



## Inside:



**The Bargain Center**

page 3



**Warming up for winter**

page 7



**Gobble Gobble Gobble Road Race**  
pages 12-13

# City Councilors pass divestment resolution



Sara Halawa, parent to five Palestinian-American children and Somerville for Palestine organizer, spoke in favor of the resolution at the City Council meeting on November 25.

By Harry Kane

The viability of boycotting and divesting from companies complicit with Israel's genocidal war is still up for debate, but city councilors adopted a resolution that may begin the process.

Following public outcry and a win on the Palestine Solidarity Ballot Question during the November municipal election with 11,599 votes in favor, lawmakers in Somerville answered back by passing a resolution that lays the groundwork for plans toward divestment at the latest city council meeting on November 25.

"We have the moral duty, in my view, to take action on this," said City Councilor Willie Burnley, Jr.

Ballot Question 3 was sponsored by activist group Somerville for Palestine, and while controversial, it led to the resolution, which passed in a 9-2 vote, in support of committing to divest in companies complicit in genocidal war.

*Continued on page 4*

# Union Square Jingle brings holiday makers markets, carolers, and more

Union Square Main Streets (USMS) and 40+ local businesses turn on sparkle lights, dress up windows, and bring instagrammable inflatables to life at The Union Square Jingle: Shop, Sip & Mingle. This free, family-friendly celebration will have you jingling all the way on Sunday, December 7, from 1 to 6 p.m. (extreme weather date 12/14). Join in to revel in rad retail, unique eats, and much more throughout Union Square in Somerville!

Looking for a delightful destination for a wintry date, your besties' holiday meet-up, or a visit with friends and family?

Shop three holiday makers markets at Aeronaut Brewery, 438 Somerville Ave Artist Studios (formerly Milk Row Studios), and Upstairs at Bow

Follow the Festivus Trail to find over-the-top inflatables and pose-worthy balloon

*Continued on page 4*



The Union Square Jingle takes place this coming Sunday in Union Square.



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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.

Kick off the holiday season on **Thursday, December 4**, at 5 p.m. at the **Christmas Tree Lighting** on the **City Hall Concourse** (93 Highland Ave.). **Santa Claus** will be escorted by the **Somerville Fire Department**, making his grand entrance atop a shiny red fire truck. After the tree lighting, head over to the **Somerville High School cafeteria** (81 Highland Ave.) for a meet-and-greet with Santa Claus and light refreshments. All children who attend will receive a special gift from Santa. **Menorah Lighting** takes place on **Monday, December 15** (Rain date: December 16), 6 p.m., **City Hall Concourse** (93 Highland Ave.) Activities: Music, words, treats, Menorah lighting, and gifts for children.

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Somerville Museum** invites you to **Tavern Talk with Dan Breen: From Belmont Street to Brisbane. Wednesday, December 3**, at 7 p.m., **Aeronaut Brewing Company**, 14 Tyler St., Join in for a presentation on Somerville's own **Rear Admiral Ralph Waldo Christie**, and the technical glitches that drove his fellow submariners to distraction in the darkest days of World War Two.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Continued on page 7

## Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of December 3 – December 9 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
<b>Wednesday</b> <i>December 3</i>	Sunny	39°/29°	6%	3%	WNW 11 mph
<b>Thursday</b> <i>December 4</i>	Cloudy	40°/14°	21%	11%	SW 14 mph
<b>Friday</b> <i>December 5</i>	Sunny	27°/23°	0%	1%	SW 7 mph
<b>Saturday</b> <i>December 6</i>	Cloudy	35°/25°	25%	13%	NW 8 mph
<b>Sunday</b> <i>December 7</i>	Partly Cloudy	38°/17°	7%	4%	WNW 9 mph
<b>Monday</b> <i>December 8</i>	Partly Cloudy	24°/11°	3%	1%	W 12 mph
<b>Tuesday</b> <i>December 9</i>	Partly Cloudy	30°/24°	2%	1%	WSW 12 mph

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

## TheSomervilleTimes.com Comments of the Week

### Response to: *Doing Divestment Right*

Dominique Stassart says:

Thank you, Chris for writing this thoughtful Oped.

Thank you for both validating the value of thinking and deciding on divesting AND drawing our attention to potential and endless and at the end, harmful lawsuit. I couldn't have said it better.

### Response to: *A H A N D P I C K E D P O E M*

Susan Tepper says:

This amazing piece tells it straight, the violence, the roughening, the way the women were used. terrific.

Katherine Indermaur says:

Thank you, Michael and Doug, for selecting my poem and writing so aptly and thoughtfully about it here! I am deeply grateful for your generous attention and for your sharing my work with others. Have a wonderful holiday season.

### Response to: *Cranberry Raspberry Sauce*

Susan Haley says:

This was the most AMAZING cranberry sauce I ever had. Will never make it any other way! FIVE out of FIVE stars.

Log onto [TheSomervilleTimes.com](http://TheSomervilleTimes.com) to leave your own comments

## The Somerville Times

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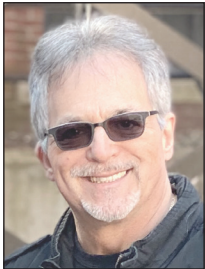


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Life in the **VILLE** by Jimmy Del Ponte

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

# The Bargain Center



Thanksgiving ... gone. Black Friday ... gone. A month of hectic, frantic, and desperate preparation for Christmas has begun. The commercials may tell us that prices are low, but shoppers are high-strung. You saw the news reports that showed crazed bargain hunters throughout the country acting like they were giving away wads of cash. They stood in line overnight, rubbing elbows with the same people they would be willing to fight to the finish, just to save \$100 on a flat screen TV or an Xbox. You would have to pay me at least \$300 just to stand outside in the dark, freezing my butt off.

Back in my day, you'd go into the Bargain Center in Davis Square with twenty bucks and come out with gifts for everyone. So what if the box was ripped, the item had slight water damage or it was singed and smelled like smoke? That's why they called

it the Bargain Center. Actually, we old' Vil-lens called it simply "Bargies." One-stop Christmas shopping!

A friend tells me, "I got my first Barbie there. She was dressed like Jackie Kennedy, and it was a fire stock sale. I still have it. Her legs were scarred from the fire, and I loved her just the same. She did smell of smoke for the longest time, though."

"My mother worked at the Bargain Center for a short time. I remember we bought Topo Gigio dolls there." Remember Topo Gigio, that little mouse on the Ed Sullivan Show?

"Bargies" seemed to be the place to buy curtains. You would buy them, take them home, and hang them up. The burnt odor in the curtains gave your house that outdoor, campfire smell.

Here is a touching story. I remember seeing my dear cousin Joe Gordon walking back from the square with shopping bags from either the Bargain Center, Woolworths, or Park Snow. He had birthday presents for his son Richard. Richard's



birthday was Patriots Day, so it had to be in mid-April, and I was likely down their house because it was school vacation week. I was probably 9 or 10 years old at the time. Richard was killed in Beirut in October 1983 when the Marines' barracks

were bombed. Joe passed away right after Christmas in 1994. But I can remember that particular scene of seeing him walking back up the tracks from way down near the square. With bags of gifts, in the sunshine. The memory always

Continued on page 21

*Wedding & Event*  
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— Harry Kane —

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## Somerville Police Department Public Safety Advisory

Somerville Police are actively investigating multiple residential break-ins that occurred in a section of Ward 2, specifically along Harold Street, Wyatt Street, and Dimick Street, between November 22 and November 23. Two of these incidents took place at night between 9 p.m. and 11 p.m.

A possible suspect has been described as a male with a dark complexion, operating a scooter, and wearing a puffy jacket.

Residents and visitors in this area are encouraged to remain vigilant and take reasonable safety precautions. Please ensure all doors, windows, and other entry points to your home are properly secured. Consider leaving porch lights and some interior lights on, as the suspect(s) appear to be targeting homes when occupants are away.

Somerville Police are working closely with partner agencies to investigate all reported break-ins. If you observe any suspicious persons or activity, please contact 911 immediately.

— Somerville Police Department



## City Councilors pass divestment resolution CONT. FROM PG 1

The resolution states that the Somerville City Council is committed to passing an ordinance that is “legally feasible” in accordance with the language in Ballot Question 3.

The nonbinding ballot question had asked Somerville residents to vote on whether to prohibit current and future city investments and contracts with companies engaging in “business that sustains Israel’s apartheid, genocide, and illegal occupation of Palestine.”

“It is, in my view, based on the results, the will of our community to do all that we can to ensure that our municipal funds, whether they be invested in pensions or the contracts, are serving the values of our community,” said Councilor Burnley, Jr.

Councilor Burnley, Jr. added that municipal funds are not meant to “enrich corporations that are violating human rights, that participate in the perpetuation of apartheid...that destroy the lives of resi-

dents both here and abroad.”

This commitment, however, may turn into a symbolic gesture to curb the city’s business with corporations on a global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) list.

City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen noted that the council is committed to understanding the legal options and will not support an “ordinance that violates constitutional rights, that is discriminatory based on national origin or ethnicity or religion ... or that is illegal in some other way.”

Councilor Ewen-Campen cited the unsuccessful passage of an ordinance that attempted to divest pensions from fossil fuels as an example of a prior measure that failed.

“We are going to do everything we can legally and practically to make progress on it,” said Councilor Ewen-Campen.

Opponents of the new resolution like Somerville United Against Discrimina-

tion said that Ballot Question 3 was “illegal” and “sows division.”

Sam Gechter, who addressed the city council on behalf of Shalom Somerville, explained that the Israel boycott movement “shares the express purpose of destroying the Jewish state of Israel.”

“Somerville is a community that cares deeply, even when we disagree,” said City Councilor Kristen E. Strezo, who voted against the resolution at the city council meeting and says that it works against collaboration in the community.

“It is divisive,” said Councilor Strezo. “It focuses on a global quandary that has nothing to do with our Somerville ... and Jewish members of the community have stated that it makes us feel more targeted and more unsafe. That’s not being inclusive.”

City Councilor Wilfred N. Mbah said he didn’t initially support the measure, but that it is the responsibility of elected officials to honor and implement the will of

the voters. He says the resolution reflects the concerns of the constituents in the community who stand on the side of dignity, compassion, and justice.

“We have an obligation to respond to those concerns within the scope of what a municipal government can do, and to do so with thoughtfulness and integrity,” said Councilor Mbah.

A proponent for divestment and Somerville for Palestine organizer Sara Halawa delivered an impassioned speech before the council. Halawa is the parent of five Palestinian-American children.

“Palestinians deserve the same rights and freedoms as everyone else,” said Halawa. “That Palestinians, too, deserve life, dignity, and peace.”

Palestinian casualties in the Gaza Strip reached a grim milestone, surpassing 70,000 since the Israel-Hamas war began more than two years ago, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry.

