



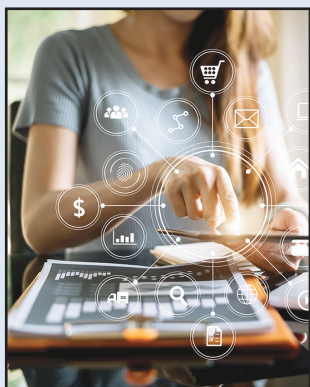
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Merry Christmas

From the Publisher and Staff of
The Somerville Times

Meeting held to discuss East Somerville unhoused population

By Bridget Frawley



Efforts to assist the unhoused in East Somerville were discussed at the latest meeting of the Public Health and Public Safety Committee.
— Photo by Bridget Frawley

The Somerville City Council discussed efforts being taken to assist the unhoused population in East Somerville during their monthly Public Health and Public Safety Committee meeting on December 11.

Director of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the City of Somerville Karin Carroll shared city-wide initiatives being taken to address the unhoused population through their partnership with the Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC). The SHC received administrative approval

Continued on page 4

Kiwanis Club hosts Toys for Tots event

On Thursday, December 14, the Kiwanis Club of Somerville, along with their friends from the Somerville Lions Club and Somerville Rotary Club hosted their annual Toys for Tots luncheon at the Mount Vernon Restaurant.

Gunnery Sergeant Curtis Dunham and Lance Corporal Matthew Rankey of the United States Marine Corps, joined in again this year as they proudly collected a record number of toys donated by members of the three clubs for the Toys for Tots campaign.

Nineteen Somerville Kiwanis members as well as fifteen members of Somerville Rotary and Lions Clubs plus one additional guest attended the event. Following a wonderful buffet lunch, Gunnery Sergeant Dunham and Lance Corporal Rankey thanked the clubs for their continuous support of the Toys for Tots program for more than 29 years.

There was a special surprise

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L-R Gunnery Sergeant Curtis Dunham, Kiwanis President Dawn Austin, Program Chairman Distinguished Past President Jay Lynch, and Lance Corporal Matthew Rankey, hold a few of the toys that were donated.

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

The publishers, staff and everyone associated with *The Somerville Times* wish one and all a very Happy Holiday, Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah, as well as a prosperous and healthy New Year in 2024.








The *Somerville Times*' staff is taking a small holiday vacation from the print edition next week, the next issue coming out will be on **January 3, 2024**. Anything that comes in and is Somerville related through that period will be posted online to our website. We want to thank all our readers for your support this past year. Don't forget, you can go online to our website and register online for a free subscription of the paper.

See Somerville's best and brightest **holiday light displays now through early January**. Celebrate the artistry and creativity of residents and businesses that transform their spaces and yards with lights, ornaments, and shrines of devotion and fantasy. To access the map to take a self-guided tour, visit somervilleartscouncil.org.

Happy birthday for the next two weeks while we are on break: We send a very special birthday wish out to **Eleanor Dunne**. Eleanor will be celebrating her 100th birthday on Friday. We wish her a very happy day and wish her many happy healthy birthdays to come. Happy birthday to **Zachary Atwell**, who is celebrating this week. We wish him a great year. Happy birthday *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of December 20 – December 26 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday <i>December 20</i>	Sunny	42°/29°	3%	1%	W 10 mph
 Thursday <i>December 21</i>	Sunny	34°/20°	4%	2%	NW 13 mph
 Friday <i>December 22</i>	Sunny	36°/25°	0%	0%	NW 9 mph
 Saturday <i>December 23</i>	Partly Cloudy	43°/33°	5%	2%	SSW 7 mph
 Sunday <i>December 24</i>	Sunny	46°/31°	7%	3%	NW 5 mph
 Monday <i>December 25</i>	Sunny	49°/35°	5%	2%	WSW 7 mph
 Tuesday <i>December 26</i>	Rain	51°/36°	27%	19%	SW 10 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: 'The Heart Sellers' – A play by Lloyd Suh

Forrest Milder says:

Thanks for this, especially your summary of the play. We saw it last night, and I must begin by saying that having Luna speak with the speed of the warnings that come at the end of a drug commercial made the play almost a joke for those of us who don't have the greatest hearing. I realize that the characterization was intentional, but it also meant that I understood about 40% (at best), and my wife even less. I'll also observe that the 2 minute "trailer" of the Milwaukee version (on YouTube) reveals that Luna's monologues could be made understandable in the right director's hands. As to the actual review, I agree that there is something powerful and deep about what the women tell us about themselves, about their homelands, and especially about their concerns, for example, there's the wonderful insight into the women worrying about having to "sell their hearts" when they come into America.

But at the same time, there's a strange characterization of the two women as somewhat silly drunks that doesn't necessarily serve them well, as if the playwright is conceding that people like his mother are a kind of thoughtful "trifle." Indeed, between Luna's rat-tat-tat delivery style, and their foolish efforts to cook a frozen turkey, I found the play conveyed more of a White American's stereotyping of Asians than a deeper look inside their brains. Knowing that the play was written by an acclaimed Asian American playwright left me wondering if this is truly how he thinks of his mother (in fact, which character was like his mother?)

I see that the critics all have raves (although Joyce Kulhawik did acknowledge that it was hard to understand the actresses, at least at the beginning), so I may well be in the minority, but to be honest, this all leads me to wanting to read Suh's play so that I might better understand what I saw.

Response to: Florida or bust

Mike Bonanno says:

I remember in '75 going to Daytona with Jimmy in my 1975 Firebird making it 24 hrs.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

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Life in the

VILLE

by Jimmy Del Ponte

Shop Somerville



There have been tons of stores in Somerville that we used to shop in. I thought it would be fun to go back and revisit some of these places. I asked this question: what stores of old did you do your Christmas shopping at?

The hotspot in Davis Square was a store called The Bargain Center. If your toy had a burn mark or smelled like smoke it probably came from the Bargain Center who used to buy out fire stock and bankruptcy merchandise.

If you needed auto parts for a gift should probably go to Goss Auto also in Davis Square. Here are some reader comments.

“Bradlees, Zayres, Caldor and Child World.”

“Bradlee’s, Kresge’s, Park Snow.”

“Any store at Assembly Square Mall.”

“Bradlees on Somerville Ave and Marks and Gorin’s in Davis Square.”

“Lechmere Sales and Service Merchandise”

“Buck A Book in Davis Square.”

“We used to buy power tools and saws for dad at Somerville Lumber.”

