



Inside:



Go Western, young man!

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A new dispensary for Somerville

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SHS basketball at TD Garden

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City Council approves measure to eliminate medical debt



The Somerville City Council is unanimously onboard with a proposal that would cancel medical debt for city residents.

On January 12, the Somerville City Council unanimously passed a resolution sponsored by At-Large Councilors Willie Burnley Jr and Charlotte Kelly to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to cancel millions of dollars of residential medical debt.

Across the country, cities and counties have made headlines for efforts to wipe out medical debt. Toledo, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, and Cook County, Illinois have all partnered with the non-profit RIP Medical Debt (RIP) to cancel medical debt for residents making less than 400 percent of the federal poverty rate or those for whom debt is 5% or more of their annual income.

"All medical debt is a policy failure, a failure which endangers the health of us all and should be eliminated," said Burnley. "Conversations I've had with multiple regional hospitals

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Mystic River mural installed and ready for public viewing

The Somerville Arts Council (SAC) has announced that the mural panels that were created this summer by the Mystic River Mural Program have been installed by the Somerville Department of Public Works.

According to coordinator and lead artist, David Fichter, "The theme this past summer focused on Environmental Justice in the Mystic Watershed. We collaborated with West Medford poet extraordinaire, Terry Carter, who graciously allowed us to use an excerpt from one of his poems that connected with our theme called 'Hard By The Mystic.' The poem is projected over the river which is part of his body. Other imagery features the work of Green Roots, an environmental justice



organization in Chelsea, MA that does extraordinary work to raise the environmental justice issues and struggles in the city of Chelsea, which is part of the Mystic Watershed. There is a former Mystic

Mural student on the staff in charge of their community gardens program."

The SAC cordially invites one and all to take a walk and check out the new amazing panels this weekend.

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

The City of Somerville's **SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA)** is pleased to host an open house to connect with residents, city staff, and local service providers. SOIA provides mul-tilingual, culturally competent programs and services and advances policies to support Somerville's immigrant community. The open house is **Thursday, January 26**, from 12:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the SOIA office (42 Cross St.). The event will feature community resource tables and a series of presentations from SOIA staff, followed by a mix-and-mingle social hour: Haitian Creole: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., Portuguese: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., Nepali: 3:00 – 4:00 p.m., Mandarin/Cantonese: 4:00 – 5:00 p.m., Spanish: 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., Mix and Mingle: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Drop in at any time during the open house to speak with SOIA staff, learn more about available services, and meet your neighbors. For more information, email Courtney Henderson at chenderson@somervillema.gov.

Happy birthday this week to the following: Happy birthday to our own **Denise Cosby**, a local real estate agent. Denise published her book, *Murder at Harvard's Kirkland House-A Mother's Worst Nightmare*, which tells the real story of the murder of her son Justin. She also has a podcast <https://www.facebook.com/justintime>. initiative. **Just-in Time Initiative for Families** who lost loved ones to murder. A big happy birthday to our own **Dorothy DiMarzo**, who gives us all those delicious recipes every other week in our paper. We wish her the very best of birthdays this *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of January 25 – January 30 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday January 25	Snow	35°/34°	73%	54%	ENE 11 mph
 Thursday January 26	Rain	47°/27°	50%	41%	WSW 17 mph
 Friday January 27	Sunny	36°/25°	5%	3%	WNW 10 mph
 Saturday January 28	Partly Cloudy	45°/30°	7%	5%	SW 11 mph
 Sunday January 29	Cloudy	41°/36°	16%	11%	SW 9 mph
 Monday January 30	Partly Cloudy	41°/21°	24%	17%	WNW 13 mph
 Tuesday January 31	Partly Cloudy	33°/30°	19%	12%	WNW 7 mph

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

OBITUARY

William J. Driscoll



William J. Driscoll of North Andover, passed away on Sunday, January 15, 2023 after a 7 month battle with cancer. He died peacefully at home surrounded by family. He was 75 years old.

Born and raised in Somerville, he was the youngest of 6 children born to the late Eugene W. and the late Louise E. (McCarthy) Driscoll. Bill

was the beloved husband of the late Bonnie J. (Boudreau) Driscoll and the devoted father of Shari (Driscoll) Card and her husband, Brady Frost of Hamilton. He is survived by his two grandsons – the lights of his life – Liam Driscoll Card and Henry Mark Card. He is also survived by his sister Clare (Driscoll) Ellison of Naples, FL, his brother Francis Driscoll of Boynton Beach, FL, his sister in law Brenda (Boudreau) Palmacci and her husband Ernie Palmacci of Groton, his brother in law Thomas Boudreau of Groton, his step-grandsons Brennan and Ryder Frost of Beverly and Hamilton as well as many nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends. Bill adored his family, espe-

cially his daughter Shari and his two grandsons, Liam and Henry. If he wasn't on the sidelines for one of their lacrosse, basketball, golf or flag football games, he was likely playing golf with friends or working on his beautiful lawn and backyard. He dedicated himself to the children and families of Somerville with a decades-long career as a teacher, vice-principal and principal in the Somerville Public Schools and as a baseball coach, including many years coaching American Legion Post 19. Bill was also a proud veteran of the United States Army. A Funeral Mass was celebrated in St. Clement Church, 64 Warner Street, Medford/ Somerville, MA on Monday, January 23, 2023 at 10:00AM.