## Union Square Jingle brings holiday makers markets, carolers, and more

CONT. FROM PG 1

sculptures

Enter to win cash prizes by:

- Snapping Elfie Selfies
- Collecting stamps (minimum purchase required) for the Stroll the Square Challenge
- Judging the Storefront Decorating Contest
- Walk the Square with wintry characters Spicy G the gingerbread man, Max the snowman, and • Fluffy the gnome
- Visit with Santa Sweet Santa
- Mail your wish lists to the North Pole
- Sing along with a cappella carolers, The Eight Tracks
- Dance the Argentine Tango at one of two free Tango lessons at Dance Union
- Support local and snag a collectible

Union Square jingle bell

• Rejoice in keeping small, strong, and spirits bright!

“Finding the perfect present at a locally owned shop – at a time when many earn up to 50% of their yearly sales – gives us the gift of hometown pride too,” said Jessica Eshleman, executive director at Union Square Main Streets. “Whether you’re looking for unique goods, custom art, or gift cards to unbelievably delicious restaurants or for exciting or relaxing experiences, Union Square has something for everyone on your list this holiday season.”

40+ local businesses throughout Union Square are excited to welcome you and yours. Be sure not to miss ornament dec-

orating stations at both Dearly Studio and Rococo Floral Co.; rum rum rudolph cocktail at Himalayan Kitchen, holiday-wrapped Chuka compound brown butter, housemade chili crisp, and sichuan sauce at Mimi’s Chuka Diner; holiday card making workshop at The School of Painting; pup cups at The Pup Yard; festive martinis and a chance to win a gift card at The Independent; bretzel bites at BRONWYN, raffle tickets for a free treatment at Open Space Community Acupuncture; special re-release of this year’s Union Square Farmers Market poster hand-printed by Union Press, among many other holiday offerings.

“Tufts University is proud to support this year’s Union Square Jingle. Our stu-

dents, faculty, and staff are so fortunate to live and work so close to this vibrant neighborhood,” said Rocco DiRico, Associate Vice President of Government & Community Relations at Tufts University. “Thank you to Union Square Main Streets for your tireless efforts to support locally owned small businesses in Somerville.”

The Union Square Jingle is presented by Union Square Main Streets, Inc. and made possible by generous support from Somerville, Tiny Turns Paperie, Tufts University, The Eight Tracks, Liberty Somerville, Judith Gibson-Okunieff Photography, Confetti Friends, and Play Union.

For more information visit: <https://www.unionssquaremain.org/>.

# After-school program fees increasing mid-year, due to dwindling funds

By Jeffrey Shwom

Fees for a popular public after-school program will rise for most children as the district tries to bring accounting out of the red before the end of the school year.

Families with children in the Community Schools Afterschool Program and Apollo programs [1] will pay \$20 more per week per child, or roughly \$700 more per school year, starting Jan. 26. Students on a sliding payment scale or on full scholarships will not see increases this academic year.

To meet “high demand” across programs and with expenses projected to exceed income, “a tuition increase is necessary to close the gap,” superintendent Ruben Carmona said in an email. “Even with this adjustment, our fees remain lower than those of other local providers and neighboring districts, and we remain fully committed to working with our families who experience financial hardships.”

There are 995 children enrolled in the after-school programs, two-thirds of whom pay full tuition, while about 7 percent, or 71 students, attend for free.

Since the 2021-2022 school year, enrollment in the programs has increased 70% thanks to a commitment to “increase access, enhance quality, improve academic outcomes and increase joy and wellness,” said Ruth Santos, director of the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative. At the Oct. 20 School Committee meeting

[2], Santos indicated staffing has increased 60% and the number of students with scholarships has nearly doubled, while costs for families have stayed constant. The program now costs \$4.5 million, versus \$2.1 million in 2021.

That’s led the community school revolving account to, at times, operate at a deficit, said the school district’s interim chief financial officer, Robert Berretta. As recently as 2020, out-of-school reserves topped \$1 million, which would cover about three months of expenses. In the years since, the district has operated the community school budget with a “structural deficit” that “eroded” the budget to its current state, Beretta said. By making the increase midyear, the district can raise \$318,510 in additional revenue through the end of the school year without tapping into other out-of-school funding.

Since his hiring in the spring, Beretta “has been quietly doing a lot of work to restructure the district’s budget and accounting system,” said Ryan Williams, president of the Somerville Council of PTAs. “I’m very glad to see the district start to become proactive rather than reactive, especially as we enter an uncertain financial situation for schools.”

“Somerville families repeatedly ask for expansion of the after-school program, and I hope the Wilson administration and the new School Committee are able to find creative ways to find the space and staffing



to expand out-of-school programming,” Williams said. Incoming mayor Jake Wilson was elected with other city officials in November and will be seated in January.

## Keeping burdens low

In general, Somerville families seem accepting of the increases, School Committee vice chair Sarah Philips said at a Nov. 3 meeting [3], but there are parents – she mentioned a mom of three children, including two in kindergarten – for whom paying \$20 more a week “is a huge burden.”

Furthermore, charging sliding-scale families the additional \$20 a week would have amounted to only \$10,000 more for the school district, so the superintendent did not recommend it, according to his re-

marks at the meeting.

Requests for reduced-cost or free after-program support should go to SPS Community Schools directly, with most aid considerations reviewed on a rolling basis, Carmona said via email.

## Links:

[1] <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-departments/out-school-time-programming/afterschool-programs-overview>

[2] <https://www.somervillema.gov/events/2025/10/20/school-committee-regular-meeting>

[3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cd4qKVETY0I>

# New inclusive swings introduced at ribbon cutting

By The Times Staff

The inclusive swings ribbon cutting at Hoyt Sullivan Playground on November 17 brought community members together to celebrate the completion of an important accessibility project.

There are 10 new inclusive swings at playgrounds across Somerville, which increases the percentage of city parks with inclusive swings from 39 percent to 83 percent. The swings are designed for children ages 2 to 12.

“We are thrilled with another step forward to increase diversity and inclusion,” said Adrienne Pomeroy, ADA Coordinator at the Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

The ribbon cutting was held for 1 of the 10 new swings initiated and funded

by the SCPD and led by the Somerville Park and Urban Forestry Division in collaboration with the city’s Department of Racial and Social Justice and the Department of Public Works.

“While I know a swing might seem like a small thing, the truth is it isn’t,” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne.

Somerville has 23 playgrounds with swings. Before this project only 9 playgrounds had at least one inclusive option. Now, 19 of the playgrounds have inclusive swings.

“This is what progress looks like,” said Mayor Ballantyne. We’re moving barriers, increasing access, and making sure every child and every family share in the joy of play.”

The City of Somerville is committed to designing public spaces that work for ev-



Inclusivity was the focus at the at Hoyt Sullivan Playground ribbon cutting ceremony on November 17.

eryone, the mayor added.

Holly Simione, chair at the SCPD, said that their budget for the project initially started at \$5,000, but was increased to nearly \$25,000.

Caregivers of Somerville children who require a belt harness may contact Meg Koglin at [mkoglin@somervillema.gov](mailto:mkoglin@somervillema.gov) or by calling 311.

# Beacon Hill Roll Call



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Beacon Hill Roll Call can also be viewed on our website at [www.thesomervilletimes.com](http://www.thesomervilletimes.com)

**CORRECTION:** In last week's *Beacon Hill Roll Call*, we included in some newspapers a quote from a senator who voted against resolutions which would rescind all previous calls by the Massachusetts Legislature for a national Constitutional Convention under Article V of the U.S. Constitution. We did not attribute the quote to anyone. Here's the quote and the attribution:

"I am the Senate sponsor of the 'We the People' bill to repeal the Citizens United decision, including through an Article V Convention," said Sen. Jamie Eldridge (D-Marlborough). "I continue to believe it is a legitimate path to change the U.S. Constitution, and therefore I voted 'No' on the resolutions."

An Article V convention is a process outlined in the U.S. Constitution allowing states to propose constitutional amendments if two-thirds (34) of state legislatures call for it. Supporters of the resolutions said such a convention could open the entire Constitution to unpredictable changes, as there are no clear guidelines or limitations on what delegates could propose. They noted that while an Article V convention has never been called before in American history, there is recent conservative momentum to add up all active resolutions to meet the two-thirds threshold.

**THE HOUSE AND SENATE:** *Beacon Hill Roll Call* records local representatives' votes on roll calls from recent sessions. There were no roll calls in the House or Senate last week.

## \$3.65 BILLION TO MODERNIZE BAY STATE PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (H 4750)

House 146-5, approved and sent to the Senate a bill that funds the modernization of Bay State public colleges and universities by using the revenue from the 2022 voter-approved law, known as the Millionaire's Tax, that imposes an additional 4 percent income tax, in addition to the current flat 5 percent one, on taxpayers' earnings of more than \$1 million annually.

Provisions include \$1.25 billion for the UMass system; \$1.25 billion for nine state university campuses and 15 community college campuses; \$275 million for upgrades to MassArt; \$100 million for the transition of campus facilities and property into housing and mixed-use developments; \$80 million for costs associated with decarbonization and energy efficiency; \$120 million for lab modernization, projects at community colleges to support collaboration with vocational technical schools and projects related to student health and well-being; \$50 million for a grant program for general improvements and cli-

mate-related upgrade; \$20 million for enhancing remote or hybrid learning; and \$100 million for a grant program for improvements to upgrade and expand career technical education and training programs.

"The [bill] will ensure that students across the state learn and train in modern, high-quality campus facilities, while strengthening Massachusetts' competitiveness in research and innovation," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). "Building on the commonwealth's increases in student financial aid, and on our commitment to making higher education more accessible and affordable, especially for low-income students, Massachusetts is undertaking a generational reinvestment in educating our residents and strengthening our higher education system."

"The [bill] will help usher in a new era for public higher education in Massachusetts," said Rep. Dave Rogers (D-Cambridge), House Chair of the Committee on Higher Education. "The House has created free community college, exponentially increased financial aid and now [this bill] invests nearly \$3.65 billion in public higher education campuses statewide. This new investment will: address essential campus infrastructure needs, develop modern learning spaces and decrease reliance on fossil fuels."

"The [bill] will modernize every public higher education campus in Massachusetts," said Rep. Mike Finn (D-West Springfield), House Chair of the Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets. "This investment will spur economic development creating good-paying jobs, and deliver cleaner, state-of-the-art facilities that will prepare our students to lead in a competitive, sustainable future."

None of the five representatives who voted against the bill responded to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking them why they voted against it. Those five representatives are Reps. Nicholas Boldyga (R-Southwick), John Gaskey (R-Carver), Marc Lombardo (R-Billerica), Alyson Sullivan-Almeida (R-Abington) and Kenneth Sweezey (R-Hanson).

"While it's very important to have high quality public colleges, not everyone goes to college," said Paul Craney, executive director of the Mass Fiscal Alliance. "These funds could have been used for expenditures that impact more people, like repairing and maintaining our roads and bridges or as local aide to offset costs in local municipal public education."

