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# The Somerville Times

www.thesomervilletimes.com



VOL. 8 NO. 50

SOMERVILLE, MASS. WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

## Inside:



**Rolling up  
our sleeves**

page 3



**Reopenings rolled  
back again**

page 5



**Tips for healthy  
holiday decorating**

page 12

## 'Humanity and hope' at Somerville Arts Council town hall meeting



The Somerville Arts Council is working with the City of Somerville to help provide badly needed funding to individual artists and arts organizations as they struggle with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Max Eidelman

The Somerville Arts Council met for its third virtual town hall meeting last Tuesday. Much of the discussion concerned a year-end recap of the progress that has been made during the pandemic to support the local arts community, but plans for the future were addressed as well.

Mayor Curtatone attended the meeting, saying that "talking about the arts gives us some greater sense of humanity and hope as we think about the future." These sound like prescient words to hold onto as we head into a new, and hopefully brighter, year.

The mayor and everyone at the meeting were grateful to the City Council for approving the request for \$500K in funds for the arts. A slideshow demonstrated some of the specific ways that money has already been distributed amongst the arts community

Continued on page 4

## Illuminations Tour lights up Somerville neighborhoods

By Hongyu Liu

Somerville households have lit up their front yards with festive decorations in celebration of the holidays and to take part in the 2020 Illuminations Tour.

On December 12, the Somerville Arts Council published a google map that includes all the households, local businesses, and organizations participating in the tour by decorating their buildings with lightings and handicrafts. The map can be found online at <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1-mfd2ZVrCwIOFgjXI-bI3O487SVoT9z3j&ll=42.39130156129693%2C-71.1046092&z=14>.

In the past, the Council used trolley buses taking people on 45-minutes tours of the decorated homes in Somerville. Due to the pandemic, residents and visitors are expected to conduct self-guided tours this year, using the map as a reference.

Continued on page 9



The 2020 Illuminations Tour, organized by the Somerville Arts Council, is providing a map for those who would like to partake of the festive sights throughout the city.

— Photos by Hongyu Liu

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

Two more Somerville restaurants will be closing for the winter. Highland Kitchen and Dali Restaurant & Tapas Bar have shuttered their doors until spring of next year. They will be missed, but we look forward to their return then. Please keep in mind how important it is to support our small businesses and shop local.

Last week we mentioned a rumor going around that Ward 5 City Councilor Mark Niedergang may not be running for re-election next term. Since then, he has officially confirmed it. You can read the full announcement on our website: <http://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/104876>.

The Best of Somerville 2020 winners will be announced in the January 6, 2021, edition of our paper. There's still time to cast your vote for the best. Email, mail or call in your vote for who and what you think is the best. We're also looking for the Best Idea of 2020 here in the city. If you have anyone or anything you'd like to suggest, let us know. What a year 2020 has been.

We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as Erin Madden Capasso, Olivia Huang, Glenn DiMasse, Toni Guarino, Lori Courtney and Diane MacKay a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

The CDC recently warned that "with colder weather, more time spent indoors, the ongoing U.S. holiday season, and silent spread of disease" by persons who are sick but have no symptoms, that "the United States has entered a phase of high-level transmission." This applies to Massachusetts as well. We strongly urge you to limit non-essential activities and follow all recommended COVID-19 safety guidelines including wearing face coverings, social distancing, avoiding crowded spaces, postponing travel, increasing

Continued on page 7

# The Somerville Times

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## Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of December 16 – December 23 as provided by the National Weather Service

| DAY                      | CONDITIONS    | HIGH/LOW | PRECIPITATION | HUMIDITY | WIND       |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Wednesday<br>December 16 | Cloudy        | 29°/242° | 24%           | 21%      | NNE 9 mph  |
| Thursday<br>December 17  | Snow          | 27°/16°  | 69%           | 29%      | N 17 mph   |
| Friday<br>December 18    | Partly Cloudy | 28°/9°   | 1%            | 9%       | NNW 11 mph |
| Saturday<br>December 19  | Partly Cloudy | 33°/22°  | 6%            | 12%      | W 9 mph    |
| Sunday<br>December 20    | Rain          | 40°/33°  | 44%           | 37%      | SSW 8 mph  |
| Monday<br>December 21    | Rain          | 42°/29°  | 49%           | 39%      | WNW 10 mph |
| Tuesday<br>December 22   | Partly Cloudy | 45°/33°  | 24%           | 18%      | WSW 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: State intervention, not personal responsibility, needed to stop the surge

SusanH says:

I agree with Christine and we all should. Anyone who disagrees with us is probably a sexist and racist pig. Personal responsibility and individual rights are waaaaay overrated. The faster we all realize that the government knows what's best for all of us and will take care of us from cradle to grave the better. All I can say to those who disagree is "Come on, man!"  
Though this stat Christine references is odd and eye-opening considering none of these other states have draconian mandates or an oppressive state government destroying businesses and people's lives. \*\*\*Massachusetts now has more new COVID-19 cases per capita than Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, or Texas \*\*\* YIKES! Please note: i was just in SC and FL and no one is wearing masks.

As a proud and tolerant liberal — if you disagree with us it means your sexist, racist pig.

### Response to: Lyrical Somerville – December 9

Paul says:

Wonderful piece Joshua

Alma Cole Pesiri says:

Like so much this past year, the words bring me loving memories of my late husband. Happily, our marriage was of these words telling a wonderful story until the cancer.

Joshua Corwin says:

Thank you, Paul and Alma. Alma, that my words moved you means mountains to me; mountains which call me home, a place of peace, where your husband resides and remembers with you. Sending you peace, love, solace and serenity!

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

## Somerville Council on Aging Box Lunch Pick Up



Tuesday December 22, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Ralph and Jenny Senior Center, 9 New Washington Street



While we aren't able to share lunch together we hope you can stop by for this fun treat!

RSVP is a must – spaces are limited

To enjoy a box lunch please call Connie at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319

Life in the



by Jimmy Del Ponte

# Roll up your sleeve



Somerville folks are a tough breed.

If you grew up in the Somerville of the 50's 60's '70's and 80's, we survived some wild times. We're not about to just give in to a virus that has completely messed up our way of life. Our inborn sense of survival and common sense will hopefully guide us through the deadly storm of the Coronavirus.

Pfizer rolled out millions of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine on Monday. Fantastic! Finally, a glimpse of light at the end of a long and costly tunnel. Bravo to the scientists who worked painstakingly hard to get these vaccines to the world.

The subject of will you or won't you get the first COVID-19 vaccine is almost as heated as the recent election was. The first round will go to health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care, and then those who need it most.

I threw it out there. "Are any of my 65 + year old friends going to get the vaccine?" Both sides were adamant about their opinion, but first, a look back.

"In the 1950s, the polio virus terrified American families. Parents tried 'social distancing' – ineffectively and out of fear. Polio was not part the life they had signed up for." "In the United States, the 1952 polio epidemic became the worst outbreak in the nation's history. Of the nearly 58,000 cases reported that year, 3,145 died and 21,269 were left with mild to disabling paralysis."

COVID-19 is all that and more. On February 23, 1954, the first Polio inoculations were administered. Eventually we all got it. Some of our vaccination marks on our arms are still visible. I found one of my old immunization records from the early '60's (see photo).

| ORAL POLIO VACCINE IMMUNIZATION RECORD<br>(Save this for your child's health record) |                 |            |
|--|-----------------|------------|
| NAME:  | JAMES DEL PONTE | AGE: 9     |
| ADDRESS  | SOMERVILLE      |            |
| DATE   | VIRUS TYPE      | LOT NUMBER |
| 5/24/62  | TYPE I          | 02106      |
| 6-24-62  | TYPE III        | 03103      |
| 8-20-63  | TYPE II         | 20014      |

My sister, my brother and I were born between 1952 and 1956 and I can only imagine what my parents went through. Now my age group, is in the high-risk age group again for COVID-19. Is that going full circle or what? From Polio to COVID in a lifetime. Hopefully the COVID-19 vaccines are as successful as the ones for polio.

The following comments reveal how a few of my Somerville friends answered the question, "Are you going to get the vaccine?" I chose the most colorful responses. Comments are in quotes.

"Absolutely ... I'm only 53 ... I worked for these folks at MIT ... now my former boss founded Moderna. There is nothing to be afraid of. These brilliant researchers and scientists have my Full trust and confidence."

"Sure, why not? Then in 5 to 10 years we will see lawyers on TV saying if you got the virus vaccine in 2020 then you can sue the vaccine company. They're rushing this out without testing. Sorry, I'm no one's guinea pig."