The Somerville Times

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Life in the

VILLE

by Jimmy Del Ponte

Go Western, young man!



This article first appeared in our October 13, 2007 edition.

There used to be three junior high schools in Somerville – the Western, the Southern and the Northeastern. I went to the Western, which was up near Teele Square. Dr. Horne was the principal and Mr. Mackey was the vice-principal – it was 1968.

I wish I could find that huge rolled up class picture they gave us, but it's long gone – it was all cracked and ripped anyway. But hey, who needs a photo – the images are still fresh in my mind.

The slicked back hair and pegged pants were on the way out, and long hair was growing.

Bell-bottoms were starting and pointy shoes were ending. Guys named Porky and Chickie were cool and girls named Lynn and Debbie were hot.

When you hit junior high you had made it – you were cool enough to attempt cutting class and running over to Angelina's Sub Shop across the street and your only problem then was covering up your onion and cigarette breath when you snuck back in. Freddie Benoit had it down to an art.

I only did the ninth grade at the Western after escaping eight years of St. Clements – I went from Sister Helene to Miss Charlton. It was my first year of freedom and her first year of teaching. I don't think I ever apologized to her for putting the dog in the paper closet, and boy, did she scream when she opened the door!

It was also the first year I somehow convinced my parents to let me have a leather jacket – I was so cool.

After eight years of "sister school" I felt like a freed prisoner. My hair was growing, my leather jacket was shiny and I was ready for fun. On the other hand, Dr. Horne had some plans of his own – like strict rules. It's a little foggy, but I think we had to keep our top button on our shirt buttoned and our sideburns had to be trimmed. Your hair wasn't supposed to touch your collar. We had to walk in an orderly fashion in the hallways. The only words I ever recall hearing from Dr. Horne were: "Line over there, line over there." But it was all good, we were in junior high school.

We had no iPods, no Playstations, no cable TV and no computers. We had "hanging around with our friends in the park or on a street corner." We had record players and we bought albums. We didn't have Fiddy Cent – we had The Beatles, un-



til Yoko came along anyway.

Junior high school, leather jackets, Beatles albums and hanging with my friends made me feel like I was in heaven – then we hit the high school. Over one short summer we went from being the kings of junior high to the babies of the high school – and to make matters worse, our beloved Western went up in a puff of smoke shortly after we graduated.

The Western Junior High School was rebuilt and still stands on Holland Street as a testimonial to all who entered its hal-

lowed halls – including my dad, my aunts and uncles and my cousins. My dear friend, the beloved Dr. David Wendell Jones, took over as principal and I went back as a substitute teacher. One of our bragging rights was that the class of 1968 had the distinction of being the last graduating class before the fire.

Being at the high school now meant new friends, new teachers and most of all – new challenges. We then had to figure out how to cut class and run over to Nan's sub shop across the street from the high school.

Somerville's SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs Open House

The City of Somerville's SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA) is pleased to host an open house to connect with residents, city staff, and local service providers. SOIA provides multilingual, culturally competent programs and services and advances policies to support Somerville's immigrant community. The open house is Thursday, January 26, from 12:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the SOIA office (42 Cross St.). The event will feature community resource tables and a series of presentations from SOIA staff, followed by a mix-and-mingle social hour: Haitian Creole: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.; Portuguese: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ; Nepali: 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.; Mandarin/Cantonese: 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.; Spanish: 5:30- 6:30 p.m.; Mix and Mingle: 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Drop in at any time during the open house to speak with SOIA staff, learn more about available services, and meet your neighbors. For more information, email Courtney Henderson at chenderson@somervillema.gov.

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THE WEEK IN CRIME

By Jim Clark

Attempted larceny and a switchblade

Somerville Police officers were dispatched to the Home Depot store on Mystic Ave. on reports of a larceny.

While en route to the scene, police dispatch relayed to responding units that the suspect had ran towards Lucky Strike and that the reporting party was possibly off with the suspect at Capital One. Dispatch

provided a description of the suspect and that he could be in possession of a knife.

Upon arrival, the officers were flagged down by the victim in front of Capital One. The victim stated that the suspect had ran behind the building and was now running towards the Subway.

Officers spotted a man matching the description, later identi-

fied as William Hancock, of Re-hoboth, and ordered him to stop, at which time he took off running towards the Assembly Orange line Substation.

Officers called for Hancock to stop and he complied. He was asked if he was in possession of a knife and he confirmed that there was a knife in his front pocket.

Officers then spoke with the

victim, one of the managers at Home Depot, who witnessed Hancock walk past the registers and then make his way outside of the store with stolen property.