(A "Yes" vote is for the \$3.65 billion bill. A "No" vote is

against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber	Didn't Vote
Rep. Mike Connolly	Yes
Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven	Yes

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES (H 4767)

House 153-0, approved and sent to the Senate a bill that supporters said would strengthen protections for health care workers, establish preventive and protective standards to reduce the risk of violence, improve health care facility incident reporting, enhance interagency coordination to safeguard privacy and create legal protections for certain employees harmed in the line of duty.

Another key section would establish that employees, directly employed by a health care employer, who suffer workplace violence resulting in bodily injury or serious bodily injury are entitled to paid leave without using any vacation, sick or personal time.

Supporters said that every 38 minutes in Massachusetts health care facilities, someone, most often a clinician or an employee, is physically assaulted, endures verbal abuse or is threatened -- most often in emergency rooms, inpatient units and psychiatric units, according to the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association.

"Every day, health care workers face an imminent risk of workplace violence," said Rep. John Lawn (D-Water-town), lead sponsor of the bill and House Chair of the Committee on Health Care Financing. "This bill takes decisive action to ensure our laws reflect our values and deliver real protections for those who protect us."

"Every day frontline health care workers are asked to do their jobs under the threat of violence," said Rep. Dan Cahill (D-Lynn), House Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. "This bill makes it clear that protecting our health care workers is a matter of public safety and an urgent responsibility. By requiring health care employers to assess risks, train staff, report incidents and respond to violence with real accountability, we are taking long overdue steps to ensure that no worker stands alone in harm's way."

(A "Yes" vote is for the bill.)

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

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

Continued on page 11

# COMMENTARY

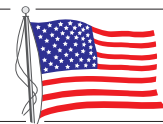
## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Somerville loves to celebrate the holidays.

## Our View Of The Times



It's been an interesting year in politics and social discourse, to say the least. The City of Somerville is certainly one classic example of strong, good-hearted people having the capacity to set aside fundamental ideological differences for the sake of appreciation of the community.

Events such as the city Christmas Tree lighting, taking place this Thursday, symbolically serve as a reminder that we are in-

deed a cohesive community, with our common hopes, fears, ambitions, and objectives.

Looking into the joyful face of a child filled with wonder as the lights are brightened fills us with a sense of resolve that we will persevere and protect our own. The most important thing we can do as responsible citizens is to make certain that our future is safe and secure as we launch into the future.

Later in the month, we can look forward to similar seasonal traditions such as the Somerville Illuminations beginning on the 12th, showcasing Somerville's best and brightest holiday lights, while the ceremonial Menorah Lighting will be taking place on the 15th, in celebration of Hanukkah.

We love our holiday season anyway, but in troubling times, we tend to become a little more appreciative of our traditions and

the stabilizing force they provide us.

Whatever gifts you may receive this Christmas, and whatever gifts you may give, at least give yourself the gift of taking a second to take a breath and enjoy whatever it is in your life that brings you true happiness.

Carry these thoughts into the new year, and we guarantee that the winter months will go by much more happily for you.

### Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Happy birthday to **Irene Bremis**. We wish her the very best. Happy birthday to **Kevin McDevitt**. We wish him a great day. Happy birthday to **Dorothy Derwishian O'Malley**, **Lee Grassia Anderson**, **Peter Blaikie**, **Karen Fay**, **Deb Feeley**, **Rochelle Jennings**, **Gordon Crook**, **Jason Castle**, **Steve Prescod**, **Kat Rutkin**, **James V Avila**, **Rita VanSteenburg**, **Brian M. Conley**, **Nicholas Cubides**, and **Kristen Chiaraluce**. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

\*\*\*\*\*

Support local businesses this holiday

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

\*\*\*\*\*

Both **flu** and **COVID-19** vaccines are conveniently offered at multiple locations across Somerville, improving access for all residents with no out-of-pocket costs. Visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/vaccinations> to see more clinics.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Spa Day at the Center** – Friday, December 5, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the **Holland Street Center**. The **Somerville High School Cosmetology Students** will be joining the COA. Their services include: Manicures (regular or gel) - \$5, Hair Styling (roller sets, curling iron sets, flat iron styling, any updo or braids.) - \$5, Facials (basic and relaxing) - \$10, Haircuts (we can spray hair with a water bottle) - \$5 Space is limited with a maximum of eight clients. They will be holding more days in January. RSVP to **Mary Marshall** by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2316.

\*\*\*\*\*

**COA Holiday Luncheon** – Thursday, December 11, at the **Dilboy Post**, located at 351 Summer Street, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$10 per person. Lunch will be stuffed chicken, vegetables, and salad. Please reserve your spot by calling **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321. **COA Holiday Party**, hosted by **Somerville's Veterans Services** and the **Council on Aging**. Tuesday, December 16, at the **Holland Street Center**, starting at 10 a.m. Join in for a crafting activity from 10:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. and for lunch at noon; don't forget to wear your ugly sweater. Please reserve *Continued on page 21*

# FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

# Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#1000

- Which shopping event is often compared to Black Friday in China?
- What U.S. constitutional milestone happened on December 6, 1865?
- In what fictional Indiana town does the sci-fi series *Stranger Things* take place?
- Which '70s sitcom starring Penny Marshall and Cindy Williams was a spin-off of *Happy Days*?
- Which pop star had a hit song called *Bad Guy* in 2019?
- Which band was originally called Starfish?
- Who is the author of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*?
- A camera inspired the original logo of what social media platform?
- Which freezes faster, hot or cold water?
- What is the maximum score possible in ten-pin bowling?
- What is the name of the process by which plants make their food?
- In which sport would you perform a slam, block, and spike?

Answers on page 14

## The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

- 3.6 cans of Spam are consumed each second.
- The average American looks at eight houses before buying one.

### STATEPOINT CROSSWORD DISNEY CHARACTERS

#### ACROSS

- Imperfections
- Part of T.G.I.F.
- Stark daughter on "Game of Thrones"
- Kind of print, for short
- Hula dancer's flowers
- Kitchen tear-jerker
- Viva voce
- Draft beer container
- Confused
- Irreverent Disney nanny
- Scar's older brother
- Famous T-Rex
- Gardening tool
- Louisville Slugger
- Stallion's mate
- Famous ciphering machine
- D'Artagnan's weapon of choice
- Essence
- Gloomy and drab
- Containing limestone
- Scrawny one
- Purse to match a gown
- Spot for boutonniere
- John Oates' partner Daryl
- Prepare for a rainy day
- Catch in a snare
- Rapper LL \_\_\_\_ J
- \_\_\_\_ Aviv
- Wholly engrossed
- Call to Bo Peep
- \*Shere Khan's sworn enemy
- Marie's and Toulouse's younger brother
- Beneficiary
- Opposite of nothing
- Pancho's last name
- Weasel's aquatic cousin
- "New" prefix
- Like Iago in "Alladin" or Laddy Kluck in "Robin Hood"
- Karate blow
- Not safe in baseball
- Like salad greens

#### DOWN

- Part of an envelope
- Nani Pelekai's little sister and new pet owner
- At the summit of
- Beats, slangily
- Hypertension sufferer's dietary concern
- Sorts
- Driver's aid
- Fraternity letter
- Dwarf buffalo
- Oil field structures
- Moving meditation practice
- "\_\_\_\_ day now"
- Hurt or upset
- Some tides
- Israel Kamakawiwo'ole's strings
- Take back
- Beast's love interest
- Bee-related
- Act like a siren
- Macaulay Culkin's "Richie \_\_\_\_"
- Wraths
- Gain access to (2 words)
- Shade of violet

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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35			36	37		38		39			
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53			54		55		56				
57	58	59			60			61	62	63	
64				65	66		67				
68				69			70				
71				72			73				



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### Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

- a.k.a Little Mermaid
  - Ogler
  - Angel's headgear
  - Geography class prop
  - "\_\_\_\_ than life"
  - Chum
  - Immature, as an undeveloped insect
  - Baby grand
  - Full of pep
  - It's drawn to light
  - "I'm \_\_\_\_ you!"
  - Shed tears
  - Soak some ink
  - Hipbones
  - "I am \_\_\_\_, and I like warm hugs"
  - Goofy or silly
  - Leader of the seven dwarfs
  - Romanian money
- Solution in the next edition of *The Somerville Times*.

# HHS Department awarded grant for warming center

By Harry Kane

More money is being allocated to help the homeless thanks to another generous grant from the state. The winter warming center will reopen on December 8 and provide safe sleeping spaces through April 12 at the former Cummings School building.

A grant of \$304,954.10 from the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities was awarded to the Health and Human Services Department for Somerville's most vulnerable.

"We were awarded the grant," said HHS Director Karin Carroll. "It's to cover, essentially, the operations after the first four weeks."

The grant money will cover the costs associated with 25 of the 35 cots from January through April, explained Carroll at the city council meeting on November 25.

Some funding had already been earmarked by the city for the warming center from the COVID-19 Stabilization Fund, which was approved during an earlier city council meeting on October 23, totaling \$147,724.07.

Additionally, the Massachusetts Largest Cities Innovative Homelessness Solutions Grant Program had awarded another \$119,095.58 for the warming center this year, said Public



The city's warming center will reopen this winter with additional funding provided by a state grant.

Information Officer Victoria MacGregor.

Last year, the city decided to transform the former Cummings School building into an overnight warming center for unhoused residents during the cold months. Before that, the warming center operated out of the second floor of the Armory.

The warming center will provide hot meals, bathrooms, and safe sleeping spaces for residents experiencing homelessness.

To accommodate more homeless individuals, renovations were made at the building that expanded the center's sleeping area to accommodate 35 cots and overflow space for 10 people, said MacGregor.

The warming center now has ADA accessible indoor bathrooms, a permanent wheelchair ramp outside the building, and an expanded fire alarm system.

The warming center will operate seven nights a week from 5 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. on the second floor of the former Cummings School located at 42 Prescott Street. Clients will have access to hot meals, safe sleeping spaces, and on-site housing navigation and case management services.

For more information about Somerville's Emergency Overnight Warming Center, visit [somervillema.gov/warmingcenter](http://somervillema.gov/warmingcenter) or email [warmingcenter@somervillema.gov](mailto:warmingcenter@somervillema.gov).

## The Somerville Times Historical Fact of the Week



### Eagle feathers #343

This article first appeared in the November 12, 2014, edition of *The Somerville Times*.

### Signs of the Time

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

The "time" was 150 years ago, and the "signs" appeared shortly after. America was in the last year of the Civil War, 1864-1865. The war would claim over 600,000 American lives and wound a million more before it ended. Every city and town would be affected in one way or another. Somerville was no different. The Somerville militia's sacrifice would be 98 killed and 250 wounded out of 1,485, or almost one quarter. Hundreds more served in other military branches. The Somerville Avenue 1863 Civil War Memorial to her fallen troops is said to be the first in the nation. This was a spark for the small town's appreciation later on.