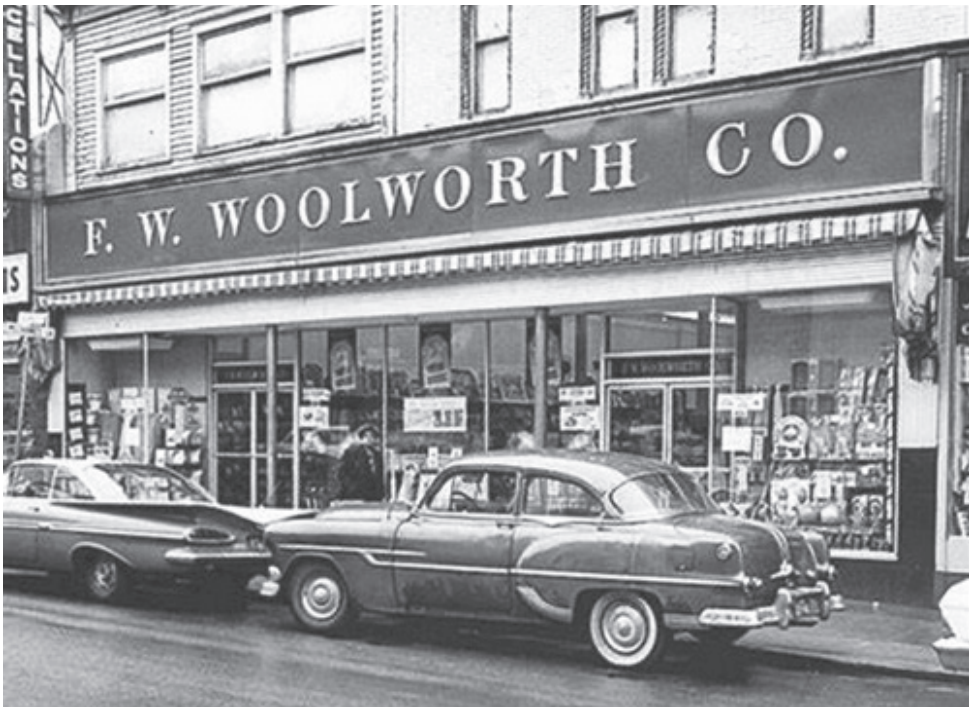
“Don’t forget Woolworths and Grants.”

“Salvation Army. Couldn’t afford anything else I was very poor.”

“Even though it was in Medford, my parents did a lot of toy shopping at Child World.”

Looks like people remembered Bradlees the most. I’d say that today, Target is most reminiscent of Bradlees from back in the day. Also, the old Assembly Square Mall offered one stop Christmas shopping. These days I’ve become an avid Amazon fan.

I’d like to wish all our readers a safe and happy Christmas.



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somervillema.gov/departments/osped/historic-events-and-education



Kiwanis Club hosts Toys for Tots event CONT. FROM PG 1

when Distinguished Past President Jay Lynch, the program chairman, presented the Marines with a check for \$2000, a donation made by the Middlesex Federal Savings Bank, who have been long time supporters of the Somerville Kiwanis Club and Toys for Tots program. Special thanks are extended to Past President Michael McWilliams and Member Adam Portney from Middlesex Federal for helping to make this donation possible.

Kiwanis President Dawn Austin thanked the members of all the clubs for their support of the children who are being served by

the Marine Corps program. After the meeting, the members loaded the toys in the Marine Corps van to capacity.

In a separate program, the Somerville Kiwanis Club delivered wrapped toys to 180 children from Somerville and Cambridge who are part of the Head Start program and have been identified as most in need of help at Christmas.

To learn more about the Kiwanis Club of Somerville, or to become a member, visit our web site, www.somervillekiwanis.org. You can also follow them on Facebook, Kiwanis Club of Somerville.



Member Adam Portney from Middlesex Federal Savings Bank presents the check for \$2000.00 to Sergeant Dunham along with Program Chairman, Jay Lynch.



Meeting held to discuss East Somerville unhoused population CONT. FROM PG 1

to operate a shower van to assist individuals across the city, specifically East Somerville since it does not have a full-time engagement center. The shower van is projected to be accessible at the beginning of 2024.

A recent request was approved by the Somerville City Council for a new division of community health workers within HHS, including a director and advisory board, to expand outreach services. The HHS department is modeling after other state's initiatives, including Vermont, to expand their range of services. Vermont utilized a hand-held data referral platform app to collect data on the unhoused population in designated areas.

"The state contracted it very

quickly to try to help track the families that were unhoused and the new arrivals, as well as the chronically unhoused," Carroll said during the meeting. "And to connect all of the range of services, follow up, and provide data directly to the governor's office."

The need for accessible services increased following a 2019 hepatitis outbreak in the East Somerville unhoused population. In response, the HHS department is administering vaccinations and planning vaccination efforts through their partnership with Cambridge Health Alliance's (CHA) outreach healthcare for the homeless.

"We're thinking about that model as a way for our nursing team, maybe our CHA team,

to begin to build relationships through vaccination efforts," Carroll said. "We want to try to build that rapport and find ways that our team can be enrolled regularly, so when there is something sensitive, like hepatitis outbreak, in this population throughout the state, we're able to more sensitively have these conversations."

Somerville's HHS department is working in conjunction with neighboring cities like Revere to host warming centers. Last February, there was an emergency pop-up warming center for two days, but Somerville mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the city council approved funding to expand the warming center service to seven days a week. Since the end of last

winter, the HHS department worked through the logistics of the expansion to determine a budget, space, and an operator.

To find a nonprofit to operate the warming center, the city of Somerville and Revere is working with the SHC and the Medical Reserve Corps to host an informational forum recruitment event in City Hall on December 21.

"We're very excited about this partnership with Revere," Carroll said. "They are struggling with the same issue. We are trying as a community to figure this out together."

To close communication gaps between Somerville's HHS department and their partners, Chief of Staff to Ballantyne Nikki Spencer hosts weekly meetings

in the mayor's office to discuss the resources being provided across the city.

"It was this huge learning curve this first couple of weeks around what is everyone doing in this space and how do we all interact with the population and the agencies that serve the population," Carroll said.

Information gathered from the weekly meetings will be relayed to the council on a monthly basis to streamline communication between the HHS department and decision making on the committee-level.

"We'll do what we can to fix the front end and the back end," said Ward 6 City Councilor Lance Davis. "And help those folks as much as we can."

ARPA funding to be used to address threats to Amelia Earhart Dam and Draw Seven Park

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has announced an investment of \$28 million in funding to improve climate resiliency and provide significant flood protection for the environmental justice communities surrounding the Amelia Earhart Dam (AED) on the Mystic River between Somerville and Everett and Draw Seven Park in Somerville.

The projects, which are funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), include \$13 million to redesign the elevation of the dam and \$15 million for the renovation of Draw Seven Park including construction of a flood control berm to prevent coastal flooding.

Undersecretary for Environment Stephanie Cooper and DCR Commissioner Brian Arigo joined the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyWRA) and local legislators in Somerville today to make the announcement. Today's announcement is the culmination of collaborative efforts by DCR, MyWRA, community members and officials from Somerville, Cambridge and Everett to identify vulnerabilities in the area and ways to advance climate resiliency.