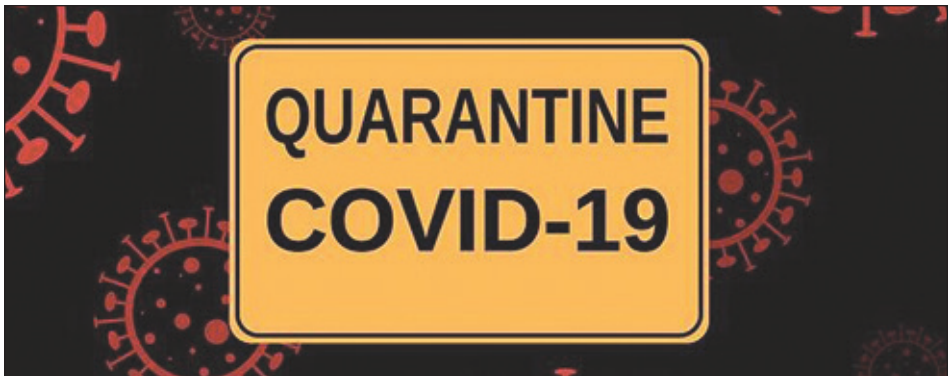
One of my many of octogenarian friends was next: "Yes, I will take it I'm 80 years old ... the more people that take it, the more that this thing will disappear we hope."

"Not until I see what happens to the millions before me that get it."

This next lady was very poignant: "I am under 65 with pre-existing conditions. I have done an incredible amount of research and spoken to people I know in the medical/research community, plus a few of my physicians. I am definitely getting it." She goes on to say, "You can live in fear of the unknown without it. Or live in fear of the vaccine. Mine is to choose to live life. It is everyone's choice but it is simply not just about us but the people around us."

The next guy is going to wait and see: "Maybe after I see how it's going in The UK and here, after they start giving them and see how people are responding, especially older people."

So, the majority of Somerville people I asked said yes, they would get the vaccine as soon as they can. Let's pray that the vaccines are successful and people are spared any more pain and sickness. Hopefully we will send this virus packing as soon as possible the way the scientists of the 1950's squashed polio.



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Our menus and specials are posted on our Facebook page at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/Mount-Vernon-Restaurants-103209019028/>

We ask you to bear with us while we follow established guidelines. The safety of our patrons and employees remain our number one priority as we continue to operate and maintain our small business during this difficult time.

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Be safe and stay healthy – The Mount Vernon Restaurant

## The SHA says 'Thanks!'

Thank you to the student members of the Somerville High School National Honor Society and staff for their generous contribution to the SHA Holiday Drive. Somerville Housing Authority appreciates you!

— Somerville Housing Authority

THE WEEK IN CRIME

By Jim Clark

## Suspected shoplifter resists to the end

A Somerville Police officer on duty and assigned to uniform patrol of Assembly Row last Thursday spotted a man known to him as Rachid Belhadj walking past LegoLand.

Belhadj is reportedly well known for shoplifting from retail establishments. The officer also had knowledge that Belhadj was wanted for multiple arrest warrants at the time.

The officer I made contact with Belhadj in the intersection of Assembly Row and Canal St, and ordered him to stop. Belhadj complied and approached the officer.

As Belhadj came nearer the officer could see a large bulge

in the front of his pants. He knew from past thefts that Belhadj conceals merchandise in his pants before fleeing retail establishments.

The officer informed Belhadj that there were active warrants for his arrest, and ordered him to place his hands behind his back. Belhadj reportedly began to yell and back away from the officer, who then grabbed Belhadj by his right upper arm, and ordered him to place his hands behind his back.

According to reports, Belhadj then began to struggle with the officer, pulling away and pushing the officer.

Attempts were made to bring

Belhadj to the ground unsuccessfully, and he slipped from the officer's grasp. He then reportedly turned around and came back toward the officer.

The officer grabbed control of Belhadj's arm again and attempted to handcuff him, but he reportedly continued to resist.

During this struggle, Belhadj thrust his hand toward the officer numerous times in an attempt to strike him, according to reports, but the officer was able to prevent full extension of his arm.

Belhadj repeatedly ignored the officer's commands to comply and continued his assaultive behavior, police said.

The officer struck Belhadj with

a closed fist, which resulted in Belhadj being stunned. The officer was finally able to take Belhadj to the ground, and got one handcuff on before Belhadj began resisting again.

The officer gave numerous commands for Belhadj to roll onto his stomach, which he refused to do.

The officer held Belhadj in a wrist lock until backup arrived and assisted him in completing the handcuffing.

While awaiting the prisoner transport wagon, the officer located numerous items of allegedly stolen clothing in his backpack.

Belhadj continued to resist

while handcuffed, and then began spitting toward the officers when placed in the wagon. Belhadj was transported to the station where he was booked on a charge of resisting arrest.

During the booking process, additional stolen clothing was located in Belhadj's pants where the officer first observed the bulge.

Police returned all stolen property which totaled \$134.97 from Banana Republic, \$400 from Columbia Sports, and \$241 from Nike Outlet.

In addition to the outstanding warrants, Belhadj was charged with three counts of receiving stolen property, and one count of resisting arrest.

Crime Tip Hotline: 617-776-7210

Leave a message on our tip hotline answering machine – All calls are confidential

Help Keep Somerville Safe!

## SOMERVILLE POLICE CRIME LOG

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Arrests:</b>          | 10, 2:01 p.m., arrested at Franklin St. on a charge of resisting arrest, multiple counts of receiving stolen property, and on warrant charges of shoplifting by concealing merchandise, furnishing a false ID to an arresting officer, and open and gross lewdness. |
| Rachid Belhadj, December |   |

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## ‘Humanity and hope’ at Somerville Arts Council town hall meeting

CONT. FROM PG 1

during the pandemic. For example: \$161K has been distributed amongst 50 applicants for the Artist Resiliency Fund, and \$201K has been distributed amongst 16 applicants for COVID-19 grants to local cultural organizations.

The mayor went on to say, though, that the Commonwealth has denied the city's request to make CARES funding available to the arts. However, he is seeking to acquire an additional \$100K for the arts in 2021 to support the local Cultural Council.

After Mayor Curtatone spoke, members of the Arts Council presented slides that showcased some of what local artists have been able to create these past months. One such project is the Home Alone series. This has featured thirty presentations since April and has allowed artists to promote their work virtually.

Another successful project, Serenading Seniors, has al-

lowed local musicians to perform at safe distances for residents in elderly homes. This effort in particular reflects how "public art can be used to support so many other different efforts that we care about," as Ann Hirsch said at the town hall. As the most vulnerable demographic, seniors have sadly faced a severe restriction in what they can do. Acts like Serenading Seniors that bring music and a chance for a happy diversion to the elderly reflect the potential power the arts have.

The Council began to discuss future ideas for a cultural planning process to create more physical space for the arts and further cultivate the city's culture. This process is envisioned to take approximately 10 years and is not meant to exclusively focus on how to deal with COVID-19, but rather how to promote the arts in Somerville on a long-term basis.

One attendee at the town



hall had some reservations about the length of this plan. A woman from Brickbottom Artists Association expressed some frustration with how she has seen a lot of talk about enhancing the city's arts, but not much action. She specifically cited the unfinished project at

the Art Farm.

Mayor Curtatone and the Arts Council did not try to make any excuses but said that they will work to address this. Cause for optimism can be found in the recent funding that the arts have received, and in the city's other efforts to support the arts during

these trying months.

The director of the Somerville Art's Council, Greg Jenkins, said that folks who are interested in participating in the cultural planning process can email him at gjenkins@somervillema.gov for information about how to become involved.

# Somerville rolls back COVID-19 reopenings to a modified version of Phase II, Step 2

Due to the accelerating spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts and CDC warnings that the United States has entered a dangerous and record-breaking phase of high-level transmission for the virus, Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone and the Somerville Board of Health are rolling back the City of Somerville to a modified version of Phase II, Step 2 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' reopening plan effective end of day Wednesday, December 16, at 11:59 p.m. and will be in effect for at least three weeks.

In addition, Mayor Curtatone will be submitting a proposal for City Council approval to use an additional \$5 million from city fiscal reserves as economic stabilization funds to support local businesses impacted by the pandemic. The main businesses affected by this rollback will be gyms and indoor recreational facilities. Additional rollbacks are under review. The rollback is being undertaken in tandem with the City of Boston and other area communities.

"We fully appreciate the economic hardship and mental strain caused by efforts to lessen the spread of this deadly disease, but given the surging transmission of this virus we have no choice but to take more restrictive measures," Mayor Curtatone said. "We have 50 people in our city who have died due to coronavirus and the measures

we take today are designed to save lives in our community and beyond. We are putting together an economic aid package for local businesses facing these necessary closures just as we have delivered support for housing, artists, food, Internet access, and other needs to our community during the crisis."

The proposed \$5 million economic aid package will be presented to Somerville's City Council on Thursday, December 17. It is intended to bridge the gap until state or federal aid becomes available.