When the war ended, half of the town was open land and began to be developed as streets were laid out from Spring Hill to beyond Teele Square. During the war, much of this area was called Camp Cameron, named after Lincoln's Secretary of War. Thousands of regional troops were trained there and on Prospect Hill.



As expansion occurred, a grateful citizenry who lived through that war never wanted to forget what they and their sons had endured. Liberty Pole Square's name was changed to Union Square. During the war, it had been illuminated with ninety gas lamps to protect it against enemy arson. New street names appeared throughout the town, celebrating the victory. In West Somerville, more than a dozen new streets are acknowledged and still do, the names of Admiral Farragut of the Navy, General Banks, General Burnside, General Hooker, General Hancock, and General Mead of the Army. Malvern Avenue *Continued on page 11*

## The Tufts University Department of Music Presents 'Kiniwe'

The Tufts University Department of Music presents *Kiniwe* at the Perry and Marty Granoff Music Center on Friday, December 5, at 8 p.m.

Attah Poku leads *Kiniwe* in a performance of music and dance from Ghana featuring Mohammed Alidu, Maltiti Ruhia A Saidk, Saeed Kuubetesuri, Agbekor Drum and Dance Society, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute African Drumming Ensemble.

The Granoff Music Center is located at 20 Talbot Avenue on Tufts' Medford/Somerville campus. For more information, please visit [as.tufts.edu/music/musiccenter](http://as.tufts.edu/music/musiccenter) or call the Granoff Music Center Box Office at 617-627-2253.

## LEGAL NOTICES

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## Notice of names of persons appearing to be owners of funds held by City of Somerville and deemed abandoned.

To claim funds, please go to [www.somervillema.gov/treasury](http://www.somervillema.gov/treasury) and complete the Abandoned and Unclaimed Property Form and send completed form together with required documentation to the City of Somerville Treasury Department by **January 21, 2026**. Mail to **City of Somerville, 93 Highland Ave, Somerville, MA 02143** or email [treasury@somervillema.gov](mailto:treasury@somervillema.gov). If you would like a printed copy of the Abandoned and Unclaimed Property Form mailed to you, please email treasury or call 617-625-6600 ext 3500. Funds not claimed by **January 21, 2026** will be deemed abandoned.

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ABUBAKAR, SAMIR A.  
ACEVEDO, NALLELIE  
ALLEN, CHRISTOPHER  
AMERICAN SAFETY COUNCIL INC  
ANGELAKIS DIONISSIOS CONSTANTINOS  
ANTHONY & LISA VELARDO  
APEX DEVELOPMENT CO INC  
ARDOLINO, JACKSON  
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BARROS, ETHAN  
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BERMAN, DANIEL JOSEPH  
BIENAIME, EVANS  
BLATT BUSINESS GROUP LLC  
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CASSESSO, CHRISTOPHER  
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CHRISTINE PIMENTAL  
CHRISTOPHER, KERN EDWARD  
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CLARKE, PAUL  
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COLEMAN MICHAEL & EILEEN A  
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DEMAYO, KIMBERLI  
DEPASQUALE, COURTNEY R.

DICKSON, KATELYN M.  
DIPALMA, DANIEL  
DONOVAN, NORA  
ECKART-LEE, JOSHUA  
EDWARDS, CRAIG  
ESTRADA, JOSE  
FEITOR MICHAEL & JOHN C & MARIA D &  
FERNANDES, JULIA  
FERRAZ, LAURA  
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FRIERE-TEJADA, ALIANA  
FURTUNA LLC  
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GAUTHIER, RONAN F.  
GELEAS, SELENA  
GERNER PHILIP & CLAIRE  
GIANOUKOS VASILEIOS  
GIGUEL, MEDHI  
GILCHRIST, ANNALYN  
GRAHAM, EMILIA  
GRAY BROTHERS REALTY LLC  
GREATER BOSTON MATHEMATIC LEAGUE  
GREEN, ANDRE  
GRIECO, OLIVIA  
GROW YOUR OWN LLC  
HARDY, CAITLIN  
HAYDEN, JASON SR  
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HERMITE, JEAN C  
HIGGINS, ALISON  
HODGDON, MARY LOU  
HOLISTIC INDUSTRIES INC  
IANCOVICI, MICHAEL  
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KEELY WILCZEK  
KELLI KILLOREN  
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KINER, EMMERIT  
KOSTINEK, JULIAN ALEXA  
KOWALSKI, CRISTINE  
KRISS LAW

LAN, YANG  
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LAURELCHILD - HERTIG POLLY  
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LORMEUS, GESTIN  
LOUIS, FLETCHER  
LPC COMMERCIAL SERVICES, INC  
LUN HSU HUNG & TING LIN I  
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TRUSTEE  
MARTELL, RYLEIGH  
MARTIN, ANGELINA  
MARTINEZ, AUNDREA  
MARTINEZ, JOSELYN  
MASTROIANNI, CLAUDIA M.  
MIRANDA, EMILIA  
MIZIOLEK, CLAIRE  
MODESTO, CARINA M.  
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MORGAN, LAURA  
MOY SAM R & EVADNE C TRS  
MURCIA MARTINEZ, JOSUE  
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NAPA AUTO PARTS  
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NICHOLAS CLARKE FIGHTER  
O'BRIEN, ELEANOR  
O'BRIEN, THEODORE  
OLIVE, VIOLA AND WILL INC  
OLIVIER, FAVIANA  
PALMER, STEPHANIE  
PARADIS, AMY  
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PIERRE, RICHARDSON  
PIGEON, CAMERON D.  
PINGREE, DAVID ROLLINS  
PITOL, MARCUS  
PRISCILLA ELIZABETH ZHANG  
PROCTER, JEREMY R.  
QAZILBASH, MAYA  
RACHAEL CHAGAT  
RAFTERY, PATRICK A.

RAYMOND, MARIO ARCHER  
REBECCA KLOBUCHER  
REDBOX AUTOMATED RETAIL  
REED, JAYME  
RESENDES, JESSICA  
RIVERA, CRISTIAN  
RIVERO, GABRIELA  
RODRIGUEZ, DARSY  
ROSAS, COLIN  
ROSAS, OWEN W.  
ROSENWINKEL, MARY E.  
SANTOS LANDAVERDE, FRANCISCO J.  
SARAH ST. GERMAIN  
SAULNIER, JESSICA  
SCHIFF, NETA  
SCOTIA MIDDLESEX CORPORATION  
SCOTT, COMEAU RANDALL  
SHAW, ELLIOT  
SHEA, JOHN  
SHERMAN, JENNIFER  
SISAK, STEPHEN G  
SONGHUA, CUI  
STACY-ANN WINT  
STEWART, ISABEL E.  
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WHEELS LT  
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WICKENDEN, SILAS  
WILLIAMS, BRENDA  
YANG JUNG, KIMBERLY  
YANJUN, LIU  
YESSENIA TEJADA  
YESSENIA TEJADA  
YU DAN & GU YING  
ZASLOFF, LORI

12/3/25 The Somerville Times

## Davis Square Holidate this coming Saturday

The Davis Square Merchants Association is excited to announce a brand-new community celebration for the 2025 holiday season: the Davis Square Holidate, taking place Saturday, December 6, as an all-day, neighborhood event. The event will begin at 8 a.m.

# DAVIS SQ HOLIDATE!

Designed to spotlight the vibrant local retailers and restaurants during the holiday rush, the Davis Square Holidate invites residents and visitors alike to spend the day exploring the numerous participating shops, cafés, and restaurants. Each business will offer its own festive perk, ranging from special discounts and limited-time pop-ups to complimentary treats like hot cider or a free appetizer.

"We wanted to create something fun, inviting, and uniquely Davis Square," said Paul Chrisite, owner of Davis Squared gift shop on Highland Ave. "The Holidate gives folks a chance to support small businesses while enjoying a little holiday magic throughout the Square."

### A Neighborhood-Wide Raffle with Local Flavor

The unifying element of the Davis Square Holidate is a community raffle celebrating the spirit of local giving. Visitors can fill out a raffle ticket at each participating business they visit on December 6, increasing their chances of winning as they explore the Square. At the end of the day, all raffle tickets will be collected, and four winners will be drawn. Each winner will receive a "Totally Davis Gift Basket" featuring gift cards donated by every participating business. Each business will contribute four \$10 gift cards, ensuring that every basket includes a diverse and delightful sampling of Davis Square favorites.

### An Invitation to Celebrate Local

The Davis Square Merchants Association encourages residents and visitors to join in the first-ever Davis Square Holidate. Whether discovering one of our shops, enjoying a seasonal snack, or simply soaking up the neighborhood's festive and funky atmosphere, attendees will experience the best of what Davis Square has to offer, while supporting local merchants during an important shopping season.

— Davis Square Merchants Association

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**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, December 16, 2025** 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 2 of the Acts of 2025, 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](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov).

**TO USE A COMPUTER**

Registration URL:  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YkBePEy3SlrhwazorUzBA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YkBePEy3SlrhwazorUzBA)  
Webinar ID: 863 3159 2163

**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)**

**HP25-000098 - 28 Vinal Avenue**

Applicant: 28 Vinal LLC  
Owner: 28 Vinal LLC

The Applicant seeks to demolish a building constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

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](mailto: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](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) **NO LATER THAN NOON** one week prior to the meeting date. Email [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) with inquiries.

11/26/25, 12/3/25 The Somerville Times



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

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

The Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will hold a virtual public hearing on **Wednesday, December 17, 2025**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to [ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov](mailto:ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov).

**TO USE A COMPUTER**

Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_4lh4qXh6SnSgnVCt852H5w](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4lh4qXh6SnSgnVCt852H5w)  
Webinar ID: 884 6980 0271

**TO CALL IN**

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

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

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

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

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

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions>.

Interested persons may provide comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to [ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov](mailto:ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov).

12/3/25 The Somerville Times

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PHONE: 857-488-5138**

Historical Fact CONT. FROM PG 9



and Seven Pines Avenue were named after battles and Cameron and Garrison Avenues were named after training grounds.

In 1866, the entrance to the new quarters for Fire Hose Company #1, intersecting Webster and Ellsworth Streets, was named in honor of the first officer killed in the Civil War, Lieutenant Elmer E. Ellsworth. He was a firefighter and a close friend of the president. On Winter Hill, General Grant, General Butler, and General Fremont are celebrated, as well as Civil War statesmen Edward Everett and Daniel Webster. President Abraham Lincoln is honored with four streets and a park.

In East Somerville, street signs honor the New England states of the Union with the avenues of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. The Western states of the Union are honored with the avenues of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. Pennsylvania, also known as the "Keystone State," joins them together to form the section now known as "the states Avenues." Garfield Avenue was named after General and later President James Garfield of Ohio, with Union Street, North Union Street, and Sherman Street circling all of the states.