"The impacts of climate change are very much upon us," said Governor Maura Healey. "It's a priority of our administration to invest in our vital infrastructure so that our residents are protected as sea levels rise and extreme weather increases. Every dollar we spend on resilience today is an investment in our future."

"Draw Seven Park represents an important avenue for urban residents to enjoy our waterfront," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "These investments also give us an opportunity to rethink the surrounding area while promoting resilience. Communities across Massachusetts are strained by the cost of aging infrastructure. Our partnerships with communities like Everett, Cambridge,

and Somerville are critical to protecting our residents."

"The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to ensuring that our communities are resilient and have the necessary tools to mitigate the impacts of climate change that we continue to see across Massachusetts," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. "The Draw Seven Park and Amelia Earhart Dam projects will ensure resilience in several cities and towns in the Greater Boston area by eliminating a flood pathway, ensuring we can preserve these areas for generations to come."

"Mitigating the effects of climate change is critical to building safe and healthy communities and preserving our natural and recreational resources," said DCR Commissioner Brian Arigo. "This funding will enable us to completely transform Draw Seven Park, creating new recreational opportunities and raise the Amelia Earhart Dam to protect an area that would be at significant risk of flooding due to climate change, if left untouched."

Based on a 2018 feasibility study, DCR determined that future sea level rise would inundate the AED and initiated planning efforts to eliminate flood pathways and the risk of coastal flooding in the Mystic River Watershed. The AED and Draw Seven Park projects will raise the dam and adjoining land by several feet to eliminate the Mystic River flood pathway, better protecting the surrounding areas of Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Everett, Malden, Medford, and Somerville from coastal flooding.

"We are absolutely thrilled to see these two projects funded," said Julie Wormser, Senior Policy Advisor with the Mystic River Watershed Association. "Concerns about the role of the dam and Draw 7 Park in protecting upstream communities from flooding was one of the major reasons the 20-community Resilient Mystic Collaborative came

together in 2018."

"People across our state face an increased risk of flooding due to the climate crisis, especially people of color and individuals with low income, and projects like these are exactly what we need to be doing to protect our residents," said Senator Sal DiDomenico. "This investment is critical for the well-being of our coastal communities, and it benefits our environment, workforce, businesses, and residents. I want to thank the Healey-Driscoll Administration, city officials, and the Mystic River Watershed Association for prioritizing these resilience projects that will safeguard environmental justice communities from flooding."

"Climate change doesn't care



about political agendas or district lines," said Senator Patricia Jehlen. "I am grateful to work with my colleagues from communities on both sides of the Mystic River, the Resilient Mystic Collaborative and the Healey-Driscoll Administration in partnership to protect our communities from coastal flooding for years to come, and to provide new climate resistant parkland at Draw 7 park. This is a great investment in our communities and our future."

"This is a great day for Draw 7 Park, The Amelia Earhart Dam and the cities and towns within the Mystic River

Continued on page 13

ANNOUNCEMENT

315 Broadway, in conjunction with Micozzi Management
are pleased to announce an

Affordable Rental Open Waitlist Opportunity

The application period for a two-bedroom (2BR) Affordable Rental Waitlist for households earning up to 50% Area Media Income (AMI) and a two-bedroom (2BR) Affordable Rental Waitlist for households earning up to 80% AMI will begin on 12/11/2023 at 2pm and end on 1/10/2024 at 2pm.

The Household size must be a minimum of 2 people.

315 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145

Located in the Winter Hill neighborhood of Somerville, the units offer open- concept floor plans and modern features. Parking is available based on availability and for an additional fee.

Eligible households of 2 or more people whose income does not exceed the following:

50% AMI	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons
Income	\$59,400	\$66,800	\$72,300

80% AMI	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons
Income	\$94,800	\$196,650	\$118,450

Eligibility Requirements

- The rental unit must be used as the renters' primary residence.
- Income and residency restrictions will apply throughout tenancy. Income eligibility will be reviewed annually.
- Head of households claiming full-time student status are not eligible.
- Total Household Liquid Assets cannot exceed \$75,000

Applications will be available beginning on 12/11/2023 at 2pm.

To obtain an application, please contact Micozzi Management and reference "315 Broadway 50%" or "315 Broadway 80%"

Telephone: 617-254-5576 ex 112 or email: eburkart@micozzimanagement.com

Completed applications must be submitted to Micozzi Management at eburkart@micozzimanagement.com or mailed to 159 Cambridge Street, Suite 2, Allston, MA 02134 by 1/10/2024 at 2pm.

Applications received after the deadline will not be added to the waitlist. All qualified applications will be ranked by date and time received. All mailed applications will receive a 7-day grace period.

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.

Equitable and affordable health care in Massachusetts: A crisis we cannot ignore

By State Representative
Christine Barber

Auri is a single mother living in Salem, Massachusetts who pays over \$800 per month for a health insurance premium through her employer to cover herself and her two children. On top of that premium, Auri also pays hundreds of dollars a month in co-pays and other costs for medications and specialist visits related to chronic health issues, including asthma. For her asthma, Auri needs four different inhalers which cost about \$40 for each prescription. These health costs—which compete with other family expenses like food, utility bills, and her mortgage—leave Auri worried she won't be able to afford her life-saving medications each month.

Auri is not unique to this situation; countless residents in Massachusetts experience similar struggles to access the medication they need in order to survive and stay healthy. The Health Policy Commission recently reported a 60% increase in monthly pre-

scription drug costs for chronic conditions over the past 5 years. While the COVID pandemic exposed just how vulnerable many in our communities are, particularly for people with chronic conditions, these challenges continue to exist and are even worse now. Historically in Massachusetts, like other states, communities of color have experienced higher rates of chronic diseases. Research shows that disparities in the health care system stem from the legacy and continued effects of racism in our country.

Our neighbors should not have to choose between picking up their prescription and picking up groceries. There is now an opportunity to build upon what we have learned and improve the system.

I recently introduced H.943 in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, An act to reduce co-pays for people with chronic conditions, to help families afford prescriptions for basic health needs. This bill would reduce cost-sharing, including co-pays for people with three chronic

conditions that disproportionately impact people of color and low-income communities: diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. For generic medication for each of these three conditions, all cost-sharing will be eliminated. For a brand name medication for these conditions, including insulin, coinsurance and a deductible will be eliminated and co-pays will be capped at \$25.

Co-pays and cost sharing are both primary reasons why people do not access the care they need. Twenty-five percent of Massachusetts residents WITH health insurance still have unmet health needs, and a portion of this is due to unaffordable prescription drugs. In a recent study, when asked the reason for not getting health needs met, most insured residents referred to issues in coverage or cost. Over a third (35%) said that the co-pay or coinsurance was too high, or that they would have to pay for their care as part of their plan's deductible (24%). When it comes to chronic conditions, this leads to worse health. People need these medi-

cations to survive, and taking insulin or an asthma inhaler should not compromise their families' other needs.