The victim said he asked Hancock to stop and return the items, and he then pulled a switch blade knife out of his pocket and attempted to swing it at him.

Hancock then left all of his

belongings and took off running towards Lucky Strike. The victim then called Somerville Police and followed Hancock to Capital One.

Hancock was subsequently placed under arrest on a charge of assault with a dangerous weapon and on warrant charges of possession of a class B drug and receiving stolen property.

January is Poverty Awareness Month

January represents a time for change, with the end of holiday celebrations ushering in a wave of resolutions. January is also National Poverty Awareness Month. This year, the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) is shining a light on this critical issue and calling for more action against the root causes of poverty and understanding for those experiencing it. We ask you to join us to think more critically about poverty and use this start to the year to reflect on how we understand the issue in our community.

The US Census estimated that about 10.4% of Somerville's population was living in poverty in 2021. A 2022, The Somerville Housing and Community Development conducted a Housing Needs Assessment and found that 23% of residents were living with poverty-level wages. In the plainest terms, this means that

thousands of people in Somerville were unable to afford basic necessities, including food, shelter, clothing, utilities, and transportation, among other things.

An often misunderstood issue, many continue to incorrectly blame individual behavior and choices for poverty. In reality, the true cause of poverty isn't personal shortcomings or failures. Instead, it is the result of political and structural injustices that not only lead to poverty, but make it next to impossible for individuals and families to escape. And for those not already in poverty, financial insecurity is a looming threat. Almost a third of Americans were unable to afford an unexpected expense of \$400 in 2021. For many, poverty is one car problem, hospital visit, or natural disaster away.

As an anti-poverty organization, we see clients every day

at CAAS who are struggling within this system. Let's think about housing, since that's one of the largest concerns not just for our clients, but across the state. Imagine a situation where you're struggling to find stable housing; the stress of not knowing where you'll be living on a monthly, or even daily basis, takes an indescribable toll on you, mentally and physically. Imagine not just trying to hold down a job, but perform well, when you're also constantly asking yourself if you and your children will be able to continue living in your current home.

For thousands of people in our city, this is a daily reality. Eviction is another terrifying reality for many families living in poverty, one that makes it drastically more difficult to escape poverty. Ironically, eviction can lead to people losing access to affordable

housing assistance, and has been linked with job loss, lower credit scores, and worsening health outcomes for parents and children, with the impacts being felt years after an eviction. Students in families with unstable living situations struggle more in school, making academic success and, later, higher-paying jobs more difficult to attain. Keep in mind, the average age of a homeless person in the U.S. is 9.

We all know that Somerville is rapidly undergoing widespread change. At least once a week, you can easily find a headline in the Boston news cycle that another lab space is opening here, or that new luxury condos are slated for development. With the growth of new jobs in tech and life sciences, plus the expansion of the Green Line into Somerville drastically hiking up housing costs, the city is undergoing rapid transforma-

tion. However, when economic growth on this scale takes place, not everyone benefits equally. In Somerville, our neighbors who ring up your groceries at Market Basket, who wait at you at the new restaurants cropping up around the city, and who stock the shelves at your favorite stores are being pushed out.

For those who are still here, staying in the city is becoming even more difficult as workers are forced to stretch their paychecks even further. Sometimes they're artists, musicians, and performers. These are the neighbors who have been here for years, sometimes for generations, who have helped create the vibrant community of Somerville as we know it. Growth and change doesn't need to come at the expense of our low-income families – it can be a collaborative effort between the people who

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City Council approves measure to eliminate medical debt

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demonstrate that government can ensure that no one has to endure the indignity of sacrificing their basic human right to healthcare as long as we have the political will to fight for a future for all."

"Medical debt has reached a crisis point for millions of Americans, causing depressed credit scores, fueling bankruptcies and

decreasing the likelihood someone seeks out the care they need," shared RIP president and CEO Allison Sesso. "It's exciting to see yet another local government interested in our model and I am hopeful we'll be able to engage local healthcare providers in the process."

"Somerville has the oppor-

tunity to transform thousands of residents' lives with very few resources and this is an incredible opportunity to center equity and economic justice in how we spend our remaining ARPA funds," said Kelly. "We can lead boldly around the issue of healthcare debt, support our residents who continue to struggle due to

exasperated economic and medical impacts of COVID-19, and strengthen our relationship with medical institutions that serve as the primary point of medical care for our residents"

The deadline for non-profits to apply for ARPA funding ends on February 3 with all proposals requiring approval from Mayor

Katjana Ballantyne. The Public Health and Public Safety Committee of the City Council is set to hear more about medical debt cancellation on Monday February 13. If approved by the Ballantyne Administration, Somerville will be the first city in Massachusetts to wipe out millions of dollars in medical debt from residents.

Nuestra/Boston Garden moves towards opening dispensary in Somerville

By Morgan Gaffney

Nuestra LLC dba Boston Garden, a Massachusetts-based cannabis brand, moves forward in their process to open an adult-use marijuana establishment at 518 Somerville Ave. The proposed retailer was discussed during a virtual community outreach meeting they held via Zoom last Thursday evening. After a presentation about how the retailer would function, the meeting was opened up to the community for questions and concerns.