"With no help or guidance from federal and state government in sight, the city and our community need to step up and support and protect each other," said City Council President Matthew McLaughlin.

The mayor cautioned that municipal leaders throughout the Greater Boston region are also discussing further restrictions, including the closure of all indoor dining spaces.

"To have the greatest public health impact, closing indoor dining needs to take place regionally, not town by town," Mayor Curtatone said. "If you can just cross the city line to eat in the community next door, border-hopping will just spur community spread of this deadly virus. Though it's a painful choice, many of us have been pressing for the cessation of indoor dining to slow the virus and

we hope very soon to see broad regional action on it. In the meantime, Somerville can put these assistance funds in place to help preserve businesses affected by these new and anticipated rollbacks. I'm also calling on residents, who are able, to increase their use of take-out services at our restaurants or consider gift cards to local restaurants and businesses this holiday season. That extra spending can help buffer the economic strain they face. Hopefully, the state and federal governments also will step forward to provide more support for those facing business closures in order to keep coronavirus in check."

To help break the chain of transmission, members of the public are also strongly urged to continue limiting non-essential activities and following all recommended COVID-19 safety guidelines including wearing face coverings at all times when not at home (remember to cover both nose and mouth), social distancing, avoiding crowded spaces, postponing travel, increasing ventilation, washing hands frequently, and staying home and getting tested if you feel ill or may have been exposed to the virus.

Medical offices, retail establishments, and personal care businesses (like hairdressers) will continue to operate under their current regulations and restrictions. Office spaces may remain



open at 40 percent of capacity, though employers are urged to maximize the amount of work done from home and ensure that employees remain masked at all times while in the office.

"We understand it is difficult to keep track of all the different local and state regulations. The key thing people should remember is they should not gather indoors with people from outside their immediate household," said Doug Kress, Somerville's Director of Health and Human Services. "Keep your circle as limited as possible and don't share your air with anyone from outside of it. In any situation where you are outside your home, you should have a face covering on at all times. Different munici-

palities and the state may have a variety of regulations, but we are all acting to fight a clear and present danger to human lives. Please help break the chain of transmission of this virus."

**Closing as of the end of day Wednesday, December 17:**

- Indoor fitness centers and health clubs, including gyms using alternative spaces. One-on-one personal training sessions are allowed.

- Indoor non-athletic instructional classes in arts, education and life sciences for persons 18 years and older

- Indoor recreational and athletic facilities (except for youth 18 and under), indoor pools may remain open for all ages under pre-

## Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



### Holiday Dishes

This holiday season looks quite different than years past for many of us. Usually, we host between 30-35 people on Christmas Eve. This year, it will be just the two of us. Sure, there will be phone calls, FaceTime, or whatever other platform you use to be in touch with family and friends. I know it's not the same, but I'm grateful nonetheless. Thank goodness for technology. With the vaccines on the horizon, better days are headed our way. May this pave the way for an outstanding 2021.

Here is a compilation of holiday dishes that I've written about over the past few years. Maybe you can create new family traditions using some of these recipes. Happy Holidays to all!

**Baccalà** – <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/80551>

**Ricotta Pie** – <https://www.the->

[somervilletimes.com/archives/81102](https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/81102)

**Chocolate Holiday Cookies** – <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/95625>

**Stuffed Mushrooms** – <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/55006>

**Pizzelle** – <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/88516>

**Baked Stuffed Shrimp** – <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/63666>

**Tzimmes** – <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/64030>

**Stuffed Artichokes** – <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/65165>

**Panettone Bread Pudding** – <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/66494>

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



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.

State intervention, not personal responsibility, needed to stop the surge



By State Representative Christine P. Barber

The number of COVID-19 infections throughout Massachusetts is rising at an alarming rate. Massachusetts now has more new COVID-19 cases per capita than Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, or Texas – and in the last week alone, MA has seen more COVID-19 deaths per capita than 23 other states. This surge of infections and hospitalizations is placing

tremendous pressure on the state’s health facilities and leading to countless preventable COVID-related deaths. Over the past nine months, Gov. Baker has mainly linked increased COVID-19 cases statewide to private social gatherings and individuals failing to comply with state health guidelines. However, the data clearly shows there are systemic factors in viral spread and infection. It is time for the Baker Administration to shift the onus of responsibility from individual actions to systemic factors that continue to put people at risk for COVID-19, particularly communities of color, which have been hit hardest by this pandemic. Though each person plays a role in reducing the spread of the COVID-19, individuals alone are not personally re-

sponsible for putting an end to the pandemic. Immediate action by the Governor to tighten COVID-19 restrictions is necessary to reduce the strain on our health system and to save lives. Beyond private gatherings, there have been many reports of viral clusters at workplaces and this goes beyond personal choice. Many people, particularly those working in low-wage jobs, do not have the option of staying home to reduce their exposure to COVID. While Gov. Baker placed new restrictions this week, including requiring masks for indoor dining and gyms, reducing the size of outdoor gatherings to 50 persons, and closing certain high-contact recreational businesses, these are simply not strong enough to address this state of dire emergency for our communities.

Our state’s support systems for those facing housing instability and food insecurity, for those who have recently lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic, and protections for schools, businesses, and workers on the frontlines of this crisis are just a few examples of systemic factors that ultimately influence people’s risk of COVID-19 exposure and infection. The House and Senate recently passed a state budget that makes significant investments in housing assistance, food security, and substance use addiction services, as well as domestic violence, sexual assault treatment and prevention programs to address the sweeping effects of the pandemic. The budget invests in programs that provide COVID-related supports for small businesses, and increases funding for child care and local boards of health. There

is still more work to be done to support individuals and small businesses as we continue to navigate this crisis, but this budget makes important steps. It is imperative the Governor and his administration implement targeted rollbacks of the state’s reopening plan to keep people safe. To do this, it is necessary for the state and federal government to strengthen resources and the safety net to support families and small businesses. Right now, people across the Commonwealth are doing all they can to keep themselves and their loved ones healthy and safe. We are counting on the Baker Administration to make needed adjustments to the state’s COVID-19 restrictions to minimize the dangerous impacts of the virus on our health care system and our communities.

Community Growing Center Open Hours

Join the Community Growing Center this December for their twice-weekly Open Hours. Through the end of the month, volunteer hosts make sure the garden is open for visitors to enjoy every Tuesday, from 3:00 to 4:40 p.m., and Saturday, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to come by the Growing Center, stroll the paths, enjoy the plants in the garden, and take a moment to enjoy this little green oasis tucked right into Union Square. Due to current public health conditions, a limited number of visitors are allowed in the site at any one time. To learn more about the Community Growing Center, visit [www.thegrowingcenter.org](http://www.thegrowingcenter.org).

The Somerville Times Best of Somerville 2020 Cast your vote!

You have until December 28 to vote for your favorite category. To cast your vote, email us at [thebestofsomerville@yahoo.com](mailto:thebestofsomerville@yahoo.com) or mail in your ballot to The Somerville Times, 699 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144. The winners will be announced Wednesday, January 6, 2021. If you don’t see your favorite category here, simply add it to this list.

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Foods &amp; Restaurants</b><br>Best Breakfast<br>Best Combination Breakfast & Lunch<br>Best Italian Food<br>Best Chinese Food<br>Best Mexican Food<br>Best Portuguese Food<br>Best Local Deli<br>Best Variety and all around Restaurant<br>Best Seafood<br>Best Irish Pub<br>Best Local Bar<br>Best Thai Food<br>Best Hamburger<br>Best Mac & Cheese<br>Best Hot-Dog<br>Best Roast Beef Sandwich<br>Best Pizza<br>Best Bakery<br>Best Sub Shop | Best Coffee Shop Franchise<br>Best Coffee Shop local<br>Best Bar Food<br><br><b>Best of Somerville Services</b><br>Best Electrician<br>Best Plumber<br>Best Attorney<br>Best Teacher<br>Best Politician<br>Best City Worker<br>Best Receptionist<br>Best Real Estate Agent/Realtor<br>Best Real Estate Rental Agent<br>Best Bank Teller<br>Best Bank Employee<br>Best Waitstaff<br>Best Bartender<br>Best Cook<br>Best Caterer | Best Barber<br>Best Hair Salon<br>Best Doctor<br>Best Nurse<br>Best Coach<br>Best Police Officer<br>Best Fire Fighter<br>Best Photographer<br>Best Somerville Historian<br>Best Eye Doctor<br>Best Orthodontist<br>Best Mortgage Officer<br>Best Somerville Artist<br>Best Somerville Poet<br>Best Somerville Writer<br>Best Somerville Celebrity<br>Best City Elected Politician<br>Best City Employee DPW<br>Best City Employee City Hall/Annex | <b>Best of Somerville Businesses</b><br>Best Somerville Bank<br>Best Real Estate Company<br>Best Insurance Agency<br>Best Creative Business in 2020<br>Best Florist<br>Best Laundromat<br>Best Liquor Store<br>Best Gas Station<br>Best Auto Body Shop<br>Best Tow Company<br>Best Law Firm<br>Best Pest Exterminator<br>Best Convenient/Neighborhood Store<br>Best Somerville Non Profit Agency<br>Best Bar For Bands<br>Best Newspaper<br><br><b>Best Idea in 2020</b><br><b>Worst Idea in 2020</b> |
|---|--|---|---|

COMMENTARY

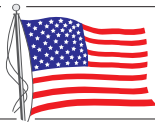
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Holiday observances live on in the ‘Ville.