Inability to afford prescriptions can greatly limit access to health care. When people cannot access critical preventive care, the likelihood of visiting the emergency room for care increases drastically. Compared to White residents (11.2%), Black residents were nearly twice as likely, and Hispanic residents nearly three times as likely, to have a potential reliance on the ER for care (20.0% and 29.1%, respectively). As recently outlined in a recent report by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, the economic burden of health disparities in Massachusetts costs us nearly \$6 billion each year in avoidable health care costs, lost labor and productivity, and premature illness and death.

The Act to Reduce Co-Pays bill is one way to focus on health equity to provide direct relief to patients. The core goal of this legislation is to lower the costs of prescriptions so people can avoid



State Representative Christine Barber

more costly care later, and is one key to eradicating inequitable health care access in Massachusetts. While we continue to address these complex challenges on a number of fronts, this is one important step to supporting preventative care in our communities.

Community members in Somerville and Medford, as well as throughout the state would be better able to afford health care through this legislation. We have an opportunity now to take a step towards health equity, and for Massachusetts to continue to be a national leader in health care access.

City announces agreement increasing school crossing guard pay and benefits

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne is announcing that the City of Somerville, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), have successfully reached a collective bargaining agreement that will provide better wages and benefits for these essential public safety employees.

"Crossing guards play a vital role in helping our entire SPS community start and end each school day safely," said Mayor Ballantyne. "This new collective bargaining agreement with the SEIU not only recognizes the crucial role that crossing guards play in community safety, but also demonstrates our commitment to fair compensation and improved working conditions for our public servants."

Under the terms of the new contract, crossing guards will receive a 20 percent pay increase from \$20/an hour to \$24/an hour effective immediately, with a commitment to 2.5% annual raises in subsequent fiscal years. Current guards will also receive retroactive pay dating back to July of 2023, the official start date of the contract.

The salary increase brings Somerville's pay rate for these positions in line with neighboring communities, and will help attract and retain dedicated candidates for these vital public service roles. In a first for these part-time positions, in addition to salary increases, Somerville crossing guards will also now be provided with paid sick leave benefits. The new contract also includes stipends for improved outgear gear including an annual footwear stipend and a full-length high visibility raincoat to help ensure the comfort and safety of the guards in all conditions.

If you are interested in learning more about joining the City of Somerville as a crossing guard, or other employment opportunities, please visit somervillema.gov/careers.



COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Merry Christmas from all of us here at The Times.

Our View Of The Times



The shopping is done, the presents are (hopefully) wrapped, and the plans for the big day have been made. Now is the time to slow down, relax and enjoy the holiday and all the finer things that come with it.

Being with family, friends and loved ones and sharing warmth of the occasion is unquestionably at or near the top of the list of things we like most at this time of year.

Whatever faith one may adhere to, we can all agree that the spirit of the moment 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 our gifts, hug our loved ones, 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, no matter how contentious and troubling the times may be.

We may certainly face adversity from

time to time, but we can hold that spirit of tolerance and magnanimity in 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.

We here at *The Times* wish all of our readers the warmest and happiest of the holiday season and the coming new year. May peace and prosperity bless you and yours throughout the years to come.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

to Christopher Kenney. We hope he has a great day. Happy birthday to great person and great friend, Monica Calvo. We wish her a very happy birthday. Happy birthday also to **Jim Henry**, a well-known man in Somerville, we wish him the best. Happy birthday to **Kristen Marie Butler** as well. We hope she has a great day. Happy birthday to **Maria Curtatone**, who is the Register of Deeds for Middlesex County. We hope she has a great day on her birthday. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Debbie Hurley**, **Lori Courtney**, **Erica Voolich**, **Natalia Caliman**, **Caddy Villen**, **Chris McCarthy**, **Liz-Mary Jelinek**, **Caroline C. Carafotes**, **Brian M. Conley**, **Richard Murphy**, **Bob Cammarata**, **Bobby Martini**, **Thomas Ross**, **John Brady**, **Martha Rheaume**, **Jimmy Deoliveira** and **Jon Curtis** a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, the **Somerville City Council**, and the **Somerville School Committee** invite the community to attend the **2024 inauguration ceremonies** on **Tuesday, January 2, 2024**. The inauguration ceremonies and addresses by **Mayor Ballantyne**, the incoming **City Council President**, and the incoming **School Committee Chairperson** will be held at 6:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, January 2**, in the Somerville High School auditorium (81 Highland Ave). Organizational meetings of the **City Council** and **School Committee** will precede the ceremony at 5:00 p.m. in the **City Council Chambers** in **City Hall** (93 Highland Ave). A public reception at **The Row Hotel** (360 Foley Street, Assembly Row), will immediately follow the inaugural ceremony starting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Because this winter begins in an **even-numbered year**, snow emergency parking will be on the **even side of the street all winter**, unless posted signage says differently. Check street signs in your neighborhood so you know where you can park ahead of winter weather. You can also learn more about the city's snow policies at somervillema.gov/snow.

As the holiday gift shopping season intensifies, it's important to remember that **our local merchants** are depending on us all to do our best to shop local.

How about making your holiday a little greener by creating a **holiday greeting on video** free at the

Continued on page 14

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#903

1. What U.S. state is home to the town of Santa Claus?

2. How long is the average growing time for a Christmas tree?

3. What was the first song played in space?

4. Which song tops Billboard's list of the 100 greatest holiday songs of all time?

5. In the film *Polar Express*, how many voiced characters did Tom Hanks play?

6. What is the tradition of finding a Christmas pickle ornament on a Christmas tree?
7. What was the original name of Clement Clarke Moore's *The Night Before Christmas*?

8. How many nights does Hanukkah last?

9. What are dreidels used for?

10. What is on each side of a dreidel?

11. What city drops a giant chocolate kiss on New Year's Eve?

12. What do people write on the scraps of confetti in Times Square on New Year's?
- Answers on page 10

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. A frigate bird can sleep while it flies.
2. Octopuses and squid have three hearts.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD
COCKTAILS

- ACROSS
1. Great divide

6. Priestly vestment

9. Took to court

13. Haile Selassie's disciple

14. 10 decibels

15. Appletini's ____ schnapps

16. Rose oil

17. Maui garland

18. Birth-related

19. Old Fashioned liquor option

21. Gin+vermouth rosso+Campari

23. Not him

24. Bye, in Palermo

25. VA.gov beneficiary

28. Puerto follower

30. Like Ferris Bueller

35. Exclude

37. " ____ Your Enthusiasm"