For many years, Somerville's Historical Society featured a Civil War Round Table Room and library where historians and veterans could research and reminisce about the war.

A beautiful statue on Central Hill commemorates their valor and conviction. When we honor our combined veterans of all wars on November 11, don't forget the Civil War soldiers and sailors who died for our freedom and built up this city ... They were the soldiers and sailors of the Union.

Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 6

**DON'T MISS THIS TRANSPORTATION POLICY FORUM** - Massachusetts faces a turning point in transit. Long underfunded systems are getting a boost from a new Transportation Bond Bill — but key challenges remain.

On Tuesday, December 9, the State House News Service and MASSterList host TransitNEXT, a policy forum at the MCLE in Boston (Downtown Crossing). Speakers include interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phil Eng, former Federal Highway Deputy Administrator and MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollock, along with key legislators and transportation advocates. Networking begins at 7:30 a.m. with the policy conversation starting at 8:30 a.m. Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/transitnext>

**\$2.3 BILLION SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET (H**

4761) Gov. Maura Healey signed into law a \$2.3 billion fiscal year 2025 budget to close out the books on fiscal year 2025.

Provisions include \$1.67 billion for MassHealth, with a \$303 million net cost to the state after federal reimbursements; \$374 million for Steward hospital payments, with a \$236 million net cost to the state; \$10 million for Health Care For All to conduct a public awareness campaign to inform vulnerable populations about new Medicaid work requirements put in place by the recent federal spending bill; \$5 million in for reproductive health care; \$2.5 million for the Committee for Public Counsel Services for indigent persons; \$60.7 million for snow and ice removal; and \$50 million for the Housing Preservation and Stabilization Trust Fund.

Other provisions require an investigation into sheriffs' fiscal year 2025 spending deficits; create a new Sports and Entertainment Fund initially provided with \$10 million to support transportation, public safety and other costs related to Massachusetts' seven 2026 FIFA World Cup matches; criminalize the impersonation of a federal officer and increase penalties for impersonating a public official, including a federal officer; protect unpaid federal employees from residential eviction or foreclosure during and immediately after any federal shutdown; and remove the automatic requirement of a public notice for name-change petitions filed in court.

"This budget represents our commitment to delivering for people on what matters in their lives," said Gov. Healey. "It will make things more affordable, promote vaccine and health care access for our kids and families in the face of attacks from the federal government and *Continued on page 15*

# Gobble Gobble Gobble Road Race

On Thanksgiving morning, the Somerville Road Runner's 29th annual 4K Gobble Gobble road race was held in and around the Davis, Teele, Ball, and Magoun Square areas. Proceeds from the Gobble benefit SRR and local charities like Somerville Homeless Coalition, the Somerville High School Track team, and Stride for Stride. Over the past 11 years, the Gobble has raised over \$400,000 for local charities.

**Top 12 Overall Winners:**

David Zanetti: 20:01, Paulino Guevara Mateo: 20:14, Ed Baker: 20:30, Lucas Estrada: 20:50, Ryan Willems: 21:01, Jorge Buendia: 21:06, Matt Mixdorf: 21:12, Wesley Kaukas-Quinn: 21:17, Zach Dombi: 21:21, Nicolas Emmenegger: 21:29, Kristopher Koster: 21:38, Rachel Hyland: 21:45.



— Photo courtesy of Paul Nelson and family



— Photo courtesy of Paul Nelson and family





Photos by Bobbie Toner



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Ms. Cam's

Olio

Answers

From page 8

- |                                       |                    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Singles' Day                       | 7. Stieg Larsson   |
| 2. 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery | 8. Instagram       |
| 3. Hawkins                            | 9. Hot water       |
| 4. Laverne & Shirley                  | 10. 300            |
| 5. Billie Eilish                      | 11. Photosynthesis |
| 6. Coldplay                           | 12. Volleyball     |

# City Council re-elects Davis as President, Mbah as Vice President for 2026

By Jordan Pagkalinawan

Ahead of the November 25 meeting [1], the Somerville City Council Caucus elected the city council president and vice president for 2026. Councilor Lance Davis, who was elected on July 10 [2] after Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld's resignation [3], was selected to retain his position after a nomination by Councilor Matthew McLaughlin. Likewise, Councilor Wilfred Mbah, though absent from Tuesday's caucus meeting, was re-elected as vice president for 2026, following a nomination by Davis. Both nonbinding votes passed with ten councilors in favor.

Davis, representing Ward 6, has served on the City Council since 2015 [4], championing various civic issues, including housing stability, public education, and public space investment. Among the recent projects he's supported are the renovation of the West Branch Library, upkeep of Seven Hills Park, and new crosswalks and sidewalks in Davis Square. A graduate of Syracuse University's Newhouse School and Boston College Law School, Davis has passed several ordinances to protect civil rights and

ensure housing affordability. In addition to his role as city council president, he has been a member of six local committees [5], including the Land Use Committee, Legislative Matters Committee, and Open Space, Environment, and Energy Committee.

Mbah, a councilor since 2017 [6] and Councilor At-Large since last January, has fought for [7] housing equality, racial equity, and environmental justice in Somerville, among other issues. Born and raised in Cameroon and graduating from the University of Buea, he moved to the U.S. after attending Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. In his time as a city councilor, Mbah has used his position to advocate for the city's marginalized communities, including helping lead the creation of the Office of Housing and Stability [8] in 2021, alongside Davis. Mbah has also served on four committees, including the Finance Committee, Legislative Matters Committee, and Equity, Gender, Families, Seniors, and Vulnerable Populations Committee.

Davis' and Mbah's new two-year terms begin on January 5, 2026.



L to R: Newly re-elected City Council President Lance Davis, and Vice President Wilfred Mbah.

## Links:

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDyIrVVIIsII>

[2] <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/141543>

[3] <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/140173>

[4] <http://www.lancedavis.org/>

[5] [https://somervillema.legistar.com/PersonDetail.aspx-](https://somervillema.legistar.com/PersonDetail.aspx-?ID=271539&GUID=8F1E38B4-A43E-41D0-AD78-E91830967E28)

[?ID=271539&GUID=8F1E38B4-A43E-41D0-AD78-E91830967E28](https://somervillema.legistar.com/PersonDetail.aspx-?ID=271539&GUID=8F1E38B4-A43E-41D0-AD78-E91830967E28)

[6] <https://www.willmbah.com/wills-story>

[7] <https://www.willmbah.com/issues>

[8] <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/office-strategic-planning-and-community-development-osp-cd/office-housing-stability>

## Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 11

protect public safety in our communities. While President Trump is increasing costs and cutting funding from states, this budget is balanced and protects taxpayer dollars."

"With the next fiscal year well underway, it is critical that we close the books on fiscal year 2025 with a balanced budget that delivers for Massachusetts communities," said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. "This bill reflects our commitment to responsibly managing state spending and stretching every dollar in service of Massachusetts residents."

"The governor and Legislature put the finishing touches on a supplemental budget that was full of gravy for their pet projects, and not prioritizing the taxpayers of the commonwealth," said Paul Craney, executive director of the Mass Fiscal Alliance which opposed the budget. "If you can imagine a Thanksgiving feast, the taxpayers were on the table and not at the table. Our hard-earned money was being carved up for misguided priorities. Spending billions of dollars on items that do not grow jobs, reduce energy costs or make our state more economically competitive is utterly foolish but that's what this supplemental budget represents."

None of the nine representatives who voted against the budget when it was approved by the Legislature respond-

ed to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking them why they voted against it. Those nine representatives are Reps. Donald Berthiaume (R-Spencer), Nicholas Boldyga (R-Southwick), Colleen Garry (D-Dracut), John Gaskey (R-Carver), Marc Lombardo (R-Billerica), Joseph McKenna (R-Sutton), Alyson Sullivan-Almeida (R-Abington), Kenneth Swezey (R-Hanson) and Justin Thurber (R-Somerset).

### PROTECT ALL PUBLIC TRANSIT WORKERS FROM ASSAULT AND BATTERY (S 2697) -

The House and Senate approved and sent to Gov. Healey legislation that would expand the current law which punishes anyone who commits assault and battery against a public employee including police officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel. The bill ensures that all transit workers are covered, including those who are not directly employed by the state, such as workers employed by Keolis, the state's contracted commuter rail operator. The bill would also add "assault and battery by means of a bodily substance including saliva, blood or urine" to the current law.

"Transit workers are among the most essential employees of our commonwealth, carrying out the steady and often unseen work that allows tens of thousands of people to

travel safely and reliably each day," said Senate sponsor Sen. Nick Collins (D-South Boston). "Their commitment keeps our cities moving, even under challenging and unpredictable circumstances. When the rights and safety of these workers are impinged upon, it is an affront to the invaluable service they provide and the trust the public places in them."

Collins continued, "We must remain vigilant in safeguarding their wellbeing as they encounter nearly every facet of public life in this line of work. With the passage of this legislation, strengthening protections and expanding the definition of what constitutes an assault against a transit worker, we are sending a clear message that we do not take their hard work for granted and that we stand firmly behind those who keep our commonwealth connected."

"Our transit workers provide critical services all over the commonwealth, yet are many times assaulted by the very customers they serve," said House sponsor Rep. Joe McGonagle (D-Everett). "I am so thrilled that both the House and Senate prioritized this important issue. The right to feel safe and supported on the job is just that, a right. I'm also extremely grateful to the brave men and women who came forward to share their stories. I look forward to Gov. Healey signing this bill swiftly."

Continued on page 17

# Money Map Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

**Q: What is the Pareto Principle, and how can it help my finances?**

**A:** The Pareto Principle, or 80/20 Rule, says that 80% of results often come from just 20% of efforts. In your financial life, that means focusing on a few high-impact actions can drive most of your progress.

Here's how to apply it:

• **Spending:** A few purchases likely cause most of your budget leaks. Track your top 3 recurring expenses or impulse buys.

• **Debt:** One or two accounts may be driving most of your interest payments. Target those first with extra payments.

• **Income:** A small part of your work or side hustle might generate most of your earnings—lean into that strength.

• **Financial stress:** Most of your money worries may come from just one or two issues—naming them is the first step to solving them.

Start by asking: What 1–2 changes would make the biggest difference? That's the 80/20 Rule in action—and it works!

**Any questions? I'd be happy to help.**

I'm Vincent Hicks, CPA, based in Somerville with over 20 years of experience. Reach out at [vchicksconnect@gmail.com](mailto:vchicksconnect@gmail.com) or (859) 553-0788.

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



## Just-In-Time Initiative hosts Fundraiser, silent auction to support families impacted by homicide and unexpected trauma

On Sunday, December 14, The Just-In-Time Initiative will bring together families, survivors, community leaders, and supporters for a deeply meaningful fundraiser and silent auction from 3 to 7 p.m. at La Fábrica Restaurant, 450 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge. This event is more than a fundraiser — it is a gathering of hearts, a celebration of resilience, and a call to support families facing the unthinkable.