No community members attending the meeting objected to the proposed site.

As time goes on since the legalization of marijuana in the state

of Massachusetts on December 15, 2016, marijuana retailers have become more common, with over 225 locations around the Commonwealth. Boston Garden's establishment would join this increasing number across the state, as well as in the City of Somerville.

"I suspect that this facility is really going to be almost kind of like a neighborhood pharmacy, or a neighborhood liquor store," says Phil Silverman, a partner at Vicente Sederberg LLP, the firm representing Boston Garden. Vicente Sederberg LLP, a national law firm, specializes in cannabis law and policy.

Silverman, along with Ivelise Rivera, the majority owner of

Nuestra LLC, dba Boston Garden, and a neutral moderator, led this community outreach meeting.

Common concerns with opening a cannabis facility were addressed and appeased in the presentation, as well as general information about retailer.

Silverman explained that construction to renovate the location would take between three to four months. The facility would open in about seven to eight months from the time renovations begin.

There will be several elements to the security of this establishment. "This is a limited access facility," says Silverman.

When customers first walk in, they must go through what



Nuestra LLC dba Boston Garden recently held a public meeting introducing itself to the community and addressing any concerns about its proposed business model.

Silverman calls a sally port, an area before they enter the facility where they must show identification to prove they are over 21 years of age before moving forward. After customers prove they are of age, they are buzzed into the retail area

Continued on page 11

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COMMENTARY

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

Honoring our core values: Supporting MAPS and the Somerville Media Center

As a 42-year resident of Somerville, I am excited for the future of this City and watching it reach its fullest potential through smart legislation and a modernized charter. As a member of “old school Somerville (Yikes!),” I also long for the continuation of those ingredients that have been deeply embedded in the soul of this City for decades. I realize the Goldilocks / perfect porridge expectation, but in this case, I truly believe it is possible.


Recently, I was disheartened to learn that the home of MAPS and the Somerville Media Center a.k.a SCATV is currently in jeopardy. SCATV has led the way bringing Somerville-based television content into our living rooms and the thought that there is even the slightest delay in assisting them is just gross. From teaching children video editing skills to being there for every other nonprofit and business through their Community Lense series and other documentation this studio has provided – mostly for free – we owe them a hell of a lot more than this blatant arrogance surrounding their housing. The Somerville Media Center would never and has never let us down... why are we letting them down?

Similarly, MAPS has been the eyes, ears and voices of our Portuguese speakers in Somerville and surrounding cities. How dare we not assist them and connect them to resources that guarantee their sustained success - precisely what they have been doing since they opened their doors.

Legislation was submitted through our City Council and was initially sponsored by Ward 2 City Councilor JT Scott, Ward 3 City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, and Ward 1 City Councilor Matt McLaughlin at their Thursday January 12th meeting of the whole. The resolution would eventually be sponsored by the entire City Council - they get it.

With so many changes happening around us, we need a historical perspective now more than ever to ensure we don't repeat mistakes we made yesterday. Abandoning the Somerville Media Center and MAPS is like abandoning our core values of maintaining the best City to work, play and raise a family.

I encourage the administration to work with both of these nonprofits and find a home - expeditiously and thoughtfully - that best suits their needs and the needs of their constituents.



Courtney O'Keefe
Hudson Street Resident
Former Ward 5 Alderman

Joint statement on recent shootings in California and Iowa

With very heavy hearts we once again wish to share our deepest sympathies as well as information about supports available in the wake of not one but two mass shootings and a third shooting at a school in Iowa.

On Saturday, what should have been a joyful celebration of the Lunar New Year turned into a horrific attack at a dance hall in Monterey Park, CA, with the majority of the victims – at least 11 fatalities and multiple injuries – being members of the local Asian American community. Before we could finish preparing this statement, news also broke of a shooting at an Iowa school that took two student lives and seriously injured a teacher. And before we could translate and send this statement, a second mass shooting occurred in California killing at least seven at two worksites, with early reports indicating victims were Chinese and Latino farmworkers.

We are beyond frustrated, angry, and sad, but we will once again come together as a community to support our friends and loved ones and point to resources that you or someone you know may need in the wake of these tragedies.

It is important to know that shootings can traumatize and re-traumatize persons no matter how far away. We also want to recognize that the details and motives behind these shootings are not yet clear. But with the rise in hate crimes in our nation, fear of targeted, racist violence understandably can course through communities as the facts are awaited. Even if other motives are eventually revealed, that fear is real and comes with real consequences for well-being.

Our sympathies thus go out first to the friends and families of the victims but also especially here at home to Somerville’s Asian and Asian American residents; to our students, families, and staff in our school community; and to migrants, immigrants, workers, and any others who may feel more personal reactions to these attacks.

