lot B (Grove St. east side at Elm St.)
- Grove Street Lot C (Grove St. at

Highland Ave.)

- Magoun Square Lot (Broadway at Medford St.)
- Mount Vernon St. Lot (Broadway at Mt. Vernon St.)
- Union Square Lot (Washington St. at Bonner Ave.)
- Founders Ice Arena (Bleachery Ct. at Somerville Ave.)
- Winter Hill Lot A (Broadway, north side between Fellsway West and Wheatland St.)
- Winter Hill Lot B (Broadway, north side between Wheatland St. and Grant St.)

Again, parking is not allowed in school lots during snow emergencies.

Snow Shoveling Support

The Somerville Teen Snow Shoveling Program returns for the 2025-2026 snow season. This is a paid opportunity for youth to help local seniors and homeowners with disabilities or medical conditions after a

snowstorm.

Residents interested in receiving snow shoveling assistance must submit an application and a CORI form by Thursday, January 1, 2026, to the Somerville's Council on Aging's Holland Street Center (167 Holland St.) and appear at the Holland Street Center in person with a government-issued photo ID (such as a driver's license, state ID, or passport). Forms may be completed ahead of time or upon arrival at the Center. Persons who are homebound can receive application assistance by contacting Debra Higgins at the Council on Aging at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321.

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

For questions and to learn more, visit somervillema.gov/ *Continued on page 11*

Ms. Cam's

From on page 8

Olio
Answers

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The shortest period of daylight and the longest night of the year | 7. Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador |
| 2. December 21 | 8. Sweden |
| 3. December 7, 1941 | 9. United States |
| 4. Hanukkah | 10. Hawaii |
| 5. Max | 11. <i>Sex and the City</i> |
| 6. White | 12. Percy Bysshe Shelley |

Somerville's Emergency Overnight Warming Center opens

As we approach the coldest months of the year, the City of Somerville is once again opening a winter season Emergency Overnight Warming Center to support adults experiencing homelessness. Starting on Monday, December 8, 2025, through April 12, 2026, the warming center will offer a safe place to sleep and a range of other services. Returning for its fourth season, the warming center will operate seven nights a week from 5 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. on the second floor of the former Cummings School located at 42 Prescott Street. Clients will have access to hot meals, safe sleeping spaces, and on-site housing navigation and case management services. In response to increased need, the warming center has been expanded from approximately 30 beds to accommodate up to 45 guests each night. The center is run with the support of Housing Families (housingfamilies.org), a nonprofit serving Boston's Metro North region. The Emergency Overnight Warming Center is available only to adults experiencing homelessness. Families or individuals with children seeking shelter should contact the Somerville Office of Housing Stability at 617-625-6600, Ext. 2581, for referrals to family-specific resources and shelters. For more info about Somerville's Emergency Overnight Warming Center, visit somervillema.gov/warmingcenter or email warmingcenter@somervillema.gov.

Somerville community encouraged to plan ahead for snowstorms

CONT. FROM PG 10

shoveling, contact Daniel Harris at dharris@somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600 ext. 2406, or contact 311 (617-666-3311).

Snow Shoveling Requirements

Property owners are responsible for removing snow and ice from sidewalks and accessible ramps that abut their property. The City places buckets of sand where possible in neighborhoods, which may be used to prevent slipping on your public walkways.

To comply with all shoveling rules:

- Sidewalks need to be cleared within six daylight hours after the snow stops.

- Shovel a path at least 3 feet wide and down to the pavement on sidewalks and ramps.

- Do not shovel snow onto city streets unless the temperature is 40 degrees or higher, it is during daylight hours, and snow and ice are broken up and spread evenly on the street to melt quickly.

These rules apply to all snowfall, not just when a snow emergency is declared. Failure to comply with the above rules may

result in increasing fines issued until the walkway is clear.

Be a Good Neighbor This Winter

- Please consider checking on seniors or persons with disabilities during and after snowstorms to ensure they are safe; have all the basic supplies, food/water, and medication they need; and that they have heat and are safe if there are power outages.

- If you are physically able, please consider clearing storm drains in advance of storms, or shoveling out fire hydrants after snowfall.

Always take breaks when you shovel.

- If you have a driveway, please consider sharing it with tenants, neighbors, or friends during snow emergencies to free up spaces on the street (they might even help you shovel out as a thank you).

- If you feel comfortable and safe doing so, if you see a neighbor parking on the wrong side of the street, consider sharing snow emergency parking information with them and encouraging them to sign up for City Alerts. — City of Somerville

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www.TheSomervilleTimes.com



Somerville Fair Housing Commission

Question of the week



Q: What is the federal Fair Housing Act?