The Just-In-Time Initiative was founded out of profound loss by two mothers whose lives were forever changed by gun violence:

- **Denise Cosby**, who lost her 21-year-old son, Justin Cosby, to murder on the campus of Harvard University in 2009.
- **Faye Rackley**, who lost her 19-year-old grandson, Kenneth Rackley, to murder in 2010.

From their deepest grief grew a powerful mission: to make sure that families who lose loved ones to homicide are not left alone, not forgotten, and not forced to navigate trauma without support.

### A Heartfelt Evening of Healing and Hope

The fundraiser will feature a series of personal testimonies, community voices, and presentations that speak directly to the real, raw experiences of families affected by homicide. The organization is honored to welcome several powerful and wonderful presenters, including Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, whose advocacy for justice and community healing aligns with the heart of this event.

### Guests will also experience:

- A silent auction filled with donated items that reflect community generosity
- Healing testimonies from survivors and loved ones
- Raffle prizes
- Educational insights from advocates, law enforcement, and community professionals
- Space for remembrance, connection, and empowerment

Every dollar raised will help provide critical support to grieving families — including counseling, crisis assistance, court guidance, youth outreach, emergency resources, and memorial support.

### A Message from the Founders

“After Justin was taken from me, I didn’t know how to breathe, how to move, or how to keep living. My heart was broken into a million pieces,” said founder Denise Cosby. “But I knew no mother should ever walk this path alone. Justin lost his voice that day so I became his voice. This organization is built on love — the love I have for my son and for every parent like me.”

Co-founder Faye Rackley shared, “When Kenneth was taken, his family and my world were shattered. But through helping others, I found purpose again. We want families to feel held, supported, and seen. This fundraiser allows us to continue providing hope where it’s needed most. We want everyone to know, Not One Stands Alone.”

Join Us. Stand With Us. Give Hope.

The Just-In-Time Initiative invites the community to come together in compassion, remembrance, and action.

Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door.

To reserve tickets or learn more, please visit: <https://share.google/WkXJZ7WwhlNIN5CPR>

### About the Just-In-Time Initiative:

The Just-In-Time Initiative is a nonprofit organization providing support, advocacy, and resources to families who have lost loved ones to homicide. Rooted in compassion and founded in remembrance, the organization exists to bring healing, education, and hope to grieving families across the community.



Featuring Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley.

# Eat Out in East Initiative continues through the holiday season

By Angelina Parrillo

As the holiday season and winter weather approach, Eat Out in East, the collaborative initiative of Ward 1 City Councilor Matt McLaughlin and East Somerville Main Streets, enters its third successful month.

Launched in September, the initiative began in an effort to stimulate neighborhood business after a sharp increase in Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity in Somerville. Councilor McLaughlin reported in an opinion article published in the Cambridge Day and The Somerville Times this past September, "Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents are out in East Somerville, and the streets are noticeably silent." He further explained, "The decline in business, as well as tariffs, is negatively impacting our community and tax base. The lack of neighborhood presence on the streets only makes us less safe."

Hosted every Wednesday from 4 to 8 p.m., Eat Out in East encourages community interaction, specifically by dining at the 24 restaurants in the East Somerville business district, 22 of which are immigrant-owned. Executive Director of East Somerville Main Streets, Lindsay Allen, stated in an interview with the Somerville Times, "We always

talk about how these small businesses are the backbone of the community, and they very much are, and they are very much struggling right now."

With the approach of January and February, known as a particularly challenging time of year for the restaurant industry, Allen hopes to sustain the initiative through winter. She reported positively on the initial months of Eat Out in East, "We've seen consistency since September, which we're excited about, and I think generally, people like it for the fact that it is a community event, and you can volunteer, you can support a small business, or you can just walk around the neighborhood and be in community with each other."

Also occurring every Wednesday in East Somerville is the Community Meal hosted by Connexion United Methodist Church on 149 Broadway. Each week, free meals are provided at Connexion by a different local restaurant. The event is open for all to join. Volunteers are also encouraged to assist with preparation, distribution, and clean-up after the meal. As the Community Meal and Eat Out in East events happen concurrently, Allen said that many residents take the opportunity to participate in both.

Along with the Community Meal, Connexion also provides several other oppor-



The Eat Out in East Initiative will carry on throughout the wintery months ahead.

tunities to engage with the neighborhood and community members. According to Councilor McLaughlin, "Connexion provides services for those in need, including food, clothing, and other resources. There are many residents there who can connect you to other initiatives to support our local businesses and our neighbors."

For the future of Eat Out in East Somerville, Allen said that many ideas are in progress to ensure continued foot traffic in the business district. Different food-themed crawls or trails may take place on

Wednesdays throughout the winter to keep Eat Out in East an exciting routine for the community. "Life is really busy, and this is something where a little light bulb goes off for folks like, 'It's Wednesday, we should go to East,'" said Allen.

Regardless of weekday or season, Allen emphasized that East Somerville businesses rely on the presence of local customers, "Support our small businesses any way you can. Our mission is to keep our main street vibrant and keep our businesses where they are."

## Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 15

### OKUR-CHUNG NEURODEVELOPMENT SYNDROME (OCNDS) AWARENESS DAY (H 3366) –

The House gave initial approval to legislation designating April 5 as Okur-Chung Neurodevelopmental Syndrome Awareness Day.

According to the National Library of Medicine, "Individuals with OCNDS frequently have nonspecific clinical features, delayed language development, motor delay, intellectual disability (typically in the mild-to-moderate range), generalized hypotonia starting in infancy, difficulty feeding and nonspecific dysmorphic facial features.

Lead sponsor Rep. Kristin Kassner (D-Hamilton) said that she filed this bill on behalf of her constituent Jillian Kavanagh, who brought OCNDS to her attention. Kassner said, "OCNDS is rare and difficult to diagnose, but if caught early, there are treatments that can lead to better outcomes. Our goal in filing this bill was to raise awareness of the syndrome, which can lead to earlier diagnoses that truly improve the quality of life for patients and their families."

### PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON A PERSON'S HEIGHT (H 1820) -

The Judiciary Committee held a hearing on legislation that would provide increased protection from harassment and discrimination on the basis of height, by adding height as a protected characteristic across Massachusetts civil rights and hate-crime laws.

The measure also creates a new law that prohibits photographing or videotaping a person with a disability without the person's consent. Anyone who conveys such a photograph or video by electronic communication or publishes the photograph in print for the sole purpose of harassing or annoying the person or the person's family, would be subject to up to a 3-month prison sentence and/or a fine of up to \$500.

Supporters said the bill would strengthen anti-discrimination statutes, enhance protections for students, update hate-crime definition and direct the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination to enforce these new

safeguards. They argued that the proposal would ensure that individuals cannot be denied opportunities, treated unfairly or subjected to bias-motivated harassment simply because of their height.

"Everyone deserves to live, work and learn in an environment free from discrimination," said co-sponsor Rep. Angelo Puppolo (D-Springfield). "[The bill] takes a meaningful step toward ensuring that no one is targeted, bullied or denied opportunity because of their height. This bill is about fairness, dignity and strengthening Massachusetts' commitment to equal treatment for all."

Rep. Michael Kushmerek (D-Fitchburg), the co-sponsor of the bill, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking him to comment on his bill.

**COMBAT STREET TAKEOVERS (H 4736) –** The Judiciary Committee's hearing also included a measure that supporters say will protect the public from street takeovers by giving cities and towns the necessary tools to combat the Street Takeover Public Safety Crisis. *Continued on page 18*

## Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 17

The bill would prohibit the reckless or negligent operation of a group of two or more vehicles in a public place or at a business or commercial property in a way that hinders the movement of other vehicles. Violators would be subject to up to a 2.5-year prison sentence and a fine of up to \$2,000. The measure also imposes up to a 1-year prison sentence and/or up to a \$500 fine on anyone who is convicted of disorderly conduct or disturbing the peace while wearing a mask.

Another provision would sharply distinguish street takeovers from traditional reckless operation of a vehicle; allow for the forfeiture of vehicles utilized in street takeovers; and provides municipalities with the funds received from the sale of the forfeited vehicles.

Supporters said they filed the bill in response to the rash of dangerous street takeover events across the state, resulting in several arrests, injuries and damaged property including a Boston Police vehicle which was burned while officers were responding to a recent street takeover incident.

Sponsor Rep. Christopher Markey (D-Dartmouth) said he is deeply concerned by the danger that recent street takeover incidents represent to public safety. "We have already seen multiple instances where property was damaged, law enforcement was assaulted and bystanders were injured," said Markey. "This legislation takes an important step by giving law enforcement and municipalities the necessary tools to combat the crisis."

**MAKE JURASSIC ARMORED MUD BALL THE OFFICIAL SEDIMENTARY STRUCTURE OF THE STATE (H 3438)** – The House gave initial approval to a bill that would designate the Jurassic Armored Mud Ball (JAMB) as the official sedimentary structure of the state.

Supporters said that these mud balls are one of the rarest sedimentary structures in the world, representing a unique geologic environment and are only easily seen in Massachusetts. They noted that they can be found in Greenfield, Turners Falls, Gill and Deerfield.

Richard Little, Professor Emeritus of Greenfield Community College is leading the fight to preserve and publicize the JAMB.

"The intriguing and amusingly named armored mud balls formed as mud rolled down flooding streams and became coated with pebbles - the armor," said Little. "These sedimentary structures are so rare that, in the whole world, they are only easily seen in the red sedimentary rocks of the Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts. Officially

celebrating them as one of Massachusetts' symbols, will preserve them for future generations. After all, they are in the same Jurassic rock layers as our State Dinosaur (Po-dokesaurus) and State Fossil (Dino Footprints). That is why I am leading a working group of scientists and citizens to preserve these rare features."

Advocates also note that famous Greenfield native and magician, Penn Jillette of Penn and Teller once said, "I may live in Las Vegas and travel the world, but my armored mud balls will always be in Greenfield. Let's protect them."