Our View Of The Times



The shopping is well underway, and all the presents should be wrapped on time. And once the plans for the big day have been made, don't forget to slow down, relax and enjoy the holiday season and all the finer things that come with it, in spite of the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought upon us.

Being with family, friends and loved ones and sharing warmth of the occasion is certainly being curtailed this year. We just have to be patient and remain connected remotely via social media and video conferencing.

Whatever faith one may adhere to, we can all agree that the spirit of the season can be meaningful to one and all. Kindness, charity and camaraderie are ideals that we particularly embrace at this time, and wish to uphold throughout the year.

If we can be firm enough in our convictions to see that through, then our world will be a better place for us all to share.

We try our best, and that is all that can be asked of us.

Let us enjoy this holiday season to the fullest. Exchange gifts with those closest to us, keep in touch with our loved ones remotely, catch up on our big dramatic doings in life, and all the rest. But let us also give a little thought to extending that warmth and sense of solidarity into the year to come as we look forward to the better times ahead.

We may certainly face adversity and disagreement from time to time, but we can hold that spirit of tolerance and magnanimity within ourselves as we deal with it.

We are only human, and often fall short of it. But it is well worth the effort to try.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

ventilation (open a door or window occasionally), washing hands frequently, and staying home and getting tested if you feel ill or may have been exposed to the virus.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Senior Lunch pick up on Tuesday, December 22** at 10:30 a.m. at the **Ralph and Jenny Senior Center**, 9 New Washington Street. While they aren't able to share lunch together, they hope you can stop by for this fun treat. RSVP is a must as spaces are limited. To enjoy a box lunch, please call **Connie** at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319.

\*\*\*\*\*

**SomerSocial** is a free, online after-school program for **Somerville students** in kindergarten through eighth grade. To see upcoming activities and register, visit the SomerSocial website: <https://sites.google.com/scatvsomerville.org/somersocial>.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Vaccines are coming**, but keep up **COVID safety**. The state recently released a timeline for when COVID-19 vaccines will be available. While this news provides some much-needed hope, now is not the time to relax COVID safety measures. Although health workers and persons at long-term care facilities may start getting vaccines as early as this month, the vaccine is not expected to be available widely until April-June 2021. In the meantime, it is important that we all continue wearing face coverings (over your nose and mouth), socially distancing, and keeping up other COVID safety measures. As more information about the vaccine becomes available, including information on how to get it locally, we'll be sharing it in these updates and at [somervillema.gov/covid19](https://www.somervillema.gov/covid19).

\*\*\*\*\*

New **Somerville rental/mortgage assistance funds** are available. \$500,000 in federal **COVID-19 Cares Act Relief funds** are being dedicated to the city's **Flex-CV Fund** to support income-eligible residents behind in rent or mortgage payments due to impacts of the pandemic. This funding is being administered by the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** and must be allocated by **December 30**, so residents interested in applying should do so as soon as possible. To learn more about the Flex-CV fund, visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/news/city-announces-500000-emergency-housing-funds-covid-19-rental-mortgage-assistance>.

\*\*\*\*\*

On **December 20**, the **Somerville Arts Council** will go live with a **YouTube playlist** featuring a well-rounded array of **Somerville musicians** performing musical numbers to brighten up your holidays. Looking for some jams for cooking or festive melodies for unwrapping gifts? They've got you covered. You could also play this seriously local holiday mix while enjoying the 2020 **Illuminations Tour** in your car. Subscribe to the SAC YouTube Channel for updates: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvpEsOeGsDU0VaizTF4-78A>.

\*\*\*\*\*

This holiday season, our **favorite local traditions** have adapted to prevent the spread of COVID-19. **Santa** made a special trip earlier in the month to pre-record a message with **Mayor Curatone** and light the Christmas tree; we joined **Temple B'nai Brith** for a virtual candle lighting on the first night of **Hanukkah**; and the **Somerville Arts Council** has adapted the **Illuminations Tour** into a self-guided tour of spectacular lights displays. Visit "Somerville's Holiday Traditions Adapt to COVID-19" to find out how you can join in the festivities: <https://www.somervillema.gov/2020holidays>.

\*\*\*\*\*

**CHA Somerville Hospital** offers free testing at **Assembly Row**. To make an appointment, call 617-665-2928, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The mobile COVID-19 testing unit also offers testing in our neighborhoods. Mobile testing schedules and more information on both can be found under the "**Symptoms, Testing, & Medical Info**" tab on [somervillema.gov/covid19](https://www.somervillema.gov/covid19). The state also operates several Stop the Spread testing sites, including in the nearby communities of Chelsea and Everett. For more information, visit the state's website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread>.

\*\*\*\*\*

There's still time for you to help by donating to the **Somerville Homeless Coalition**. Your support helps reach even more people in need. This year, they have distributed over 33,000 bags of groceries, and expect to prevent over 200 evictions by the end of the month. They could not have done this work without your help. Donate to keep their clients housed through the winter. Your contributions will go directly to providing warmth, care, and

Continued on page 10

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#760

1. Baseball player Eddie Mathews was the first to appear on the cover of what magazine?

2. What snack had the slogan "The More You Eat The More You Want"?

3. What kind of poisonous gas was used during WWI?

4. What is the only U.S. flag that is two-sided?

5. Another Brick In the Wall was a song recorded by what British band?

6. What is a Texas

Ruby Red?

7. What band had a song Down On The Corner?

8. In what 1998 movie did David Bowie play the part of Pontius Pilot?

9. Leo the Lion was the mascot for which film studio?

10. When was Google founded?

11. What is a fear of darkness known as?

12. Which state has the longest coast-line?

Answers on page 10

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. At latitude 60 degrees south you can sail all the way around the world.

2. During his entire life, Vincent Van Gogh sold exactly one painting.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD  
YEAR IN REVIEW

- ACROSS
1. New wardrobe accessory

5. RIP, \_\_\_\_

8. Flock's echo

12. Reply from a tunnel?

13. Feline noise

14. Edward Teller's "baby"

15. Beat

16. Competently

17. Savory jelly

18. Blue vs. red competition

20. One third of a three-piece suit

21. Mailed greetings

22. Long time

23. \_\_\_\_ biloba

26. Anointing oil

30. Nurses' org.

31. Leafy vegetable

34. "Cogito, \_\_\_\_ sum"

35. Mooring spots

37. Bring into play

38. Old Brazilian coins

39. Prefix with 'graph'

40. Joe's running mate

42. PGA peg

43. What bees did

45. Fixes firmly

47. Summer mo.

48. R in NPR

50. Widespread

52. WHO's March announcement

55. Cliffside dwelling

56. Drop-off spot

57. Sonic sound

59. Sports figures, e.g.

60. Persian backgammon

61. Water carrier

62. Late basketball legend

63. \_\_\_\_ lightning, cause of California wildfires

64. X-ray units

- DOWN
1. Copy cats

2. Flu symptom

3. Synagogue

4. 1/100th of a ruble

| CROSSWORD |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1         | 2  | 3  | 4  |    |    | 5  | 6  | 7  |    |    | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 |
| 12        |    |    |    |    | 13 |    |    |    |    | 14 |    |    |    |    |
| 15        |    |    |    |    | 16 |    |    |    |    | 17 |    |    |    |    |
|           | 18 |    |    |    | 19 |    |    |    |    | 20 |    |    |    |    |
|           |    |    | 21 |    |    |    |    |    | 22 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 23        | 24 | 25 |    |    |    |    |    | 26 |    |    |    | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30        |    |    |    | 31 |    | 32 | 33 |    |    |    | 34 |    |    |    |
| 35        |    |    | 36 |    |    | 37 |    |    |    | 38 |    |    |    |    |
| 39        |    |    |    |    | 40 |    |    |    | 41 |    |    | 42 |    |    |
| 43        |    |    |    | 44 |    |    |    |    | 45 |    | 46 |    |    |    |
|           |    |    | 47 |    |    |    | 48 | 49 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|           | 50 | 51 |    |    |    | 52 |    |    |    |    |    | 53 | 54 |    |
| 55        |    |    |    |    |    | 56 |    |    |    |    | 57 |    |    | 58 |
| 59        |    |    |    |    |    | 60 |    |    |    |    | 61 |    |    |    |
| 62        |    |    |    |    |    | 63 |    |    |    |    | 64 |    |    |    |