39. Green-light

40. Tiny coffee cup, or ____-tasse

41. Cut mission short

43. Not final or absolute

44. Makes a sweater

46. Wing-shaped

47. Bird, in Latin

48. One with drug dependency

50. Do like a frog

52. A U.S. time zone

53. Dance with #17 Across

55. Anatomical duct

57. It usually comes in a conical glass

61. Popular cocktail mixer

65. Spy's other name

66. Knicks' org.

68. Give a speech

69. Clan emblem

70. Party barrel

71. Clean a spill (2 words)

72. Part of pump

73. Sargasso or Barents

74. Same as apse

CROSSWORD														
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
19					20			21	22					
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57	58	59	60					61				62	63	64
65						66	67			68				
69						70				71				
72						73				74				

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

- DOWN
1. Sticking point, in alimentary tract

2. Possesses, archaic

3. Bellini with ____ Spumante

4. Squirrel away

5. a.k.a. felt-pen

6. Competently

7. M tley Cr e's Tommy ____

8. Russian pancakes

9. Practice in the ring

10. As far as (2 words)

11. Distinctive flair

12. Place for a hero

15. Fluffy sweater material

20. "All My Children" vixen ____ Kane

22. 2010 Movie " ____ Pray Love"

24. Toyota model

25. Moscow Mule spirit

26. Make corrections

27. Shy

29. ____ Libre

31. Forearm bone

32. Not dead

33. Honkers

34. Lemon or orange piece
36. South American monkey

38. Highlands hillside

42. Crossbeam

45. Religious split

49. 252-gallon wine cask

51. Tequila+grapefruit juice+sparkling water

54. Kind of golf course

56. Razor sharpener

57. S.A.T. section

58. Balm ingredient

59. Baptism or shiva, e.g.

60. Asian weight unit

61. John Galsworthy's "The Forsyte ____"

62. Nukes

63. Sewing case

64. Gym set

67. ____'s Knees
- Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Somerville woman ID'd in fatal crash, State Police continue to seek public's help

Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan and the Massachusetts State Police have identified the young woman killed in Wednesday's crash on Route 93 north in Stoneham as Kayla E. Driscoll, 34, of Somerville.

Ms. Driscoll was driving a 2015 Nissan Rogue sport utility vehicle northbound on Route 93 when, for reasons still under investigation, the vehicle rolled over at approximately 8:40 a.m. Ms. Driscoll was determined to be deceased on scene.

The State Police are seeking to identify another vehicle that was in the area at the time of the crash, which is believed to be a dark-colored small SUV similar to a Subaru Crosstrek or a Nissan Rogue. That vehicle was being operated erratically and at a high rate of speed on Route 93 north in Medford and Stoneham between 8:25 and 8:40 a.m.

Anyone who may have seen this vehicle or has information about it is asked to call Trooper CJ Murgo at the State Police Detective Unit for Middlesex County at 781-897-6609 or the State Police-Medford Barracks at 781-396-0100.

The crash remains under investigation by the State Police-Medford Barracks, the State Police Detective Unit for Middlesex County, the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office, the State Police Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section, and the State Police Crime Scene Services Section.



Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Ricotta Pie

In 1912, a boy named Giuseppe Montalto emigrated to the United States from Mineo in the Catania region of Italy at the age of 13. He eventually married his bride Josephine and started a family where they had four children. One of those children, Peter was my uncle. I remember as a young kid, we would go to Joe's (Giuseppe's and Josephine's) to visit and Joe would always be in the kitchen baking all sorts of sweets. Baking was a passion of his and he shared this recipe with my aunt, who in turn shared it with me. I hope you enjoy this amazing ricotta pie because it's definitely worth the effort!

For the filling:

2 lbs. Ricotta Cheese, full fat
3/4 Cups Sugar
2 Large Eggs, lightly beaten
2 Teaspoons of Orange Zest,
Lemon Zest or a combination of both

For the dough:

2 Large Eggs, lightly beaten
6 Tablespoons Unsalted Butter, melted
and cooled (original recipe used margarine)
1/4 Cup Sugar
2 Cups Flour, sifted

2 Teaspoons Baking Powder
1 egg yolk for the egg wash for the top lattice crust.
*Special equipment. You will need one 9" spring form pan.

Preheat oven to 350° and place rack onto the middle of the oven.

Filling: In a medium bowl, add the ricotta, sugar, eggs and the zest and mix by hand until fully incorporated. Set aside in the refrigerator.

Dough: In a medium bowl, add the eggs, melted butter and sugar. Mix until well blended. Add the flour and baking powder to the egg mixture and blend well. Once the dough comes together, knead on a floured surface until it forms a tight ball. It will take about 5 minutes. Once the ball is formed, cut 1/3rd of the dough and put aside. Roll out the other 2/3rds of the dough on a floured surface to approximately 12" in diameter. Place the dough into the spring form pan. Cover the bottom and the sides. You may have to piece the dough together for an even fit on the bottom and sides of the pan. Once you line the pan, add the filling to the lined pan. Roll out the remaining dough and cut into 1" wide strips and place onto the top of the filling in a lattice pattern.



Beat the egg yolk and brush over the lattice.

Place the pie onto a cookie sheet and into the oven. Bake for 30 minutes. Lower the temperature to 325° and bake for an additional 60-90 minutes. At the 60-minute mark, slightly shake the oven rack and see if the ricotta is set firmly around the edges. If so, check the center of the ricotta pie. If it's really loose, leave in the oven for the ad-

ditional 30 minutes. Recheck after the time is up. If the center is slightly loose, take it out of the oven and let it cool on a rack for an hour. Then place it into the freezer for about 1-1/2 hours, then transfer to the refrigerator. Let sit overnight to fully set up. Remove the sides of the pan. Serves 16.

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

LEGAL NOTICES

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

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court

MIDDLESEX Division Docket No. MI23P6233EA

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

Estate of: Shawna Lee Cirrone
First Name Middle Name Last Name

Also Known As: Shawna L. Cirrone and Shawna Cirrone

Date of Death: September 10, 2023

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of
Petitioner Joseph M Cirrone of Malden MA
First Name M.I. Last Name (City/Town) (State)

[x] Joseph M Cirrone of Malden MA
First Name M.I. Last Name (City/Town) (State)

has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve [] with [x] without surety on the bond.


The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.

12/20/23 The Somerville Times

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Ms. Cam's *From on page 8*
Olio
Answers

1. Indiana	7. A Visit from St. Nicholas
2. Marketable time is 7 years	8. Eight nights, to commemorate how long the holy light burned
3. Jingle Bells	9. To play a Hanukkah game
4. All I Want For Christmas Is You by Mariah Carey	10. A letter of the Hebrew alphabet (each standing for a Hebrew word)
5. Seven	11. Hershey, Pennsylvania
6. The finder receives either a reward or good fortune for the next year	12. Their wishes for the new year


CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
& COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LEGAL NOTICE - HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC)

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a public meeting and public hearings on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024** at 6:45pm on the following applications, in accordance with 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.

Pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to historic@somervillema.gov.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Registration URL:
https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_iJ8ezpxhQ0qG77dp1xeFWA

Webinar ID: 814 0303 0734

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.