### QUOTABLE QUOTES

"The misinformation coming from the Trump administration about vaccines is dangerous and puts the health of our children and families at risk. We must continue to be clear: Vaccines – including the hepatitis B vaccine for newborns – are safe, effective and lifesaving. Massachusetts will continue to base our public health decisions on science and make sure that people have access to the vaccines that they want and need." — *Gov. Maura Healey*

"We have a saying in the fire service: 'You risk a little to save a little, and you risk a lot to save a lot.' In big cities and small towns, these firefighters risked everything when lives were on the line. The physical, mental and technical skills they bring to this demanding job are second to none, and the Firefighter of the Year Awards are a small way of recognizing their singular value to our commonwealth." — *State Fire Marshal Jon Davine honoring firefighters from 15 local fire departments and two state agencies for acts of lifesaving heroism and community service at Massachusetts' 36th Annual Firefighter of the Year Awards.*

"Safer streets are achieved through strong partnerships. These nonprofits play a vital role in educating the public about traffic safety, and we're proud to support their work." — *Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, awarding \$297,135 to four nonprofits to continue community-based traffic safety initiatives, including pedestrian safety improvements, youth traffic safety education and a young driver diversion program.*

"Faced with our lawsuit, the federal government has rightly decided to drop their cruel and unlawful restrictions on essential services that help victims of violent crime navigate their trauma and get back on their feet. Our support for survivors should be unconditional, and I will continue fighting to hold the Trump Administration accountable for actions that harm vulnerable residents." — *Attorney General Andrea Campbell, on securing an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), ensuring DOJ will not apply alarming restrictions to critical Victims of Crime Act and Violence Against Women*

*Act -- services that support survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.*

"Adult learners strengthen both our communities and our economy. Adult and Community Learning Services has long built bridges between classroom and career, and this investment is a clear display that workforce readiness remains a priority." — *Education Secretary Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, awarding \$4.1 million to 12 adult education organizations to support the organizations' work helping adults enroll in college or find employment in high-growth industries. The funding will be used to provide training, education and wrap-around services to approximately 700 adults to help them pursue jobs such as medical interpreters, certified nursing assistants and community health care workers.*

### HOW LONG WAS LAST WEEK'S SESSION?

*Beacon Hill Roll Call* tracks the length of time that the House and Senate were in session each week. Many legislators say that legislative sessions are only one aspect of the Legislature's job and that a lot of important work is done outside of the House and Senate chambers. They note that their jobs also involve committee work, research, constituent work and other matters that are important to their districts.

Critics say that the Legislature does not meet regularly or long enough to debate and vote in public view on the thousands of pieces of legislation that have been filed. They note that the infrequency and brief length of sessions are misguided and lead to irresponsible late-night sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding the end of an annual session.

During the week of November 24-28, the House met for a total of one hour and four minutes and the Senate met for a total of one hour and six minutes.

Mon. Nov. 24	House 11:01 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Senate 11:02 a.m. to 11:49 a.m.
Tues. Nov. 25	No House session No Senate session
Wed. Nov. 26	House 11:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Senate 11:02 a.m. to 11:21 a.m.
Thurs. Nov. 27	No House session No Senate session
Fri. Nov. 28	No House session No Senate session

*Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com*

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**Somerville Fair Housing Commission**  
*Question of the week*

**Q: Is anybody exempt from the federal Fair Housing Act?**

**A:** There are several situations that are exempted from Title VIII:

- 1) A single-family house sold or rented by the owner--but only if done without the use of a real estate broker and without discriminatory advertising (oral or written), and only if certain other conditions are met.
- 2) Rental of rooms or units in owner-occupied dwellings of four units or less.
- 3) Exemptions for familial status include:
  - state and federally owned elderly developments; or,
  - housing intended for and solely occupied by persons 62 years of age or older; or,
  - housing intended for occupancy by at least one person 55 years old or older per unit.
- 4) Exemptions for disabilities include:
  - persons whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health and safety of others; and,
  - persons whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others.

*The Somerville Fair Housing Commission generally meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 3 p.m. online. Call 617-625-6600 ext. 2578 for the login information.*

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

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# Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Street of stairs... — Photo by Denise Provost

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By Bobbygeorge Potaris



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## On This Day in History

### December 3

- 1468 – Lorenzo the Magnificent and his brother Giuliano succeed their father, Piero de Medici, as rulers of Florence, Italy.
- 1762 – France cedes to Spain all lands west of the Mississippi.
- 1847 – Frederick Douglass and Martin R. Delaney establish the North Star, and anti-slavery paper.
- 1918 – The Allied Conference ends in London where they decide that Germany must pay for the war.
- 1965 – The National Council of Churches asks the United States to halt the massive bombings in North Vietnam.
- 1977 – The State Department proposes the admission of 10,000 more Vietnamese refugees to the United States.
- 1984 – Toxic gas leaks from a Union Carbide plant and results in the deaths of thousands in Bhopal, India.
- 1989 – Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev announce the official end to the Cold War at a meeting in Malta.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

your spot by calling **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Connexion closet** is accepting **clothing donations**, all seasons, all genders, and all sizes. The most wanted items are pants and jackets. You can drop off donations at Connexion, 149 Broadway. Please make sure you leave donations inside the building with a label that says, "For Connexion closet". Need clothes? The Connexion closet opens Mondays and Fridays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Wednesdays 4 to 6 p.m. Want to donate and can't drop it off? Email closet@connexionumc.org to coordinate a pickup. Questions email: clos-et@connexionumc.org.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

Shop 50+ artisan, maker, and vintage vendors at **Small Mart Holiday Markets** on **December 6** and 20, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the **Crystal Ballroom**, Davis Sq. Small Mart brings together over 50 artisan, maker, and vintage vendors offering unique, thoughtfully made gifts. You'll find hand-printed art, cozy ceramics, standout vintage fashion, and locally crafted goods that make giving (and shopping) feel good.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Davis Square Holidate** takes place on **Saturday, December 6**, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,

409 Highland Ave., Somerville. Join over 20 local businesses celebrating the Holiday Season with special promotions, giveaways, and Holiday sales. Every purchase at a participating business will also give you the chance to win one of 4 gift packages worth more than \$200 of local dining, shopping, and services.

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Union Square Jingle Shop, Sip & Mingle** takes place **Sunday, December 7**, 1 to 6 p.m. In Union Sq. Union Square businesses are decked with sparkling lights, dressed-up windows, and Instagrammable inflatables that are ready to help you be a holiday host with the most. Extreme weather date December 14.

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the **Somerville Community Growing Center** at the **Union Square Jingle**. The Growing Center will be open **Sunday, December 7**, from 1:00 to 6:00 pm for this festive neighborhood tradition (formerly the Holiday Stroll) offered by Union Square Main Streets. In your travels through the square, don't forget to stop by the Growing Center for hot herbal tea and winter cheer. The Jingle will offer Instagram-worthy inflatables like at **Fluff Fest**, a storefront decoration contest, and the "Stroll the Square Challenge."

\*\*\*\*\*

**Somerville Illuminations** begins **Friday, December 12**. Showcase and admire Somerville's best and brightest holiday lights. Add your home or business by **Thursday, December 11**, to be featured on the online Illuminations map <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/illuminations/>. Illuminations Tour. Take a **self-guided tour** using the published map. Join the **Illuminations bike tour** on **Sunday, December 13** (rain date: December 14) at 5:45 p.m. Meet in front of **City Hall** (93 Highland Ave.). Visit [somervilleartscouncil.org/events/illuminations2025](https://somervilleartscouncil.org/events/illuminations2025) to access the map and for more information.

\*\*\*\*\*

Tour any of **Somerville Public Schools'**

**Prekindergarten to Grade 8 schools** on **Tuesday, December 9**. Everyone is welcome to drop in at 9, 10, 11 a.m., or noon to tour the schools. January tour dates: **January 8, 2026**, 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m., **January 27, 2026**, 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m. Learn more: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/tours>

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Center for Arts at the Armory**, 191 Highland Ave., will host and manage the **16th Annual Somerville Winter Farmers Market (SWFM)** every Saturday beginning **November 1 through April 11**, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This weekly market offers the best locally grown and regionally produced agricultural items, including vegetable produce, cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, pastries, and sweets. In addition to cash, credit, and debit, SNAP / EBT is also accepted at the market. CAA raises funds to be able to provide a \$15 match so that SNAP / EBT for every SNAP/EBT customer who spends at least \$15 of their SNAP/EBT dollars at the market. The market is also participating in the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), which allows qualifying customers to receive between \$40 – \$80 worth of free farm-fresh fruits and vegetables from participating HIP vendors. To learn more and for a complete listing of vendors, weekly specials, and live entertainment, please visit [www.somwintermarket.org](http://www.somwintermarket.org).

somwintermarket.org.

\*\*\*\*\*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our **Arts Editor, Doug Holder**, for setting up a **GoFundMe campaign** for **The Somerville Times**. With the cost of printing going up and a lack of businesses having the resources to advertise, free papers feel the effect. We sincerely thank all who have already contributed and thank any future contributors. If you are interested in helping, please visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-somerville-times>. Or if anyone is interested in advertising, please contact [Bobbietoner@aol.com](mailto:Bobbietoner@aol.com). We offer great discounts to help our advertisers be able to advertise. Thank you all so much for your support!

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Somerville Museum** presents **Discover "Ring It On"** at **Market Basket** in Somerville. A glimpse into modern life through digital video projection. By **Barbara Jo, Nathan, Fash, and Olga Mesa**. On view **until December 6**. Visit today (2 – 5 p.m.) or Saturday (12 – 5 p.m.). One Westwood Road. For more information, visit [www.somervillemuseum.org](http://www.somervillemuseum.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

Through the generosity of the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** and under the direction of **Mayor Ballantyne**, the **Council on Aging** can provide **Durable Medical Equipment** at no cost to Somerville residents. Residents with a documented need for medical equipment must be over the age of 60 or have a permanent disability and must be otherwise unable to afford or access needed medical equipment. For additional information or for an application, please contact **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

\*\*\*\*\*

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The Bargain Center

CONT. FROM PG 3

evokes a parent's (or grand-parent's) love for their children.

Finally, one of the very reasons the Bargain Center existed proved to be its ultimate demise. A devastating fire so serious that there would be no fire sale.

"I remember the day it [The Bargain Center] burned down. I saw the smoke pall, likely all those pairs of discount sneakers, wafting through the air from my classroom at the Southern. Bright blue, sunny, and cold day. It must've been late '71

or very early '72."

Dan tells us, "We may have ventured into the burned-out [Bargain Center] building too (what's the statute if limitations?). The whole neighborhood smelled of smoke."

As I have mentioned in previous articles,

I still have the green, rubber boots that my dad bought in the late 60s from "Bargies."

After your shopping spree at the Bargain Center, you could head over to Speedy Pizza, Fras-catis, or The Venice Café for a nice meal.

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## OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

## Somerville poet John Pijewski: His new book of poetry 'Collected Father'

At a recent gathering, I ran into the poet John Pijewski. Pijewski, a member of the New England Poetry Club. He told me about his new book of poetry coming out from the Finishing Line Press in January 2026. It sounded gripping and harrowing, so I decided to ask him for an interview, which he generously agreed to. The poet writes:

"The poems in *Collected Father* exist in the province between Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*, in which an abandoned boy struggles to survive on his own in the brutal peasant culture of Poland during WWII, and Franz Kafka's *Letter to His Father*. They deal with dark subjects (my father's life in pre-war Poland and his imprisonment in a Nazi labor camp during WWII, along with the domestic violence my father perpetrated in our family). I've written the poems with the cold, clear eye of a witness, but also used nightmarishly dark humor. The poems are meant to be read like a novel, not to read randomly as though picking through a box of chocolates."