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Or visit: [www.walkintubinfo.com/spm](http://www.walkintubinfo.com/spm)

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5. Bid again

6. Western neckwear, pl.

7. Gwyneth, to friends

8. Like a vote during lockdown

9. What Joy Mangano does on TV

10. Do like exhaust pipe

11. "Transplant" network

13. \_\_\_\_ of honor

14. It's often wreaked

19. Zoo enclosures

22. Compass dir.

23. Labored breaths

24. Jared Kushner to Donald Trump

25. Nigerian money

26. Part of an eye

27. About to explode

28. Looked at, amorously

29. Smelling organs

32. Two of the same

33. Philosopher's study

36. Best Picture Oscar-winner

38. China grass

40. Party barrel

41. Having a cover

44. What Zoom host does to guests, sometimes

46. Type of jacket

48. "M\*A\*S\*H" character

49. Ticked off

50. President Trump used this power in 2020

51. United \_\_\_\_ Emirates

52. Be undecided

53. Caucus state

54. Like most universities

55. Pose a question

58. Robinson or Doubtfire

Answers in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

SUDOKU

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FREE! (\$500 Value)

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Or visit: [www.walkintubinfo.com/spm](http://www.walkintubinfo.com/spm)

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 9 | 5 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2 | 3 |   | 7 |   |   | 4 |   |   |
|   | 6 |   |   | 5 |   | 9 |   | 2 |
|   |   |   |   |   | 6 |   | 9 | 3 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1 | 2 |   | 8 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9 |   | 3 |   | 4 |   |   | 6 |   |
|   |   | 4 |   |   | 7 |   | 3 | 5 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 4 | 9 |

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Answers in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Soulution to last week's sudoku puzzle:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 5 |
| 8 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| 7 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 2 |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 6 |
| 9 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 8 |
| 6 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

Soulution to last week's crossword puzzle:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | O | N | C | H |   | S | E | C |   |   | B | A | I | L |
| O | V | O | L | O |   | A | L | L |   |   | P | U | L | S |
| R | E | S | A | W |   | U | F | O |   |   | I | R | O | N |
| D | R | E | I | D | E | L |   | S | E | C | R | E | T |   |
|   |   |   |   | M | A | R |   | P | E | E | N |   |   |   |
| B | A | Y |   | H | I | Y | A |   | L | I | M | B | I | C |
| I | D | O | L |   | C | U | R | B |   | C | A | I | R | O |
| R | O | D | E |   | A | L | T | A | R |   | A | D | A | M |
| D | R | E | A | D |   | E | A | S | E |   | M | E | T | E |
| S | E | L | F | I | E | K | E | N | T |   | S | E | T |   |
|   |   |   |   | S | L | O | E |   | E | W | E |   |   |   |
|   | D | R | E | A | M | S |   | K | W | A | N | Z | A | A |
| C | R | I | E | R |   | I | O | N |   | I | V | O | R | Y |
| R | E | A | R | M |   | E | V | E |   | N | O | N | C | E |
| U | G | L | Y |   |   | R | A | W |   | S | I | K | H | S |

Illuminations Tour lights up Somerville neighborhoods

CONT. FROM PG 1

More than a hundred households and 59 local businesses have signed up for this event.

All of the houses are surrounded by bright, colorful lights. Many of them include figures depicting reindeer, angels, elves or Santa Clause to highlight the festive theme.

Many participants chose lanterns as their means of decoration. They drew patterns representing Christmas like pine trees, snowflakes, and candles on the lanterns. Some decided to line the lanterns along their doorsteps.

Liza Kitchell, a musician living in Somerville, held a mini music festival outside her house

on the evening of December 13. She brought out her electronic keyboard, as well as her bedroom light, to perform Christmas songs with her friend Mark Chenevert, who played saxophone.

"These songs, you only do them at this time of the year," Kitchell said. "And everybody knows them, which brings us together." Her performance attracted passers-by, some of whom stopped and listened on the other side of the street, maintaining distance from one another.

Along with these households, Somerville City Hall hangs a Christmas wreath over its main gate. The building is currently closed due to the pandemic.

Iaritza Menjivar, the Event and Public Art coordinator for the Somerville Arts Council, hopes that the tour can also "bring some foot traffic to the businesses." Local shops have decorated their entrances and windows with Christmas-themed ornaments. New restaurant restrictions took effect on December 13, which placed further limitations on restaurant dining.

The Arts Council is also preparing a Podcast Tour. It will include 18 destinations, offering an alternative to the self-guided tour.

Residents can visit the places marked in the map any time before January 1, 2021.



LEGAL NOTICES

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**NOTICE FOR (OPM) SERVICES**

The Somerville Housing Authority is seeking proposals for Owner’s Project Manager (OPM) as defined in Massachusetts General Laws c. 149, section 44A 1/2 and as further defined in the provisions of the Request for Proposal (RFP), to provide Project Management Services for design and construction of the Water Works II at Capen Court. The successful OPM will demonstrate prior exemplary experience with similar Construction Management at Rick (CM at Risk) projects.

The Water Works II building is located on 1.405-acre portion of a larger campus site in Somerville, at the intersection of Mystic Valley Park way, Alewife Brook Parkway and Capen Court. The proposed development is a rehabilitation of the existing Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) garage. The rehabilitation will create 21 one-bedroom units for seniors and persons with disabilities. All 21 units will be within a single three-story building and will include common areas and facilities.


Request for Proposals (RFP) Applications will be available by e-mailing Travis Panzini at [travis@sha-web.org](mailto:travis@sha-web.org) after **9:00 A.M. on Thursday, December 17th, 2020.**

Interested professionals should submit sealed applications at the above office no later than **2:00 P.M. on Thursday, January 7th, 2021.** The Somerville Housing Authority reserves the right to reject any or all applications if, in the best interest of the Somerville Housing Authority would be served by doing so.

Prior to the deadline, a pre-application meeting will be held at the Water Works II building at 2 Capen Court, Somerville, MA on **Tuesday December 29th, 2020 at 10:00 A.M.** Attendance is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged. Questions must be presented in writing to Kevin Bumpus, Director of Operations, at (617) 625-1 1 52 ext.321

Joseph R. Macaluso  
Executive Director

12/16/20 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
PURCHASING DEPARTMENT  
IFB#21-29**

The City of Somerville, through the Purchasing Department invites sealed bids for:

**Repair Services and Parts for Ford Fleet vehicles**


An Invitation for Bid may be obtained online at [www.bidexpress.com](http://www.bidexpress.com), [www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/purchasing/bids](http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/purchasing/bids), or Purchasing Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **12/16/2020**. Sealed bids will be received at above office until: **01/13/2021 2:00PM EST.** The Purchasing Director reserves right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

The contract term shall be for a period of 1 year with 2 optional renewals.

Please contact Andrea Caruth at [acaruth@somervillema.gov](mailto:acaruth@somervillema.gov) for more information.

**Andrea Caruth**  
Assistant Purchasing Director  
617-625-6600 x3400

12/16/20 The Somerville Times



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Project Manager: Travis Panzini

The Somerville Housing Authority the Awarding Authority, invites quotes from Flooring Vendors for Federal Elderly Buildings for the Somerville Housing Authority in Somerville Massachusetts, in accordance with the documents prepared by SHA Modernization Department

Quotes are subject M.G.L. c.30 § 39M & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §526 to 27H inclusive.

The work is estimated to cost **\$ 49,000.00**

Quote packages will be available after **9:00AM on December 17th, 2020.** Please email Travis Panzini at [travis@sha-web.org](mailto:travis@sha-web.org) or Brian Langton at [brianl@sha-web.org](mailto:brianl@sha-web.org) to request a quote package.

Quotes must be received no later than **2:00PM on January 4th, 2021** by preferred method of email to [travis@sha-web.org](mailto:travis@sha-web.org).

Questions should be directed to Travis Panzini at 617-625-1152 x 330

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Somerville rolls back COVID-19 reopenings to a modified version of Phase II, Step 2 CONT. FROM PG 5

registration format structure limited to one person per swim lane

- Indoor recreational venues with potential for low-contact (for example, ax throwing, rock-climbing, etc.)

**Remaining closed or restricted (as Somerville has had existing additional phase re-**

**strictions in place):**

- Outdoor theaters and outdoor performance venues
- Indoor theaters, arenas, and performance venues, including concert halls
- Museums
- Movie theaters
- Indoor live theaters
- Bowling facilities, arcades,

and gaming spaces

- Indoor event spaces (meeting rooms, ballrooms, private party rooms, social clubs)
- Existing limits to pool usage remain in place

**Open:**

- Office spaces may remain open at 40 percent capacity. Employers are strongly encouraged

to allow employees to work from home as much as possible.