ALL OF THE CASES ADVERTISED BELOW HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING COMPONENT

Determinations of Historic Significance (STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)

HP23-000064 - 326 Lowell Street
Applicant: Alfa Excavation Inc
Owner: 326-328 Lowell Street, LLC
The Applicant seeks to demolish a building that is at least 75 years of age.

HP23-022084 - 9 Olive Ave
Applicant: Robert DiPierro
Owner: Robert DiPierro
The Applicant proposes to demolish fifty percent or more of a structure that is at least 75 years old.

Case documents reviewed by the HPC are available on the City website at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases>. Cases may be continued to a later date; please check the agenda (posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting) on the City website or email historic@somervillema.gov to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertised. **Note:** Written comments due to historic@somervillema.gov **NO LATER THAN NOON** one week prior to the meeting date. Email historic@somervillema.gov with inquiries.

12/13/23, 12/20/23 The Somerville Times

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Exhibition by Raynel Shepard on view at ROOTED Armory Café through January 7

Raynel Shepard is a renaissance woman: jazz vocalist, visual artist, educator and home chef. She was born in Chicago and grew up in Berkeley, California. She moved to the East Coast after two years of service in the Peace Corps in the Congo. She holds a doctorate from Harvard. Raynel comes from a family with deep roots in the Black Creole community of New Orleans. She performs Jazz and the American Songbook, as “Lady Ray”, with her trio of musicians at ROOTED Armory Café, other venues, and in New Orleans, where she winters. She began experimenting with mixed media during the Covid epidemic. This is her first art exhibition. Raynel is based in Somerville and New Orleans and lives with her loving husband, Nigel Hamilton, and loyal dog, Matisse.

OBITUARY

Kayla E. Driscoll



Kayla E. Driscoll, 34, passed away unexpectedly on December 13, 2023. She was born on November 27, 1989 in Melrose, Massachusetts, to Ellen (O’Neil) Driscoll and John A. Driscoll. Kayla graduated from Somerville High School in 2007. Kayla studied Muscular Therapy at the Cortiva Institute for Muscular Therapy in Watertown, MA in May 2015. As a Massage Therapist, Kayla specialized in working with clients who experienced trauma and was known for creating safe and therapeutic environments for her clients.

Kayla had an infectious smile that lit up the room and her laugh was contagious. She was fun loving, warm, friendly and made everyone feel comfortable in her presence. She was creative and excelled at any DIY project that she took on, making everything look beautiful and festive.

Kayla had a warm and nurturing personality and children were instantly drawn to her. She was the beloved Titia to her niece Alana and Auntie Kayla to Pierce and Lilia. They will forever miss playing with her as well as her tickles, hugs, and her fun gifts. Kayla was kind, protective, loyal, and was always the first person to be there to help those that she loved.

Kayla is survived by her parents, Ellen and John A. Driscoll of Somerville, MA, her brother, John J. Driscoll and his wife Amanda Driscoll of Somerville, MA, and her niece, Alana. She is survived by many aunts, uncles, and cousins. She is predeceased by her grandparents Dorothy and Paul O’Neil, and Albert and Barbara Driscoll.

A Funeral procession will be held on Wednesday, December 20th from the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville at 9:00AM. Followed by a Funeral Mass celebrated in St. Catherine Church, 179 Summer St. Somerville at 10:00AM.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend.

Calling hours will be on Tuesday from 4:00PM to 8:00PM.

Services will conclude with Kayla being laid to rest in Holy Cross Cemetery, Malden.

Taking the Illuminations tour

Many of Somerville's best and brightest holiday light displays have been enjoyed by those taking a self-guided Illuminations tour. Through early January 2024 take the time to enjoy a self-guided tour using Somerville's official online Illuminations Map. For map and more information visit <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/illuminationstour>.
— Photos by Bobbie Toner



Central St.



Electric Ave.



Electric Ave.



Electric Ave.



Electric Ave.



Electric Ave.



Electric Ave.



Electric Ave.



Highland Rd.



Lowden Ave.



Madison St.



School St.

Somerville Jingle Bell 5K RunTop 10 Finishers



Place	Name	Gender	Time
1	Brain Harvey	M	14:48
2	Jeremy Adams	M	15:02
3	Trevor Wysong	M	15:09
4	Aksel Laudon	M	15:31
5	Seabiscuit Horseman	M	16:24
6	Nick Morfesi	M	16:33
7	Brian Lee	M	16:50
8	Sam Spencer	M	16:52
9	Vikram Daesety	M	17:00
10	Sydney Clary	F	17:09

Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Bike Path with fallen leaves... — Photo by Denise Provost

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



How much did Santa's sleigh cost?
It was on the house

On This Day in History

December 20

- 0069 – Vespian's supporters enter Rome and discover Vitellius in hiding. He is dragged through the streets before being brutally murdered.
- 1802 – The United States buys the Louisiana territory from France.
- 1924 – Adolf Hitler is released from prison after serving less than one year of a five year sentence for treason.
- 1933 – The German government announces 400,000 citizens are to be sterilized because of hereditary defects.
- 1938 – First electronic television system is patented.
- 1960 – National Liberation Front is formed by guerrillas fighting the Diem regime in South Vietnam.
- 1989 – U.S. troops invade Panama to oust General Manuel Noriega and replace him with Guillermo Endara.
- 1995 – NATO begins peacekeeping operation in Bosnia.
- 1996 – NeXT merges with Apple Computer, leading to the development of ground-breaking Mac OS X.

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Somerville named one of nation's digital inclusion trailblazers

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) has named the City of Somerville as a 2023 Digital Inclusion Trailblazer, recognizing the city's efforts to close the digital divide. The NDIA is focused on advancing digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act.

As the pandemic demonstrated, digital inclusion – access to affordable high-speed internet, devices, and digital skills training – is essential to participating and thriving in today's world. Recognizing the ongoing needs of the community, Somerville didn't stop digital inclusion efforts at the end of the quarantine.

"Closing the digital divide in Somerville is not just a goal; it is a moral imperative," said Mayor Ballantyne. "Somerville's Digital Bridge team is doing innovative work that helps empower our community, creates more equal opportunities, and fosters a future where every resident can thrive in the digital landscape, and I'm so pleased to see their

efforts recognized by the NDIA."

This year, Somerville joins a record number of Digital Inclusion Trailblazers, with 47 total awardees representing municipal, county, and regional governments paving the way for digitally inclusive communities across the US.

"Nonprofits, libraries, churches, and other community organizations can't reach digital equity on their own. For everyone to thrive in today's digital world, we need all hands-on deck," said Angela Siefer, NDIA executive director. "NDIA's Digital Inclusion Trailblazers exemplify the key role local governments have in building connected communities for all of their residents."

Trailblazers provide models for other local governments to aspire to as communities build digital inclusion ecosystems. Somerville achieved Trailblazer status by prioritizing digital inclusion for residents of their communities through:

Funding digital navigators at the Council on Aging and



SomerPromise (one at each).