Please reach out to friends and family if you need to talk. Or take advantage of crisis call lines if you wish to speak to volunteers trained to listen and provide support.

The Samaritans statewide 24/7 phone or chat crisis line can take calls in up to 240 different languages. They can be reached by calling or texting just three numbers: 988. Calls are free, confidential, and anonymous.

We stand against all violence, and we join all people across our nation in grieving these terrible losses.

With sympathy and solidarity,

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne
Ben Ewen-Campen, President, Somerville City Council
Andre Green, Chairperson, Somerville School Committee
Dr. Jeff Curley, Interim Superintendent of Schools

COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Congratulations to Somerville’s Thomas G. Kelley on being honored by the U.S. Navy.

Our View Of The Times



There is a lot of history connected to the City of Somerville, and with it plenty of heroes to celebrate. One such individual is Medal of Honor recipient retired Navy Capt. Thomas Gunning Kelley, a current resident of the city.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Navy announced that the future guided-missile destroyer DDG-140 will be named after the 83-year-old Kelley, who received

the Medal of Honor in 1970 for actions during the Vietnam War.

According to the citation issued in his honor, in 1969 then-Lt. Kelley was in command of eight river assault craft that were extracting a company of U.S. Army infantry troops in Kien Hoa Province when the Army’s troop transport malfunctioned and the boats came under fire from North Vietnamese forces.

During the battle, Kelley suffered severe head injuries from shrapnel from an enemy rocket, but was able to direct the column to safety.

Kelley retired from the service in 1990 and served as the secretary of the Massachusetts Department of Veterans’ Services from 2003 to 2011.

The DDG 51 Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer (DDG 51) is a

multi-mission guided missile destroyer able to operate offensively and defensively, independently, or as units of Carrier Strike Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups, and Surface Action Groups.

As Somerville residents, we have much to be proud of in our rich historical legacy, going back hundreds of years. Mr. Kelley’s contributions to the safety and security of our homeland will never be forgotten.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

week. Also celebrating this week is **Pat Moran Quinlin**. We wish her the very best of birthdays. Another local who is celebrating this week is **Maria Nella Nunes**. We wish her the very best. Happy birthday to **Sheila Howe**. We wish her the very best on this her birthday. And finally, we wish **Naomi Landers** a big-time happy birthday this week. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such **James Casazza**, **Cathy Palumbo Demasi**, **Edward Hardy**, **Michael Kennelly**, **Edward W. Hardy** and **Geraldine Nevaras** a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very

best of birthdays.

On **February 6**, the **Somerville Arts Council** will be hosting a **Volunteer Craft Night**, a themed activity where people can design handmade cards which will be sent to the seniors at the **Visiting Nurses Association** in Somerville. A wonderful way to meet other volunteers, have a few refreshments, and create art. Craft supplies will be available. While you are not required to make a card, they encourage people use their artistic prowess to make something wonderful for those in need, or just simply stop in to say hello. They will also be collecting food

donations for the **Somerville Homeless Coalition**. If interested, please bring a non-perishable item with you when you go. Since space is limited, please RSVP via the Eventbrite link <https://tinyurl.com/533mzzvm>. **Monday, February 6** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., **MudFlat Pottery School**, 81 Broadway, Somerville.

The search is on for **crossing guards** to help keep students safe on their walks to and from school. Apply: somervillema.gov/apply. More info: careers@somervillema.gov / 617-625-6600 extension 3300.

The **City of Somerville Department of Public Works** has distributed sand city-wide for residential use. Sand increases traction on icy surfaces and, since it is less corrosive than salt-based ice melt, helps maintain the conditions of our sidewalks and other infrastructure. For our full Winter guide, visit somervillema.gov/snow.

East Somerville Main Streets is hosting a **meet and greet session** for the community to get to know our small business owners and shop their specialties. **Saturday, March 4**, at 11:00 a.m. at **Connexion**, 149 Broadway.

Continued on page 15

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#860

1. Who has been the NFL's official uniform supplier since 2012?

2. What color jersey do NFL players wear when playing at their home field?

3. Which quarterback holds the record for the most career interceptions thrown?

4. What did Lucille Ball try to sell in a commercial on *I Love Lucy*?

5. Jennifer Lopez and Ray Liotta co-starred in what drama?

6. Who sings the hit song *Girls Just Want To*

Have Fun?

7. What is Jack Nicholson's famous line from *The Shining*?

8. How many movies are there in the film series *The Godfather*?

9. Who voiced Charlie Townsend in the original *Charlie's Angels*?

10. What fictional town does Spongebob Squarepants live in?

11. What is Cynophobia the fear of?

12. With which Beatle did David Bowie co-write the song *Fame*?

Answers on page 11

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Women blink nearly twice as much as men.