- Indoor dining in restaurants may remain in operation with restricted bar seating. Ancillary activities such as pool tables, darts, trivia, etc. remain prohibited. Bar seating remains closed.
- Existing restrictions, plans and safety plans remain in place

for post-secondary, higher ed/ and vocational-tech/trade/occupational schools.

- Outdoor event spaces may be used for gatherings and celebrations under the Somerville current 10-person capacity limit.
- Motion picture, television and streaming production may continue to operate.

Ms. Cam's

*From page 8*

**Olio**

Answers

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Sports Illustrated   | Revival                                 |
| 2. Cracker Jack         | 8. <i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i> |
| 3. Mustard gas          | 9. MGM                                  |
| 4. Oregon               | 10. 1998                                |
| 5. Pink Floyd           | 11. Nyctophobia                         |
| 6. Grapefruit           | 12. Alaska                              |
| 7. Creedence Clearwater |   |

To advertise in  
**The Somerville Times**  
call  
**Bobbie Toner: 617-666-4010**

**Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7**

food to those most in need. To donate visit: [https://crm.bloomerang.co/HostedDonation?ApiKey=pub\\_3d74e456-2be2-11e9-9f3d-0aa640fb8062&WidgetId=5308416](https://crm.bloomerang.co/HostedDonation?ApiKey=pub_3d74e456-2be2-11e9-9f3d-0aa640fb8062&WidgetId=5308416)

\*\*\*\*\*

With snow in the forecast, it's smart to brush up on **Somerville's snow rules** now to be safe and avoid tickets. This year is a **park even snow season**, so unless signs say otherwise, you must park on the even-numbered side of the street during snow emergencies. Any exceptions will be noted by nearby signs. Remember that **six hours after snowfall ends**, property owners must shovel their sidewalks to avoid being ticketed. Now, before snow starts, is a good time to review these and other city snow emergency policies and information, including where to park, when to move your car, and how to sign up for snow shoveling help if needed. Visit [somervillema.gov/snow](http://somervillema.gov/snow) to learn more. If you have any questions, contact 311 at 617-666-3311.

\*\*\*\*\*

If you need assistance **accessing food**, there are several resources available to you locally. Visit the **COVID-19 Help page** at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/covid-19-help-food-housing-and-financial-assistance> to learn more. There you will find a chart that includes

local food pantry schedules, contact information, languages spoken at the food pantry, and whether or not you need to bring ID.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please join the **Council on Aging** in spreading a little cheer to **Somerville's seniors** this holiday season. Help them send cards, letters, or notes to brighten up a senior's day. The unsealed cards, letters or notes can be dropped off at the **Holland Street Senior Center**, 167 Holland St. A box will be inside the vestibule. The notes will be delivered to seniors **throughout the month of December**. For more information, please call **Debby Higgins**, Outreach Coordinator at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or [dhiggins@somervillema.gov](mailto:dhiggins@somervillema.gov).

\*\*\*\*\*

Reminder: **city buildings** are still closed to the public. Although city buildings remain closed to the public, a number of city services are still available online or by calling 311. Check the **"City Service Status"** tab on the city's COVID-19 page for more information.

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

OBITUARY

Michael R. Foster



**Michael R. Foster** – 66, Of Somerville passed away peacefully on December 9, 2020. Michael attended several Boston Public Schools, before moving to Somerville, where he attended St. Catherine’s School prior to graduating from Somerville High School in 1972. He went on to attend Fitchburg State College and graduated from Boston State College. Spent many years working in the motorcycle and automobile industry. A longstanding member of the New England Truck Association, including serving on their Board of Directors. He was an active member in the community, co-founding and coaching the Somerville boy’s youth basketball program, Tradition and coaching numerous girl’s Somerville Pride and Bay State Demons basketball teams. He also co-founded

the Alex Foster Foundation, in part hosting a monthly grief support group with GRASP.

Loving husband for 39 years to Maureen (Houghton) Foster. Son of the late Louise McGrath and Gerald Foster. Devoted father to Megan Costa, and her husband Jason of Somerville, Diana Young, and her husband Matt of Woburn, Emily Jean-Louis and her husband Claudel of Everett, and the late Alexander Foster. Bonus father to Stanley Etienne and Peter Bien-Aime, both of Somerville. Greatest Pa in the world to Arianna Costa and Michael Young. Dear brother of Gary Foster and his wife Maureen of Reading, Susan Foster and her husband Mick Godding of Kittery, ME, John Foster and his wife Michelle Sceppa of Boston and Gerald Foster. Brother in-law of Sheila Tracy and her husband Paul, Kathleen, Brenda, Mary and Charles Houghton, all of Somerville and the late Rita Houghton, Eileen Phillips, and her surviving husband, Michael. Also survived by many nieces, nephews, dear friends, colleagues, and extended family members. Due to the pandemic a memorial celebration will be scheduled at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made in Michaels memory to CASPAR. <https://www.baycovehuman-services.org/caspar>.

Coalition Food Drive provides help to struggling families

On December 12, more than 50 volunteers assisted with a community food drive spearheaded by members of the Somerville Stands Together coalition.

Somerville’s George Dilboy VFW generously opened up its new hall in Davis Square to give volunteers a place to gather, sort, and bag food contributions from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Plentiful food donations came from far and wide. Individuals brought by a bag or two of groceries. Participating unions filled vans with food. Local markets like Somerville’s Neighborhood Produce donated a huge truck filled with fresh food to support the drive. Chelsea’s La Colaborativa did the same.

By noontime on Saturday, organizers estimated that the drive had gathered literally thousands of pounds of food, sorted into roughly 350 bags and 90 boxes of groceries and produce. Most of the bags also included hand sanitizer and masks, as well as many other household necessities. Pictures of volunteers working on the drive are posted at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/8jMjR58EkFvGPZsr6>.

“The response from local unions and our community was more than generous,” said Marianne Walles, an SEIU Local 509 leader and long-time Somerville resident who spearheaded the effort. “The amount of food donated exceeded our expectations and we were really pleased to help so many families in need.” Local 509 also supported the drive with communications assistance and many volunteers.

A number of Somerville’s elected officials also attended, including State Representatives Denise Provost and Christine Barber, City Councilors Jesse Clingan and Matt McLaughlin, and State Representative-elect Erika Uyerthoeven. As is often the case, Councilor Clingan (a union member himself), arrived early to unload groceries and stayed to the end of the day to help with the clean-up.

After 1:00 p.m., people who needed food began picking it up at the Dilboy. By 3:00 p.m. there was still a large supply, so volunteers shifted gears and began making sure that the remaining groceries were distributed to area food pantries and homeless shelters in Boston, Cambridge, Lynn, and Worcester.

Market Basket, Stop & Shop, and Star Market all donated gift cards. Trader Joe’s and Wegman’s (Medford) also contributed a large number of canned goods. Painters District Council 35 brought large tents, which were essential because of inclement weather.

In addition to SEIU Local 509 and Painters District Council 35, unions and community groups that sent member volunteers included: the Boston Building Trades Council, the Greater Boston Labor Council, Our Revolution Somerville, SEIU Local 32BJ, SEIU Local 888, Somerville Municipal Employees Assoc., The Somerville Workers Center, Somerville Climate Coalition, Teamsters Local 122, 350 Mass, and UFCW Local 1445.

Most of these groups as well as many individuals also contributed financial support. The City of Somerville assisted with outreach to area markets for the gift cards and transportation and cleanup support from the DPW.

“As we continue to navigate the impacts of COVID-19 on our communities, we have to support each other,” said Walles. “Saturday’s food drive showed the power we have when we come together. Solidarity and mutual aid are what will get us through these difficult times.”



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# ‘Christmas Tree Syndrome’ poses a threat to local families

Millions of Americans recently used the long Thanksgiving weekend to set up their Christmas tree and retrieve other holiday decorations. Unfortunately, these seasonal items can cause respiratory problems for many people, as we breathe in the mold and dust they have collected while sitting in their garage or attic over the past 11 months.

Over the next few weeks, families will spend time cleaning and organizing for guests visiting their house, but what about making sure the air in their home is safe for others to breathe?

According to the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), Americans, on average spend approximately 90 percent of their day indoors, where concentrations of some pollutants can be 2 to 5 times than the air we breathe outdoors.

These conditions are made worse during the holidays as we add trees, decorations and candles around our homes which can be harmful for friends and family members with allergies, asthma, or other respiratory issues.

Here are some common holiday decoration practices that contribute to unhealthy air quality in the home and ways to keep

everyone safe this time of year: “Christmas Tree Syndrome” – While the pine scent may be nice to smell, the pollen and mold remaining on a live Christmas tree are dangerous to breathe. Researchers at State University of New York found that 70 percent of the molds found in live trees can trigger severe asthma attacks, fatigue and sinus congestion. Artificial trees can also cause problems, especially if they are not wrapped properly and have accumulated dust and mold spores while in storage.