A: The Fair Housing Act expressly prohibits discriminatory practices, policies and behavior among those involved with the housing rental, purchase and financing industry. Specifically, the law prohibits discrimination by landlords, real estate companies, lending institutions, mortgage brokers, real estate agents/brokers and even homeowners insurance companies. Municipalities themselves also must comply with the act's tenets. For more of an explanation visit: <https://www.bankrate.com/real-estate/what-is-the-fair-housing-act/>

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>

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Let's keep local news alive, together.

And to advertise in The Times, call **857-488-5138**

Want to write local Somerville stories?

Call **857-488-5138**

and speak to the Assignment Editor

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris

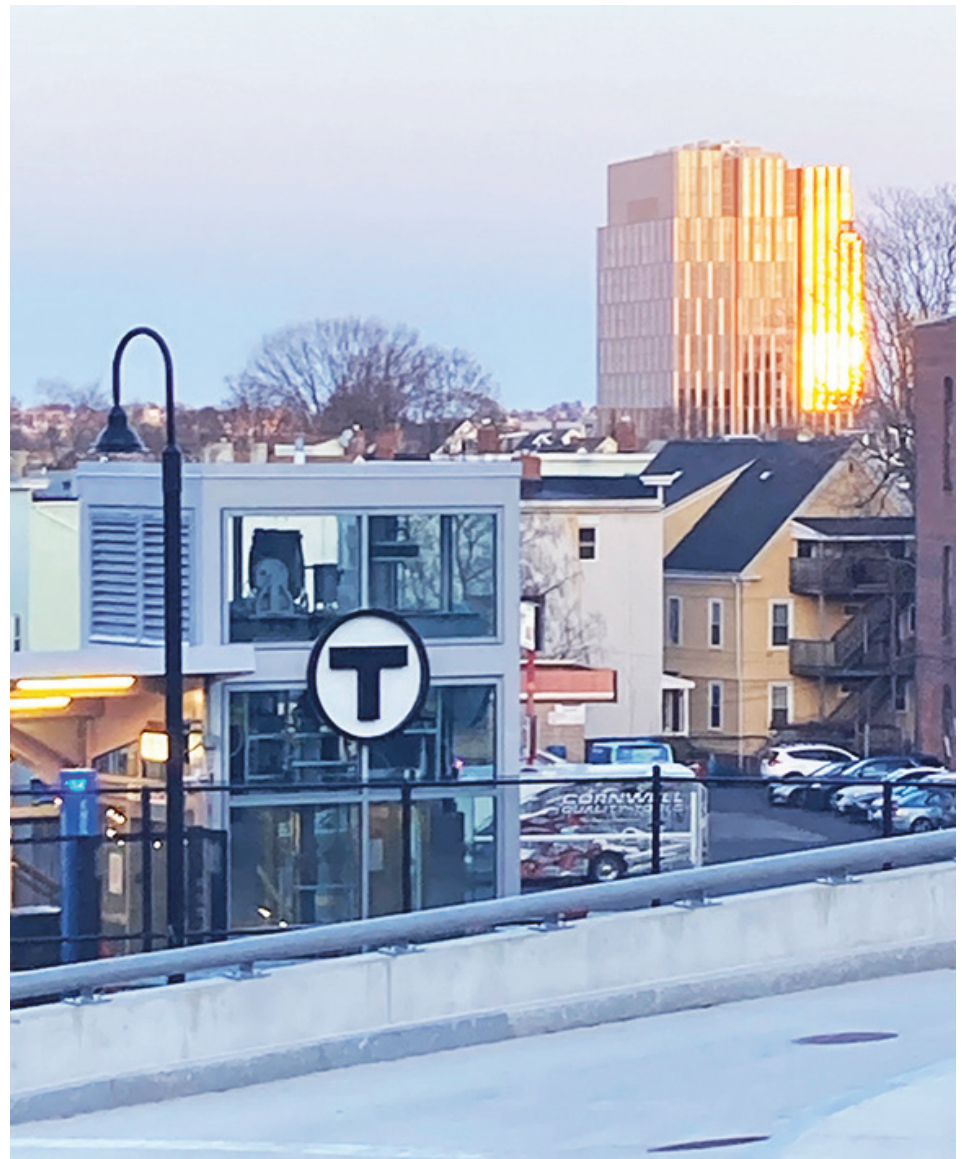


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Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Turning to gold... — Photo by Denise Provost