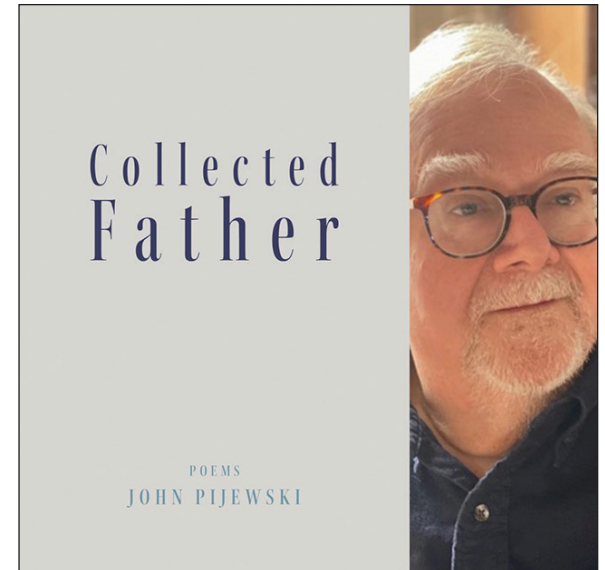
John Pijewski was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1952. He graduated from Boston University, the University of New Hampshire in Durham, and attended Iowa's Writers' Workshop. His book of poems, *Dinner with Uncle Jozef*, was published by Wesleyan University Press in 1982. He received a writing fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts in 1984. John taught Creative Writing as an adjunct professor for 35 years at Boston University, the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, and the University of Southern Maine in Portland. His poems have been published in *The Paris Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Tri-Quarterly*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The New Yorker*, and other journals.

**Doug Holder:** How has it been for you as a writer living in Somerville all these years?

**John Pijewski:** Being a writer in Somerville has been an absolute dream. I've lived in a house near the summit of Spring Hill for the past 28 years. The views are fabulous. The air is clean and clear. The sunlight bright and invigorating. It's spring every day of the year. Inspiration wafts through my open windows, and I pluck poems from the air before they jump into my lap.

**DH:** This collection reminds me in some ways of the novel, *The Pawnbroker*, by Edward Lewis Wallant. Your father was like the pawnbroker in the story, twisted by the Holocaust, and seething with anger.

**JP:** Yes, my father was somewhat like the main character in *The Pawnbroker*. He was clearly traumatized by his three years in a Nazi labor camp. He was an angry man, but his situation was molded by more than just WWII.



He was born in 1914 to extreme poverty on his farm in Poland, as well as being brutalized by an angry father who ruled with an iron fist and a thick leather razor strop. His father was also a heavy drinker. My father's mother died when he was 9 years old, leaving him stranded in a family of all males, devoid of any feminine presence. He left school at age 12 to work full-time on the family farm. It was a national disaster when the German army conquered Poland in 1939. My father was 22 when he married a local farm girl, age 18, who died at age 22 (1941) when she was pregnant with her second child, a daughter, who also died. In 1942 he was imprisoned in a Nazi labor camp and had to abandon his 4-year-old son on the family farm.

After the war my father was confined to a Displaced Persons camp in Germany for 5 years to wait for a country, any country, to accept him as a war refugee. While in the D.P. camp, he married a Polish woman who'd also been an inmate in a Nazi labor camp. Their first child, a daughter, died in childbirth in 1947. My father probably asked himself why the women in his life kept dying. In May 1950 they gave birth to a son before they arrived in United States (Boston) in late November of that year. This means that, for my father, WWII lasted 11 years, which is longer than Odysseus spent trying to return home in *The Odyssey*.

**DH:** You use gallows humor in your work, and I imagine in your life, when you think back on the past. Is humor a way to deflect the pain; is irony a sort of shield?

**JP:** Any kind of humor, including gallows humor, is a great gift in understanding and tolerating difficult situations. It's a way all of us can howl at the moon. Whether it's a coping mechanism, or a deflection of pain, or a shield of irony, humor makes pain more tolerable without minimizing *Continued on page 23*

# Lyrical

## SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

My name is Ava Amara. I am a sophomore Entrepreneurship major and Construction Management minor at Endicott College. I am on the lacrosse team, as well. While I am not pursuing writing as a career, I have a passion for poetry. I find it to be an impactful way to express my thoughts and emotions.



### Que Será, Será

The tide rolls in and out  
Nothing can disrupt its tune,  
We craft our castles in the sand  
But, they vanish far too soon.

I've fought the rain  
I've cursed the sky  
I've begged the night for more time,  
Yet time won't linger for those who ask

The stars don't ask where they should shine  
The wind just knows to blow  
The seeds don't rush to break the soil  
They know exactly when to grow

I used to fight for control  
To make meaning out of every shift,  
To hold in place what could never stay  
But I've found peace in letting go

So let the river take its course  
Let mountains kiss the mist,  
The heart beats on, with no remorse  
I, too can learn to breathe

And when tomorrow calls my name,  
I'll smile and let it be  
What is, what was, what will be,  
Que Será, Será

— Ava Amara

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)

## Sunday Concert Series: Uyon-Uyon Mat-Matan

The Tufts University Department of Music presents Sunday Concert Series: Uyon-Uyon Mat-Matan at the Perry and Marty Granoff Music Center on Sunday, December 7, at 3:00pm.

Gamelan Laras Tentrem and the Tufts gamelan ensemble, Rinengga Sih Tentrem, perform a concert of Javanese gamelan music with special guest artists I.M. Harjito and Peni Candra Rini.

Barry Drummond, director.

The Granoff Music Center is located at 20 Talbot Avenue on Tufts' Medford/Somerville campus.

For more information, please visit [as.tufts.edu/music/musiccenter](http://as.tufts.edu/music/musiccenter) or call the Granoff Music Center Box Office at 617-627-2253.



## Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 22

it. Most great humor has pain as its source. It's also how we can achieve grace and transcend the darkness that's an inevitable part of life.

**DH:** Your father created a sort of concentration house in the West End of Boston where you lived. Was this pure cruelty, or in some perverse way was he trying to teach you something?

**JP:** My father was in a labor camp, not a concentration camp, although the two sometimes overlapped. Most of the famous Nazi concentration camps also had labor camps attached to them. The Nazis needed healthy people to work for the German war effort, so they weren't going to kill everyone (except for Jews and people who posed a political threat). There were about 200 labor camps in Germany during the war; none of these made it a policy to kill the inmates. The intention was to use slave labor for Germany's benefit. If people died in the process (many did), so be it. When (if) Germany won the war, after all the Jews had been killed, they had plans to kill most of the Poles and Russians, saving some of them to work as slaves for the Third Reich.

As a child, as a young adult, as an inmate of a Nazi labor camp, my father was always at the mercy of the power others exerted over him. He had very little, if any, power in his life. When he arrived in America, he thought of himself as, finally, having power in his family. And he wasn't interested in sharing his power with anyone because no one had shared power with him. Unfortunately, his life had taught him a very narrow, nasty view of what personal power was. My father never had the chance to develop much emotional maturity given how awful his life had been before he arrived in America. It became evident that my father remained a hurt child for most of his life and lashed out at his children with anger.

**DH:** The book is meant not to be read as separate poems but as a whole work. Why?

**JP:** *Collected Father* is definitely a book of individual poems. Each poem was written to stand on its own. But the poems were also built to support each other and are presented in a linear chronology. To really appreciate the book, I think, it's best to read the poems in the order they're presented, like a novel.

**DH:** Was the work anyway cathartic for you?

**JP:** Of course it was. I had to enter the sensibility of a child in many of the poems to experience my father as I had many years ago. I wanted to capture the raw emotions I felt then, and I wanted the reader to feel them too. My father was distant, neglectful, dismissive, disrespectful, judgmental. He was abusive physically, verbally, emotionally, psychologically. He often called me "Shithead" in Polish (his nickname for me). He often castigated me for not being like my older brother, who didn't challenge our father the way I did.

In some ways it got worse when I became an adult. He didn't dare abuse me physically because I was taller and stronger than him and he knew I'd defend myself, but he ramped up his other forms of abuse. If I accomplished anything positive, he often expressed surprise, or dismissed it. To him I was a failure as a son and a human being. He liked to say that if I was ever sent to a slave labor camp, I'd never survive it.

It saddens me to say that his family in Boston didn't provide my father with much joy. He gave the impression that we were a constant burden to him. What seemed to give him the most pleasure was doing projects (alone) in his basement workshop and drinking with his Polish buddies.

But a curious thing happened as I was writing these poems about my father. I'd always felt sorry for him, for having faced the many hardships in his life and WW II. I also marveled that he was a living slice of history; in school we studied the awful things that had been done to the people in labor and concentration camps. By writing poems that tried to understand what he'd had to confront in his early years in Poland, and then as an inmate in a Nazi labor camp, I was able to be more sympathetic toward him and recognize the many obstacles and difficulties that had, to some degree, destroyed him. I was able to separate the angry father he'd been from the tragic man he became.

**DH:** Your mother doesn't appear in these poems. Why Not?

**JP:** *Collected Father* is about my father, not my mother. She makes a few appearances in these poems, but none of them are about her. I've written poems about her, and I hope they'll be published in the future.

My mother had been even more traumatized by her la-

bor camp experiences than my father. Based on her behavior at home, I suspected some truly awful things had happened to her in the labor camp, against her as a woman. She was a basket case of anxiety at home, often startled by noises, and sometimes descended into a black hole of depression. She never responded to men in the street who tried to speak to her. She tended to avoid social situations and preferred staying home where she felt "safe." My father, to his credit, recognized this about her and NEVER raised his hand against her.

Despite her problems, my mother was the opposite of my father. She was very supportive and loving toward her children. Being a mother gave her great satisfaction and meaning in life. It became her identity. She devoted herself wholeheartedly to nurturing her two sons. In doing so she became my saving grace and was a blessed antidote to who my father was.

I also became bewildered that trauma could express itself so differently in each of my parents. I suspect that gender played a significant role. My father spewed his trauma as anger against his children who couldn't retaliate. He was able to express his trauma as anger against others, while my mother cast her trauma as anger inwardly, against herself, which induced her anxiety and depression. This seems to be a fairly common pattern from a gender point of view.

**DH:** Is there an historical aspect to the trauma you document in your poems?

**JP:** I think my poems show how the Holocaust was also inflicted upon the offspring of survivors. My parents suffered tremendously but, whether intentionally or not, they gave my brother and me a taste of the Holocaust. They showed us how trauma gets transferred to a second generation.

Let's say that, metaphorically speaking, my father felt the trauma of the Holocaust as a rock thrown into a pond, a big splash. My brother and I then became the ripples that spread across the pond in all directions. Our father gave us his trauma. We became witnesses to his trauma, as well as owning this trauma ourselves (second generation). Even though the Holocaust may have ended 80 years ago, its effects are still reverberating today, and will probably appear in future generations. Not a welcome prospect.

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