Here are some tips before you set up the Christmas tree this year...

**For Live Trees:**

- Hose off the tree to remove pollen and mold and let dry before you bring it inside.
- Wear gloves and long sleeves when carrying the tree to avoid sap touching your skin.
- Wipe down the trunk of the tree with a solution of 1-part bleach, 20 parts lukewarm water.

**For Artificial Trees:**

- Wrap the tree securely, store in a cool and dry place.
- Wipe down the tree and ornaments before setting up.
- Reduce the amount of spray snow to frost your tree and windows. Aerosolized chemicals can cause irritant reactions in the

eyes, nose or lungs.

- Dust off the decorations. They have been stored away for 11 months in garages, basements or attics which are known hangouts for mold and dust mites, carrying many allergens. Wipe those decorations off thoroughly with a damp cloth when you take them out of storage. After the holidays, pack decorations in plastic bags, or bins, not cardboard. Cardboard is notorious for collecting dust and promoting mold growth.
- Stop the scented sprays and flocking. Creating ambiance from a can could lead to irritated noses and throats, exacerbating respiratory issues. Instead, try a natural potpourri of water, cinnamon sticks, cloves and orange peels, simmering on the stove, to keep your home smelling fresh and festive.
- Snuff the scented candles. While they can create that warm cozy feeling in your home, candles can also lead to respiratory distress in people with severe allergies or asthma. Some scented, petroleum-based candles can produce soot, as well as irritating particles and gasses. Candles made from soy, hemp, or beeswax, or even ones using LED “flickering light” effects may be a better option.

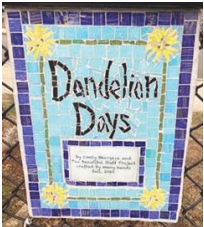


- Punt the poinsettias. The cheerful, traditional plant is everywhere during the holidays. But did you know poinsettias are members of the rubber tree family? That means anyone allergic to latex could develop anything from a rash to severe breathing problems, just by touching or inhaling the allergen. The plants can also be mildly toxic to pets, which can lead to vomiting, diarrhea or skin or eye irritation in dogs and cats.

## Collaborative mosaic storytelling installation to travel across Somerville

The Winter Hill Community Innovation School’s playground fence currently showcases a beautiful storytelling mosaic project. Titled “Dandelion Days,” the wordless story was created by the wider Somerville community at several socially-distanced, masked, outdoor tiling sessions across the city. It was completed in October. Emily Bhargava of the Beautiful Stuff Project planned, coordinated, and installed the panels.

“Dandelion Days” will be displayed at the Winter Hill playground until mid-January. It will then move to the Somerville Community Growing Center for the winter months and be installed at another elementary school playground in early spring.



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By Bobbygeorge Potaris



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## On This Day in History December 16

- 1773 – To protest the tax on tea from England, a group of young Americans, disguised as Indians, throw chests of tea from British ships in Boston Harbor.
- 1930 – In Spain, a general strike is called in support of the revolution.
- 1939 – The National Women’s Party urges immediate congressional action on equal rights.
- 1949 – Chinese Communist leader Mao Tse-tung is received at the Kremlin in Moscow.
- 1950 – President Harry Truman declares a state of National Emergency as Chinese communists invade deeper into South Korea.
- 1976 – President Jimmy Carter appoints Andrew Young as Ambassador to the United Nations.
- 1998 – The United States launches a missile attack on Iraq for failing to comply with United Nations weapons inspectors.

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OFF THE SHELF  
by Doug Holder

Somerville sculptor  
Danielle Krcmar:  
She wants to put a poem in your home!

*I am a poet, so my home is littered with polished poems, drafts with coffee stains, framed pieces that I am really proud of, etc. So that's why I caught up with sculptor Danielle Krcmar, whose latest idea is to put a poem in your home.*

**Doug Holder:** I noticed that you use a lot of found objects in your work. Some of it comes from Carson Beach in Southie. With all the beaches we have around us, why Carson?

**Danielle Krcmar:** I do work with a lot of found objects in my work. Where I get my found objects depends on my location, I used to find old china and shoe leather fragments in bottle dumps near old house sites when I lived in Pennsylvania, near the southern tier of New York. When I lived in Western Massachusetts, I would look around house foundations near the Quabbin. Because I was still making sculptures with found china when I moved to Fort Point, someone told me about Carson Beach, where there was plenty of china bits and beach glass due to a long history of dumping. I collected china and other items from the beach for years but never collected the beach glass because I didn't have a sculptural use for it at the time. When I decided to make the Fragment House piece using Beach glass. I knew where I could get it and I liked that the beach glass would have been collected from the shore, not too far from where the piece was initially sited, in Dartmouth, MA. When I was collecting beach glass for the Fragment House Project, I would always try to go to Southie at low tide, and the larger challenge was getting the plastic bags full of glass back to the car. One morning, I was able to pick up 30 pounds of glass with the help of my son, and two family friends. There are very few areas where you can get that much glass that easily and quickly. A lot of art has been made with pieces sourced from that beach. It would be interesting to curate a show of that work and talk to the artists.

**DH:** You worked with the poet Mary Pinard on the Fragment House Project. You used words and images from her poems and incorporated them into the house. Can you talk about this? Do homes with a history have a certain energy, a certain poetry about them?

**DK:** Mary Pinard and I had talked about collaborating. When I was asked to create a site-specific piece for the DNRT (Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust) it provided the perfect opportunity for us to work together. I loved Mary's Poem Song *Net For An Estuary*, and how she researches and responds to particular landscapes and their history. We walked the overall DNRT trails together to figure out a site that we were both interested in and eventually chose Bluebird Field. In the piece, Mary's full poem is etched into the window, which is the only solid surface in the house, and then select words from the poem are additionally etched into larger pieces of beach glass as a way of emphasizing those selected words. I am a little romantic about old houses, some of that may be a reaction to growing up in the suburbs in a more modern houses and having had childhood fantasies of discovering amazing heirlooms in the attic of an old Victorian house. I do think a newer house could



Fragment House.

contain poetry, but I do think older houses have a sense of poetry to them both for the age of the house itself and the accumulated life lived within its walls, but also the history of the materials- such as something like heart pine, that was 100 years old when it was milled for flooring over a hundred years ago. In the irregularly placed studs and the thicker milled lumber the sense of something being built by hand is more visible, that evidence of the work by hand is beautiful and yes, has poetry for me. I saved lumber from our interior walls when we renovated our 115-year-old house, I've used some of it in another artist friend's piece and am figuring out how it might play into new work.

**DH:** Tell us what your new idea is about, linking Somerville poets' poems with your art?

**DK:** For this new idea, I am interested in working in Somerville neighborhoods as a way to provide another layer of communication while we are under lockdown, I've began thinking about this idea when lockdown first started. Being masked in public, many of us didn't quite know how to interact with one another, we were avoiding each other in public because we didn't want to get close. Masks interfered with reading facial cues and made speech harder to understand, so even casual interactions between neighbors felt awkward. I found myself needing daily walks in my neighborhood, getting outside was such a relief. It was also beautiful to see people were doing community art projects like posting rainbows in their windows, or chalk drawings on their sidewalks to offer a little bit of beauty and surprise. I did a few of the sidewalk drawings with my son and it was cathartic to make something beautiful, though often very ephemeral! I was interested in doing something. I began to think about the possibility of working with a poet and attaching it to a large fence in Lincoln park, I worried it might get damaged and I was busy enough with work that it was hard to take on another project, but the idea stayed with me. And so, we go into winter. We will be indoors more and will see each other in person even less. Having someone tell you a story via a poem seems like a lovely way to make

Continued on page 15

Lyrical  
SOMERVILLE  
edited by Doug Holder

Poet Bruce Foley writes: "I was born in Cambridge at Mount Auburn Hospital, as July 4th fireworks exploded over the Charles River. At around age two, we moved to Somerville, MA. My early youth was spent at Saint Catherine Elementary School. I would go on to participate in sports throughout Somerville and Greater Boston. At one time a Greater Boston League All Star in Basketball and Somerville High School football captain and quarterback. My interest in poetry began in high school, junior year. A Modern Poetry class, led by a very cool and learned guy, David Moriarty. Dave was encouraging, and here it is decades later, and I am writing still. It's been challenging and fulfilling. Solitude and silence too, played a role in my writing. At one point in my life I was able to spend three years living pretty much alone. A hermitage up on Equinox mountain. Vermont. This was a defining moment and a deeply enriching period of creativity. After the experience of being published, winning contests or receiving an award, you become inspired, and you believe in yourself. Once this happens, who knows how far one can go? Poetry has been good to me. And Somerville will always be my home."