On This Day in History

December 10

- 1258 – Mongol leader Hulagu seizes Baghdad, ending the Abbasid caliphate.
- 1763 – The Treaty of Paris ends the French-Indian War.
- 1799 – Napoleon Bonaparte leaves Cairo, Egypt, for Syria, leading 13,000 men.
- 1840 – Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert.
- 1846 – The first Mormons begin a long westward exodus from Nauvoo, IL, to Utah.
- 1863 – P.T. Barnum's star midgets, Tom Thumb and Lavinia Warren, are married.
- 1904 – Russia and Japan declare war on each other.
- 1915 – President Wilson blasts the British for using the U.S. flag on merchant ships to deceive the Germans.
- 1942 – The war halts civilian car production at Ford.
- 1960 – Adolph Coors, the beer brewer, is kidnapped in Golden, CO.
- 1966 – Protester David Miller is convicted of burning his draft card.
- 1986 – The largest Mafia trial in history, with 474 defendants, opens in Palermo, IT.

Somerville's Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

The Christmas Tree Lighting on the City Hall Concourse took place on Thursday, December 4. Santa Claus was escorted by the Somerville Fire Department, making his grand entrance atop a shiny red fire truck. After the tree lighting, attendees headed over to the Somerville High School cafeteria for a meet-and-greet with Santa Claus and light refreshments. All children who attended received a special gift from Santa.

— Photos by Bobbie Toner



Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

improving access for all residents with no out-of-pocket costs. Visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/vaccinations> to see more clinics.

The trailer for *Voices of Somerville*, produced by Olivia Huang, can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGKV2LhT7WA>. It concerns the voices of poets from Somerville and others in the area. The movie includes Somerville residents Gloria Mindock, Doug Holder, Lloyd Schwartz (Somerville Poet Laureate), Denise Provost, and others. The full movie will be released next month.

School meals are free for all students. Nutritious breakfast and lunch are free for all students in **Somerville Public Schools**. Breakfast starts at 8:15 a.m. for prekindergarten students, at 7:30 a.m. for students in grades K–8, and at 7:15 a.m. at **Somerville High School** and **Next Wave/Full Circle**. To view daily menus, visit <https://linqconnect.com/public/menu/FE53U3?buildingId=14d70caa-49e6-eb11-a2c9-fa7552227e36>.

COA Holiday Luncheon, Thursday, December 11, at the **Dilboy Post**, located at 351 Summer Street, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$10 per person. Lunch will be stuffed chicken, vegetables, and salad. Please reserve your spot by calling **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321. **COA Holiday Party**, hosted by Somerville's Veterans Services and the Council on Aging. **Tuesday, December 16**, at the **Holland Street Center**, starting at 10 a.m. Join in for a crafting activity from 10:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. and for lunch at noon; don't forget to wear your ugly sweater. Please reserve your spot by calling **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

The **Connexion closet** is accepting clothing donations, all seasons, all genders, and all sizes. The most wanted items are pants and jackets. You can drop off donations at

Connexion, 149 Broadway. Please make sure you leave donations inside the building with a label that says, "For Connexion closet". Need clothes? The Connexion closet opens **Mondays and Fridays** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and **Wednesdays** 4 to 6 p.m. Want to donate and can't drop it off? Email closet@connexionumc.org to coordinate a pickup. Questions email: closet@connexionumc.org.

Somerville's **Teen Shoveling Program** is back for the 2025/26 season, providing a paid opportunity for youth to assist local seniors and homeowners with disabilities in clearing snow after a storm. The program is available for teens aged 14 to 19 years old. All interested youths must submit an application. Youths aged 18 or 19 must also submit a CORI form. For questions and to learn more, visit [somervillema.gov/shoveling](https://www.somervillema.gov/shoveling), contact **Daniel Harris** at dharris@somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600 ext. 2406, or 311 by phone (617-666-3311), email, text, mobile app, chat, social media, web, and more at [somervillema.gov/311](https://www.somervillema.gov/311).

Somerville Stitch Club takes place next **Wednesday, December 17**, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the **Somerville Public Library, West Branch**. Sewing machines available. Bring your project and get those holiday gifts finished. There will be snacks and new friends. Free entry, all ages and skill levels.

Shop 50+ artisan, maker, and vintage vendors at **Small Mart Holiday Markets** on **December 20**, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the **Crystal Ballroom**, Davis Sq. Small Mart brings together over 50 artisan, maker, and vintage vendors offering unique, thoughtfully made gifts. You'll find hand-printed art, cozy ceramics, standout vintage fashion, and locally crafted goods that make giving (and shopping) feel good.