Digital literacy skills and digital navigator funded by MBI to MassHire MetroNorth to serve Somerville residents at SCC.

Currently working with MAPC to create a Digital Equity Plan for the City of Somerville.

NDIA revised the seven-year-old Trailblazer program this year, identifying seven categories of current best practices. Each applicant's materials are verified for accuracy, assessed for community impact, and posted in an interactive map and searchable database

on NDIA's website. By sharing materials with open-sourcing, NDIA provides community advocates and local governments ways to continue learning, connect with trailblazing peers, and plan their own digital inclusion solutions.

ARPA funding to be used to address threats to Amelia Earhart Dam and Draw Seven Park CONT. FROM PG 5

Watershed," said Representative Dan Ryan. "These federal funds will go a long way in protecting our shorelines from future storm surges as we collectively plan for a more accessible, ecologically friendly lower Mystic. I want to thank Undersecretary Cooper, DCR Commissioner Arrigo, our municipal partners and especially the Mystic River Watershed Association for their vision and leadership on this issue."

"I am grateful to the Healey-Driscoll Administration and proud of our legislative efforts to secure this funding for improvements to Draw 7 Park in Somerville, including a resilient, living shoreline, enhanced stormwater management, necessary upgrades

to the Amelia Earhart Dam, and a shared-use river path," said Representative Mike Connolly. "I am particularly grateful to the Mystic River Watershed Association, DCR, city officials and local residents who made their voices heard throughout this process, resulting in an extraordinary design that will turn a dilapidated lot into a stunning new amenity for our community. I look forward to working with all concerned to continue addressing our open space needs and climate vulnerabilities."

The AED, built in 1966, prevents tidal flooding of the Mystic River Basin between the dam in Somerville and the Upper Mystic Lake Dam 6-miles upriver in Ar-

lington and Medford. The Mystic River Basin includes the Mystic and Malden Rivers and Alewife Brook. The dam raise project design will take into account the anticipated impacts of sea level rise and climate change, enabling it to continue to prevent coastal flooding well into the future. The design of the project is currently underway and is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2026, with construction expected to begin shortly after.

The complete renovation of Draw Seven Park will include construction of a flood control berm to prevent coastal flooding, that in coordination with the AED project, will make the area more resilient to climate change.

The park's redesign includes many benefits to the community and the environment including maintaining and enhancing connections to the rest of the Mystic River Reservation, as well as to the newly completed path extension to Alford Street in Charlestown. The paths will connect Somerville to Everett and the Northern Strand Trail via the future Mystic River pedestrian bridge to Everett. The project will restore the park shoreline for stability, habitat value, and flood protection. The redesign will include inclusive and welcoming natural and recreational resources including paths for walking with viewing, bench seating, and overlook areas, a new lawn, and a renovated

fishing pier. The project will also include more than 100 new trees to provide shade for visitors.

The Draw Seven project is currently in the permitting phase and is anticipated to go to bid by summer 2024, with construction expected to start in spring 2025.

Together, these projects will revive and improve a long-underutilized waterfront park, making it more welcoming and attractive for recreation, building important trail connections, restoring the natural ecology, and upgrading AED utilities. These projects are part of DCR's ongoing work to protect the state's natural resources and improve climate resiliency at agency parks and in surrounding communities.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

Somerville Media Center? Make yours by scheduling at frontdesk@somerville-media.org.

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the **Somerville Museum** will kick off the New Year on **Monday, January 1, 2024**, with a ceremony for the anniversary of the **"Grand Union" flag-raising ceremony** at **Prospect Hill Park**. A processional will leave from the **City Hall Concourse** at 11:30 a.m., followed by a ceremony at Prospect Hill Park from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. As always, members of the public, including families with school children, are invited to participate, and to inspire authenticity, all are encouraged to wear what they consider to be traditional colonial clothing. Light refreshments will be offered, as well as a few items highlighting the city's historic assets for purchase from the Somerville Museum. Depending on the weather, the Tower will be open briefly to the public following the ceremony.

Enrolling a prekindergarten or kindergarten student? The next **PK-8 School Open House events** are **January 9, 2024** and the online enrollment portal opens on **January 3, 2024**. Watch a video about enrolling your student in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. <https://youtu.be/HgdlsI8IapM>. The video is also available in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole on the Enrollment Office website, where you can find many more resources: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/enrollment>.

In the giving spirit of the season, the city is collecting **toy and gift donations** at City buildings, libraries, and firehouses **through Friday, December 22**. If you are able and wish to donate, please bring new, unwrapped toys and gifts for children of all ages and age-appropriate gifts, clothes, and winter boots for teens. Donations will support two community gift drives: **Toys for Local Children** and **MAMAS - Mutual Aid Medford & Somerville**.

More information on their gift drives and other ways to help support the drives can be found at mutualaidmamas.com and toysforlocalchildren.org. Learn more and find a donation box near you: bit.ly/47O4wYK.

Small Mart Holiday Market, your favorite fun sized vendor market, is back. The Small Mart marketplace has a sense of humor and wants to turn the idea of the big box store on its head by empowering local businesses to come together to create a space of accessibility for a thoughtful shopper. The vendors have been carefully chosen and their goods are unique and small. Stop by **December 23, 2023** from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., **Crystal Ballroom at Somerville Theatre**, 55 Davis Square, Somerville, crystalballroomboston.com.

COA's Brown Bag Supplemental Food Program pick up is **Thursday, December 21** from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the **Ralph & Jenny Center** located at 9 New Washington Street. For an application contact **Natasha Naim** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317.

Children and caregivers are welcome to come create **mini "gingerbread" houses** out of graham crackers. Supplies will be provided. Ages 3-10, younger kids please be accompanied by an adult. **December 23, 2:00 p.m., Somerville Public Library**, 79 Highland Ave. To register visit www.somervillepubliclibrary.org

The **Fuel Assistance Program**, also known as the **Home Energy Assistance Program**, helps low-income households pay their winter heating bills **between November 1 and April 30**. Renters and homeowners in Somerville are eligible to apply if they meet federal income guidelines. Learn more at somervillema.gov/heatingassistance.

The last day for **street sweeping** until spring is **December 31**. Street sweeping

resumes **April 1**.

Is your teen **looking to make some extra money?** The city's **Snow Shoveling Program** is hiring youth to assist shoveling seniors and homeowners with disabilities out after snowstorms this winter. Teens and homeowners are paired for the season. After each storm, the homeowner will contact their assigned youth to request shoveling services. Somerville teens ages 14 to 19 are welcome to apply. Learn more and apply at somervillema.gov/shoveling. Looking for snow shoveling services? Contact **Debby Higgins** at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Take steps to **protect yourself and loved ones** against COVID-19. Somerville's **Health and Human Services Department** is hosting a series of **COVID-19 booster (Moderna) vaccine clinics throughout December** at locations across the city. Vaccines are available for community members age 6 months and older. Register for a vaccine clinic at somervillema.gov/vaccines.