Among Fields Of Cotton

Today walked I the fields of cotton  
Where angel white hair upon the thicket grows  
Stepped and pressed the leaves wet trodden  
Under a hard boot came I  
With reverence in each careful stride

Birds of freedom sweetly singing  
Stilled the heart with mind serene  
Hidden deep beyond the tree line  
The pine Carolina woodland green

Freedom! Freedom!  
They entreated  
Freedom! Freedom!  
With song they greeted

Have you ever walked among fields of cotton  
Where birdsong of freedom fills the air  
Where on the wind there joins a chorus  
Of long since gone echoing voices

Spirited soulful -Timelessly haunting  
Hymns of the plantation  
Those strong and brave  
Those denied life's better choices  
The captured chained African slave

Time stood still  
Steps halted turning back  
Gone, all silent peace went shattered  
At the lightning snap of a bullwhips crack

Distant church bells stopped their ringing  
Motionless hung the Spanish moss  
Birds of freedom hushed their singing  
Whispered came a word  
The word was - loss

Loss of love-the gift of living  
No love is known when a man is owned  
No love is known when all is taken  
In life, love comes in the giving

Have you ever walked among fields of cotton...

— Bruce Foley

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

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

EVENTS

**Virtual Bingo Day** – Tuesday, December 15 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Join us online or via phone to play BINGO. If you would like to participate please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or email dhiggins@somervillema.gov We will supply you with the bingo cards and instructions. Space is limited, RSVP a must.

**Music & Movement** – Friday, December 18 at 10:30. Join Steve as he plays guitar, sings and leads gentle movements. Just tapping your toe or singing along can help move your body in new ways. Being physically active is not just good for our bodies but it is also one of Mental Health America’s 10 tools to building resiliency; or the ability to overcome obstacles and manage through tough times. Physical activity can improve sleep, increase energy, decrease some kinds of pain, boast our immune systems and lower the risk for stroke and some cancers. It also helps to reduce our anxiety, depression, stress and tension.

Join Steve as he shows us that exercise can come in all different forms and movements. Please RSVP to Debby Higgins, Outreach Coordinator at dhiggins@somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600 ext. 2321. You will then receive your email invitation to join the program via ZOOM.

**Senior Lunch pick up** – Tuesday, December 22 at 10:30. Ralph & Jenny Senior Center 9 New Washington Street. While we aren’t able to share lunch together, we hope you can stop by for this fun treat! RSVP is a must; spaces are limited. To enjoy a box lunch please call Connie at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319.

**Nutrition Workshops** – Monday at 11:00am or Wednesday at 10:00am. Each week we come together to share ideas on how to balance out your day with tasty and nutritious meals and snacks. We will focus on getting in all of the daily food

groups, while sharing our favorite recipes. During these unprecedented times, planning meals can be tiresome and boring but the kitchen is where you provide nourishment for yourself.

Topics we will cover, include:

- Knowing how much to eat and spacing out your meals
- How to choose foods that are delicious and nutritious
- How to get started on your grocery list
- Filling out a meal plan that works for you and your schedule
- Meal preparation for weekly planning and left-overs
- Healthy cooking and recipe exchanges

We will also share ideas about dining out, grocery shopping, cooking and learning what our bodies need. Please be sure to join in as I look forward to each week and hearing all the new ideas. Sign up my emailing Mary at headtofitness10@yahoo.com

ONGOING EVENTS

**Taxi Rides** – Do you need a ride? The COA has a new program just for you. Taxi Rides for Somerville Residents 60 and Over Rides can be used for: Grocery Shopping in Somerville Pharmacy Prescription pick up in Somerville, Routine Medical Appointments in the follow areas: Somerville, Cambridge, Medford, Boston or the V.A. in Jamaica Plain or West Roxbury. Two Days Advanced Notice Required. For more information please call Connie Lorenti at 617-625-6600, ext. 2319.

EXERCISE

Exercise Schedule:

Mondays 1:00 p.m. = Fit-4-Life Zoom Exercise  
Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. = Fit-4-Life Zoom Exercise  
Thursdays 1:00 p.m. = Fit-4-Life Zoom Exercise  
Thursdays 6:30 p.m. = LBT Fit-4-Life Zoom Exercise

Somerville City Cable

RCN = 13/Comcast = 22  
The Fit-4-Life Exercise Show = Daily at 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Fit-4-Life YouTube

Fit-4-Life Exercise Video # 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hd26HjpwBI&t=68s>  
Fit-4-Life Exercise Video #2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwHfyoEZaws&t=247s>  
Fit-4-Life Exercise Video #3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fcl2eBSS024&t=158s>  
Fit-4-Life Exercise Video #4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EDtaldYSz0>  
Fit-4-Life Exercise Video #5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAnwfwGybTI>

Yoga YouTube

Yoga with Janine video #1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDGF\\_EEbqF0&t=130s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDGF_EEbqF0&t=130s)  
Yoga with Janine video #3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Zezcj9XXBU>

For questions or to register for a Fit-4-Life Zoom exercise class, please contact Chris at CKowaleski@somervillema.gov or call 617-625-6600, ext. 2315.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

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

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

Somerville sculptor Danielle Krcmar

CONT. FROM PG 14

connections, both when I ask people to host poems at their houses – which I am still nervous about – and as I ask poets to work with me. Initially I imagined the poet would create a biographical poem in response to the person/ household hosting the poem, I liked the storytelling possibilities there, but I am a little concerned about managing a collaboration between three parties to everyone’s satisfaction.

**DH:** How has the Pandemic affected your work?

**DK:** Covid really threw me off and completely overwhelmed me. There was so much uncertainty and fear, and unlike many people who reported having so much time on their hands, I had more work and less time and space to do it in. I had artwork to pack and ship for our gallery, kiln firings to run for our co-curricular ceramics program, and repairs to schedule prior to upcoming budget cuts. All had to be done without the in-person help of my student workers, due to social distancing measures on campus. My teaching work became much harder and more complicated when we went on line. Teaching painting from my home mini office and sculpture and from my kitchen table to students in multiple time zones with varying degrees of internet connectivity was overwhelming and exhausting. Making sidewalk chalk drawings with my son was one way to be creative but it didn't seem exactly connected to my work; though we will see if it plants the seed for something in the future, as often happens. My critique group shifted to Zoom meetings and it has been the highlight of my week. Each of us works on artwork during the zoom, some of us draw portraits from the zoom and some work on ongoing studio projects. We discuss our work, our lives, teaching pedagogy, and the work of other artists as it pertains to each of those three things. It has been an amazing space to share ideas, get in process feedback on

work in a way that we were not able to do pre pandemic because we did not meet as frequently. We have also been able to bring back in a critique group member who had moved across the country. It has been profound to have this group of women artists discuss work and share successes and challenges.

In June, my full-time job at Babson College was terminated due to pandemic budget cuts at my institution, which was a real shock. I still could have the opportunity to teach as an adjunct in Spring 2021, but in the moment, I had to move out of my campus studio that I had for 16 years. Most of my colleagues wrote emails to the college administration protesting the decision, which provided me some comfort, but in the end, those efforts did not reverse the decision. In October, I decided not to teach there this coming Spring, so I removed the contents of my office and my personal teaching materials this week. I wanted to do it when the students were no longer on campus. I’m a bit of a packrat/magpie/ and since I taught, ran workshops, curated the gallery, and managed the permanent art collection I had a lot of stuff related to all those roles. It has been a long week of getting everything out and bringing it to my home and studio.

The upside of this is that I am now pursuing more public art projects and commission work. This week I moved into a shared studio space at Vernon Street. I love Somerville Open Studios and have many friends at Vernon Street, and it is beyond exciting to be back in a studio building surrounded by other artists. Every time I unlock the door to the new studio I feel a surge of happiness, it’s pretty great.

**DH:** Are there poems about sculpture that inspire you?

**DK:** I love the sculptor Joseph Cornell and made many assemblages as this, and love *Dime Store Alchemy* by Charles Simic. The poem *Where Chance Meets Necessity*

speaks to the serendipitous beauty offered by found objects. The first two lines say it perfectly:

Somewhere in the city of New York there are four or five still-unknown objects that belong together. Once together they’ll make a work of art.

.....four or five still unknown objects that belong together.

The perfect economy of those words. Some of my older work with the figure was inspired by Whitman’s poems. I love the visceral physicality in his poetry, as experienced here:

I mind how we lay in June, such a transparent summer morning,  
You settled your head athwart my hips, and gently turned over upon me,

And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-stripped heart,  
And reached till you felt my beard, and reached till you held my feet.

**DH:** Why should people look at your work?

**DK:** I’m interested in the potential for transformation in everyday objects and materials, my hope is that those transformations offer the viewer an opportunity for surprise and discovery through extended or repeated viewing of the work viewings of the work. My work is best experienced in person, so you can discover surface details or see how all the pieces come together to make the whole.


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