The **City of Somerville** wants to learn more about **how your child commutes to**

school. Please consider completing this survey for each of your children: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8WVDCBP>

The **5th Annual HollyGay Market** takes place at **Warehouse XI** in Somerville. Expect talented LGBTQ+ makers, festive finds, great vibes, and nonstop fun. They will be serving drag performances throughout the day. Expect camp, glamour, and a whole lot of holiday fabulousness. **December 13**, 12 – 6 p.m. 11 Sanborn Ct., Somerville.

Tour any of **Somerville Public Schools' Prekindergarten to Grade 8**. January tour dates: **January 8, 2026**, 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m., **January 27, 2026**, 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m. Learn more: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/tours>

For anyone **in need of food resources**, go to the **Somerville Food Coalition's website**: [www.https://bit.ly/4ocJ6NB](https://bit.ly/4ocJ6NB). Free local pantries, community meals, community fridges, and more. Find more information at <https://www.somervillema.gov/snap>. Here are some locations where you can find free food at **Somerville's Community Fridges** can be found at 35 Prospect St., **Elizabeth Peabody House**, 275-277 Broadway, **St. Clements**, across from 29 St. Clements Road. Donations are welcome at these locations.

The **Center for Arts at the Armory**, 191 Highland Ave., will host and manage the **16th Annual Somerville Winter Farmers Market (SWFM) every Saturday** beginning November 1 **through April 11**, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This weekly market offers the best locally grown and regionally produced agricultural items, including vegetable produce, cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, pastries, and sweets. In addition to cash, credit, and debit, SNAP / EBT is also accepted at the market. CAA raises funds to be able to pro-

vide a \$15 match so that SNAP / EBT for every SNAP/EBT customer who spends at least \$15 of their SNAP/EBT dollars at the market. The market is also participating in the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), which allows qualifying customers to receive between \$40 – \$80 worth of free farm-fresh fruits and vegetables from participating HIP vendors. To learn more, please visit www.somwintermarket.org.

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 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 Bobbieton@aol.com. We offer great discounts to help our advertisers be able to advertise. Thank you all so much for your support!

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.

Time to light up the city

CONT. FROM PG 1

Field on Saturday, December 13. Meet at 5:45 p.m., 6 p.m. departure.

Heavy rain, snow, wind, or ice postpones to Sunday, December 14 (same time, same place). The event is free and open to all.

This 60-minute, family-friendly ride will visit a selection of dazzling stops featured

on the Illuminations Map, co-created each year by Somerville's amazing residents and businesses.

Light up yourself and your bike, think twinkle lights, glow gear, holiday flair! It's fun, helps with visibility, and adds to the magical atmosphere. And of course, bundle up for the chilly ride.

The best Christmas gifts

CONT. FROM PG 3

something came from "Bargies" if it was singed, scorched, or smelled like smoke. Where else could you buy a toy fire truck with an authentic aroma of smoke? I wonder if that's why that smoky smell always reminds me of Christmas?

We will never forget the thrill of waking up early on Christmas morning and seeing all the stuff Santa brought.

Today, it's all about the kids and grandkids. These days, I'm happy to get some handkerchiefs, socks, or photos of the grandkids.

I couldn't resist ordering myself a throwback set of army soldiers and tanks from Amazon. I can't wait to clear the kitchen table off and set them up! Happy shopping! Be careful out there.



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

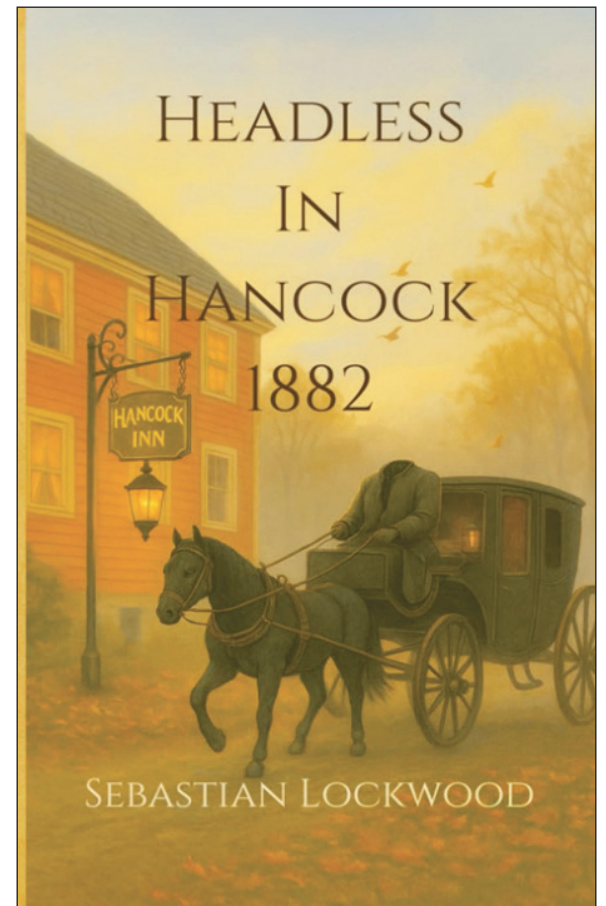
Review of 'HEADLESS IN HANCOCK 1882' by Sebastian Lockwood