Since 1987, **The Welcome Project** has worked tirelessly to give a voice to the immigrant community of Somerville and provide them with the education and support they need to advocate for themselves in their new home. Through English language classes for parents, translator training for high school students, and workers' rights campaigns, we are always advancing the mission of equity and highlighting how immigrants are an integral piece of our Somerville community. As they come to the end of 2023, The Welcome Project humbly asks if you could **support their work and donate today**. As the immigrant community continues to grow in Somerville, your generosity allows your new neighbors to get the education they need to succeed in their new home. To donate visit: https://www.welcomeproject.org/eoy_appeal.html.

In preparation for the cold months

ahead, the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** is in urgent need of **winter clothing and apparel** to keep their clients warm and safe. Donations of socks, hats, jackets, hand warmers, sweatpants, and more will go a long way towards keeping the most vulnerable clients protected against the unpredictable New England weather. All donations can be dropped off at their **Engagement Center** located at 1 Davis Square, Somerville between Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., closed each day from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. for lunch. Help keep our neighbors safe this winter.

Help keep our waterways clean in your neighborhood by joining Somerville's **Adopt-a-Drain program**. A storm drain clear of leaves, trash or other debris allows water to flow into the catch basin sump and can prevent flooding. When you adopt a drain (or drains), you commit to caring for a local storm drain of your choice by checking on it before and after heavy rain, wind, or snow. Bonus perk: you can also give it a name. Claim your drain at somerville.mysticdrains.org.

The **Center for the Arts at the Armory** offers a weekly winter market with 71+ local food vendors with the best locally grown and regionally produced foods, including fresh produce, cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, tamales, pastries, chocolate, skincare products, and more. The market accepts SNAP/EBT and HIP benefits. They also offer a \$15 SNAP match to customers each week. Visit the **Somerville Winter Farmers Market** on **Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., 191 Highland Ave. Through April 6**, except 12/30. For a list of weekly events visit www.som-wintermarket.org.

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OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Poet Thomas DeFreitas:

Baptized in Somerville and a born poet

Interview with Doug Holder/Co-president of the New England Poetry Club.

I caught up with poet Thomas DeFreitas recently, a well-regarded poet in the area and a former resident of Somerville. We discussed his life and work, and the release of his new book *Swift River Ballad*.

Thomas DeFreitas was born in 1969 in Boston and was educated at the Boston Latin School. His poems have appeared in *Dappled Things*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Plainsongs*, and elsewhere. His most recent collection is *Swift River Ballad* (Kelsay Books, 2023). He is a member of the New England Poetry Club.

Author of:
Swift River Ballad (Kelsay Books, 2023)
Longfellow, Tell Me (Kelsay Books, 2022)
Winter in Halifax (Kelsay Books, 2021)
<https://www.thomasdefreitas.me>
<https://www.youtube.com/@thomasdef634>

Doug Holder: Do you think that the fact you were baptized in Somerville, gave you a good start as a poet?

Thomas DeFreitas: It certainly didn't hurt! Somerville is (if I may borrow a phrase) a "city of poets"! From current laureate Lloyd Schwartz to my dear friend Hilary Sallick to the tireless and remarkable Gloria Mindock, to present company, there is much to recommend! Also, in the early 1970s, as now, it was a close-knit working-class city, with all of the poetical assets particular to such an environment. You learn stories. You learn colorful turns of phrase!

DH: You told me that you are a huge fan of Dylan Thomas. You like his use of meter and his sound tricks. In some ways do you identify with Thomas because he was a heavy drinker-and that led to his death in the Chelsea Hotel in NYC in the 1950s? You were once a drinker. Is there some sense of tragedy reflected in his poems that you cling to?

TDF: I read in Paul Ferris's biography of Thomas that Dylan never wrote while drunk. He'd work like mad on a poem, dozens of drafts, and then he'd treat himself to a pint (or usually more!) at the pub. I identify with Thomas's work ethic and his hostility to the easy, shopworn phrase. But the drink made an impression, and in adolescence I felt that it was somehow "connected" to his creativity. As tragic a figure as Thomas was, I feel the poems are life-giving. They do exert a pull. I'd recommend Seamus Heaney's fine essay on Thomas, *Dylan the Durable*? I answer Heaney's question in the affirmative.

DH: In your poem *Dreaming of Somerville* you bring the high holy to our burg. William Carlos William had his Paterson, N.J., does DeFreit-

as have his Somerville? Could you write this way about Arlington, where you currently reside?

TDF: I hope there is something in any poet that can find auspicious occasions for poetry, whatever their environment. I love Arlington! Arlington is my joy. My years in Somerville, East Boston, Amherst, and Chelsea have all made an impression, and I hope I use all my places and experiences in a way that conduces to the making of poems.

DH: Your book has a great deal of well-honed Catholic imagery. For some, the church was a nightmare (including my late wife), others love the ritual, the beauty of the church. Your take?

TDF: I keenly sympathize with anyone who's been wounded or diminished or disgusted by Catholicism or by any other religious body or practice. I had a better time of it than most folks as an active Catholic, loving the ritual and the fixity, to a degree. But I think that in here in the USA, there's a malady in Catholicism whereby many Catholics have whittled their creed to one or two hot-button issues. These people call themselves "orthodox Catholics," though they scorn Pope Francis (whom I love) in favor of following a political figure whose estrangement from gospel values seems glaringly obvious. I'm currently active in a beautiful Episcopal community, St. James's in Cambridge.

DH: Why should we read your book?

My book and its author will love you for it! I feel that this newest collection is a representative sampling of my work. There are poems of joy and of serious purpose. But I feel the salient note is celebration: celebration of people, of language, of this extraordinary ordinary life.

A Mad Patch of Song

You are the pink mint of floral days.
Pert froth of comic blossoms, sip
of cool blue heaven. You are the trust
of once-braided hair flaunting in a breeze.
Who can compass your jests and gestures
against the green tedium of summer?

Iris among ferns in the dank hollow.
Accidental majesty no curse can hurt.
I will greet you with a mad patch
of song. And you will brighten and blush,
crash into a racket of laughter, nudge me
out of the dust into rainburst and radiance.



Albino Neto is a student in Doug Holder's Creative Writing Course at Endicott college.



The Green Dress

I resented the way you moved,
The big silver chains swinging from your soft neck
The shiny green dress always paired with your hair up
The subtle shift to the right hip when she would run
I resented the way she moved,

The way she twitched in her sleep
The way she would snore at night like a baby pig
The long nights contemplating our future
The long nights contemplating the purpose of life
I resented the way she moved

Her contagious giggles
Her way of eating fast-food on drunken nights
Her vibrant and elusive smile
Her voice singing against the car breeze
I resented the way she moved

— Albino Neto

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