Review of *HEADLESS IN HANCOCK 1882*
By Sebastian Lockwood
LUX Press 2025 395 pages

Review by Tom Miller

Sebastian Lockwood is a story teller and a good one. He makes use of his skills in his most recent publication *Headless In Hancock 1882* which he sets in the Hancock Inn and Fox Tavern, an establishment that has actually been in existence since 1789, and in the surrounding Mondack region. Lockwood is unabashedly in love with the area which he pays homage to in the book. In the introduction he declares the work to be "historical fiction" which indeed it is, allowing him the freedom to tell a good story without letting mere facts get in the way. Having said that, one needs to understand that Lockwood went to great lengths to "get it right" in the sense of the political and social sensibilities of a small town in New Hampshire in 1882. After all the Civil War is just seventeen years in the past and many of the societal opinions regarding slavery and abolition still circulate. The radical Puritans still rule south of the Merrimack River. Electricity has not quite brought the onslaught of modernism to the area. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 is in effect. Boston and New York are intriguing but frightening places. Railroads are sort of the thing ... elsewhere.

While the book follows several main characters throughout, each chapter brings a new set of visitors to stay at the Inn. Each new visitor is unique and we find literary folks, cads, hunters, intellectuals, in other words a variety of interesting people. Lockwood is playful in introducing these characters. Washington Irving shows up as Benjamin Arbor, writer, who adds some gory details to the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow, hence the tie into the title of this book. Emerson is there as Waldo, an aged fellow whose caretaker is Aunt Moody. In real life Mary Moody Emerson, Ralph's aunt who predeceased him by some twenty five years was a great influence on his thinking. Fly Rod Cornelia Crosby, the first registered guide in Maine appears. James Freeman Clark interested in freedom and equality in real life was a minister and a editor for several literary magazines. Clerk Maxwell, an inventor, in real life was a renowned expert on electricity and magnetism. Eddie Gib-



bons, a writer, could be today's Scottish poet of the same name. Roger McGuinn, something of a recluse living on the mountain, is perhaps named for the fellow who founded the current music group The Byrds and composed "The 1882 Survivalist" in their Folk Den collection. There are others if you care to delve into historical fact.

Lockwood also introduces in detail a special libation and a unique meal in each chapter. The instructions for each drink are included in the narrative and the menus for the meals are in an addendum. Quite the epicurean Mr Lockwood is.

The main characters in the book are quite likable, a little mercurial perhaps but very real and had me cheering for them as they dealt with the adversities, none of which were outlandishly disastrous. Their stories evolve in each chapter and are the threads around which the other stories are wound. Skillfully so.

All in all this is a charming, nostalgic, and pleasant read evidencing the author's enchantment with the town, the area and the time. Well done.

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Every now and then I put a poem of my own in the *Lyrical Somerville*.

Doug Holder is the arts/editor of *The Somerville Times*, he is on the board of the New England Poetry Club, and the Friends of the Longfellow House. He is the co-founder of the Ibbetson Street Press of Somerville, MA. and teaches at Endicott College in Beverly, MA.

A Dream of my father at Grand Central Station

We were at Grand Central Station
I could hear the pound of the women's Delman heels
on the polished floors
My father wore a Brooks Brothers sports coat
with only underwear
pink socks,
stick legs
and varicose veins.

He was tired
he sat on some chest
near the information booth
He said,
"Kid, I failed you"
and downed a shot
from his flask of Vodka.

Then he was gone.

I looked in the chest
there were New York Yankee tickets
from 1933
stationary from J. Walter Thompson
an ad he wrote for the Jack Paar show
stacks of newspapers
the ones he always carried
New York Post, Daily News, and the Times
a purple heart from World War 2

pictures of him smiling widely
with Yogi Berra, and Jack Dempsey
a Toots Shore restaurant painting
with Joe DiMaggio's signature
Oh, where have you gone
Joe,

a nation turns
its lonely eyes to you...

But I was lost,
and he was gone.

— Doug Holder



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