2. Pogonophobia is the fear of beards.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

SUPER BOWL

- ACROSS
1. COVID tester

5. Pep rally syllable

8. To overlay with thin gold coating

12. Sky bear

13. Abundant

14. Worrier's worry?

15. Fishing spot

16. Blackhearted

17. Full of coral

18. 2023 Super Bowl stadium sponsor

20. Research facil.

21. Egg cell

22. King Charles to Prince Harry

23. Thief's target

26. 2023 Super Bowl Halftime Show star

30. Mozart's "L_____ del Cairo"

31. Bob Marley's music

34. Yarn spinner

35. "The Poky Little _____"

37. Skedaddle

38. 18-wheelers

39. "Guilty," e.g.

40. Fabric inset

42. One of the sibs

43. Super Bowl advertiser's purchase

45. Anatolian language

47. Decay

48. "There it is," † Paris

50. "Hold on!"

52. Home of the Ravens, for both Super Bowl appearances

56. Cuckoo for these puffs!

57. Curved molding

58. Medicinal plant

59. Court orders, e.g.

60. Sonny & Cher and Abbott & Costello

61. Talk like a drunk

62. Actor Danson and character Lasso

63. "Owner of a Lonely Heart" band

64. Star of the most-watched Super Bowl Halftime Show
- DOWN
1. Paddleboarding acronym

2. Court order

3. Between ports

4. Hungarian composer Bela _____

5. Either one of the opposing Super Bowl

6. Flambe

7. Position of leadership

8. 2023 Super Bowl AZ location

9. Frosts, as a cake

10. Hit the road

11. Like certain humor

13. Disprove

14. Dickens's Heep

19. Each and all

22. One of a set of dice

23. Father, colloquially

24. Round openings

25. Pickled garnish

26. Last year's Super Bowl winners

27. Nimbus, pl.

28. Nigerian money

29. Torcher's crime

32. Elmer's, e.g.

33. Found at the pump

36. Team with most Super Bowl appearances

38. Signing tool at the cash register

40. Greenwich-related acronym

41. Superior ones

44. Itsy-bitsy bits

46. Patterned table linen

48. Lacking clarity

49. Bread spreads

50. Donned

51. As opposed to base in chemistry

52. Snatchers' quest

53. Cantina pot

54. Overwhelming Super Bowl defeat

55. Fear-inspiring

56. 100 lbs.

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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L A T I N A W N S T I L E

C L I N T O N U N H O L Y

G A S T S A R

A F T S T A R B A M B A M

D O R M I B I D M A U V E

E R I E A B B O T S T I R

L A P A Z A U T O H E A L

E Y E L I D N E R D O N E

P O S E S E C

C R Y P T O D O J A C A T

J O U L E F B I A B A S H

O C H E R I T S V I R E O

N O R M A S K U N B A R

Congratulating the new State Auditor



The new State Auditor Diana DiZoglio for Massachusetts was sworn in on January 18. DiZoglio posed with (L to R) Lieutenant Barry Hamilton, Former Alderman Bob McWatters, Deputy Chief Michael Avery and candidate for Somerville Firefighters Marc Atwater at her post-ceremony celebration.

January is Poverty Awareness Month

CONT. FROM PG 4

have been here and the people who are being welcomed to the community. It's a matter of having supportive structures in place and making sure everyone's voices and needs are heard.

The question is not if or why we should care about poverty, but how we should work together to address both the impacts and the causes of poverty in our city.

One way to help alleviate poverty is to support programs that work with people in poverty to help provide necessary resources and aid. The Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) has been the city's designated anti-poverty agency since 1981. Community Action Agencies were first established in the 1960's, when the federal government first began to measure poverty and created programs to help people facing it.

CAAS provides free early education to over 200 children a year through our Head Start

program, which helps to break generational cycles of poverty. In fact, a 2020 study from the University of Michigan found that Head Start students were 39% more likely to graduate from college and 12% less likely to live in poverty compared to low-income children who did not enroll in the program. We also provide families with case management service, rental assistance, and aid with affordable housing searches, as well as tenant leadership development, helping to make the political process more accessible for low-income residents.

If you have the capacity, get involved in local government and advocate for changes to our city that help people in poverty. Massachusetts has a current statewide ban on rent control. We believe that overturning this ban would allow cities like Somerville to be more responsive to the needs of their residents, and would also quell the displace-

ment of our neighbors in light of the recent Green Line Extension. Advocate for affordable housing that is truly affordable for low-income residents. Many affordable housing opportunities require applicants to have a salary that's 50% or 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), leaving many of our lowest-income neighbors out of range for affordable housing.

And above all, we encourage you to once again use kindness and compassion when you think about the issue of poverty. While Poverty Awareness Month is a good time to start, poverty doesn't end with this month. This is a complex issue that no one person, group, or organization can solve on their own--this is an issue that takes a community of people coming together to listen to those in poverty, and work together to find solutions.

— Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS)

The Somerville Times
Historical Fact of the Week

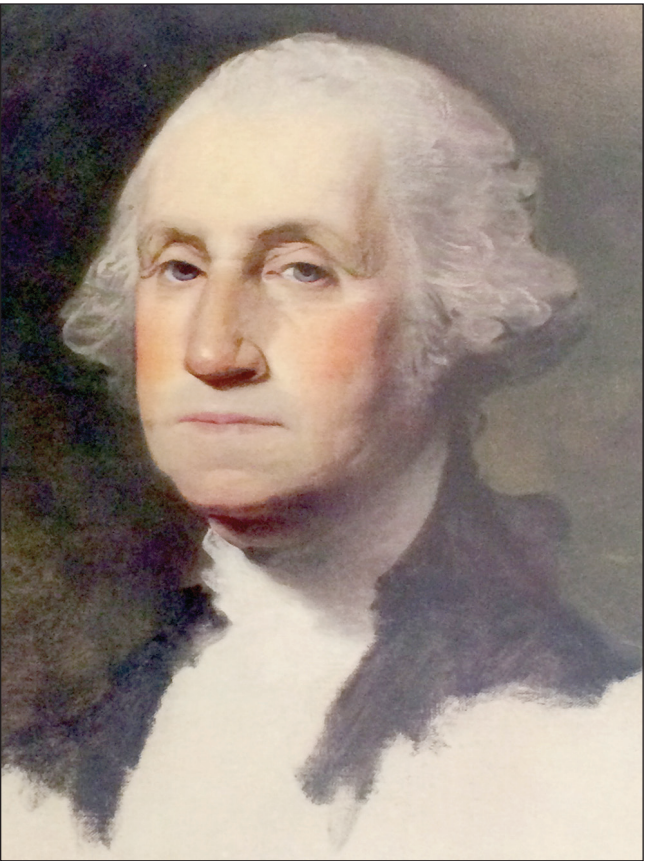


Eagle feathers #271

Medal of Honor

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

The first military medal bestowed by our government was a gold medal. It was awarded to a man who spent considerable time engaged in Charlestown/Somerville during the most crucial year of her history. It was bestowed upon general George Washington to commemorate the Evacuation of Boston by the British in 1776.



In early United States' history, no recognition was given to regular soldiers and sailors until the Civil War in 1861 when Congress established the Medal of Honor for the Army and the Navy. Sergeant Nathaniel C. Barker, who later became Assistant Somerville Fire Chief, was an early recipient of this medal. After six standard bearers were shot by snipers, he retrieved the American flag and his regiment's flag. Although severely wounded, he carried the banners aloft through the battle of Spotsylvania in Virginia.

The last Civil War Medal of Honor was presented in August, 2014, by a former Somerville resident, President Barack Obama, to First Lieutenant Alonzo H. Cushing. The posthumous award came one hundred and fifty years after this over-looked soldier's heroic acts at Gettysburg.

Marine Private Donald Ruhl of Montana was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for saving the life of Somerville marine and

Continued on page 15



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

**THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

LEGAL NOTICE - HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC)

The **Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)** will hold a public meeting and public hearings on **Tuesday, February 7, 2023** at 6:45pm on the following applications, in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

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

TO USE A COMPUTER

Registration URL:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2093004374802430560>

Webinar ID: 953-052-579

TO CALL IN

Phone Number: 1 (415) 930-5321

Access Code: 596-518-791

ALL OF THE CASES ADVERTISED BELOW HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING COMPONENT

Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties

HPC.ALT 2022.75 – 78 Sycamore Street

Applicant: Daniel Macheras

Owner: Same as Applicant

The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of wood gutters with aluminum gutters.

HPC.ALT 2022.76 – 88 College Avenue

Applicant: Melissa & Chris Frost

Owner: Same as Applicant

The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to place two air condensers on the right side of the property and visible from the Right-of-Way.

Case documents reviewed by the HPC are available on the City website at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases>.

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

1/18/23, 1/25/23 The Somerville Times



**ADVERTISEMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

The **Somerville Housing Authority**, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed proposals from registered Engineering firms to provide professional design and construction administration services to upgrade the electrical systems at our Properzi Manor Development located at 15 Warren Ave, Somerville, MA 02144. The upgrade consists of new smoke detectors, load centers, as well as intercoms.

A briefing and site inspection is scheduled for **10:00 AM on Friday, January 27th, 2023**, at the Properzi Manor elderly facility located at 15 Warren Ave, Somerville, MA 02144.

Response to this RFP must be submitted by emailing ryanc@sha-web.org no later than **2:00 Thursday, February 9th, 2023**.

The RFP may be obtained after **11:00AM on Wednesday, January 18th, 2023**, by contacting ryanc@sha-web.org or by phone at 617-625-1152 Ext.331.

Questions must be sent in writing to ryanc@sha-web.org, no later than **Monday, February 2nd, 2023**.

1/18/23, 1/25/23 The Somerville Times



**City of Somerville
PLANNING BOARD**
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The **Somerville Planning Board (PB)** will hold a virtual public hearing on **Thursday, February 2, 2023**, at 6:00pm through GoToWebinar.

Pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting of the Planning Board will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available by using the registration link once the meeting has concluded.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7501659301995062872>

Webinar ID: 935-758-619

TO CALL IN

Phone number: 1 (562) 247-8422

Access code: 211-223-243

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

256-260 Elm Street AP Davis Square Plaza, LLC proposes to develop a LEED Platinum four (4) story Lab Building in the Commercial Core 4 (CC4) district, which requires Site Plan Approval.

270 Elm Street AP Davis Square Plaza, LLC proposes to modify an existing Through Block Plaza in the Commercial Core 4 (CC4) district, which requires Site Plan Approval.

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 Planning Board at the hearing or by submitting written comments by mail to Planning & Zoning Division, 3rd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143; or by email to planning@somervillema.gov.

1/18/23, 1/25/23 The Somerville Times



LEGAL NOTICE

CITY OF SOMERVILLE CABLE TELEVISION

LICENSE RENEWAL PUBLIC HEARING

The City of Somerville, by the Mayor as the statutory Cable License Issuing Authority, will hold a cable license renewal public hearing on **Monday, February 13, 2023**, at 6pm pertaining to Comcast Cable Communications Management, LLC (Comcast) in connection with the possible issuance of a cable television renewal license to Comcast. Please note that this public hearing will be remote, via Zoom, and can be joined at the following link or by phone at the aforementioned time:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84617801153?pwd=Ym03Y2tXYkxkdXRzcUNNQjhEcHVUQT09>

Meeting ID: 846 1780 1153

Passcode: 323787

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Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84617801153?pwd=Ym03Y2tXYkxkdXRzcUNNQjhEcHVUQT09>

This proceeding is held as part of the license renewal process and possible final action to approve the license may be considered and taken by the Mayor as statutory Issuing Authority. Public comment is invited and shall be allowed by electronic video and audio conference platforms as set forth above. Copies of City license renewal documents may be made available for public inspection at the Office of the City Clerk or by contacting Steve DeCarlo, Office of Cable Communications, c/o City Hall.

By order of the Mayor as statutory License Issuing Authority.

1/25/23 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR**

The Somerville City Council's Land Use Committee and the Somerville Planning Board will hold a joint public hearing on **Thursday, February 2, 2023** at 6:30 pm. Pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, this hearing will be conducted via remote participation.

REGISTER ONLINE

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5835036069244513883>

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

- **Mayor Ballantyne proposes an amendment to Section 6.1 Commercial Districts: Fabrication of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to permit additional uses for ground story commercial spaces fronting a Pedestrian Street.**
- **David Einis proposes a map amendment to the Official Zoning Atlas to change the zoning district of 14 White Street Place from Neighborhood Residence (NR) to Mid-Rise 4 (MR4).**
- **The Somerville Planning Board proposes an amendment to Section 15.1.3 Neighborhood Meetings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to improve the neighborhood meeting process.**
- **Mayor Ballantyne proposes an amendment to Section 10.8 Commercial Signs of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to permit commercial signs by right.**

Proposed zoning amendments may be viewed online by searching the Somerville City Council's online meeting portal at

<https://somervillema.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>.

Final language of the above amendments may be modified by the City Council during the legislative process. Persons unable to attend the hearing may provide comments by email to planning@somervillema.gov.

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**LEGAL NOTICE
City of Somerville
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD)
WFD-23.3**

The City of Somerville, Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) invites sealed proposals for Industry Specific Training Programs and Innovative Programming: **Workforce Development Grant Programs**

Workforce Development Grant Programs. Proposals must be for programs that assist in the creation and maintenance of employment and career opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents of the City of Somerville. Funds for the Industry Specific Training Programs and Innovative Programming are provided by the Job Creation and Retention Trust, City funds, and other available funds generated from development impact fees.
Bid Number WFD-23.3

Request for Proposal packages for both programs will be posted and available for download on the City of Somerville website beginning at **10:00AM, Wednesday January 25, 2023** at www.somervillema.gov/wfd. Print copies available upon request to WFD@somervillema.gov.

An electronic PDF file should be emailed to email WFD@somervillema.gov and proposal packages must be submitted no later than **12:00 PM, Friday February 17, 2023** for responses to WFD-23.3 to the above email address.

Please contact the City of Somerville's Workforce Development staff, by email at WFD@somervillema.gov, for information and proposal packages.

Thomas F. Galligani Jr., Acting Executive Director
617- 625-6600, x 2500

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The **Somerville Housing Authority**, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed proposals from registered Architecture firms to provide professional design and construction administration services to replace two asphalt shingle roofs at our Mystic View Development. Mystic View is a 3-story brick with synthetic stucco and gable roof building located at River Road and Canal Lane in Somerville MA, 02145

A briefing and site inspection is scheduled for **10:00 AM on Wednesday January 25th, 2023**, at the Mystic View family development. Please meet at our Modernization Office located at 30R Memorial Road, Somerville MA, 02145.

Response to this RFP must be submitted by emailing ryanc@sha-web.org no later than **2:00 Thursday, February 9th, 2023**.

The RFP may be obtained after **11:00AM on Wednesday, January 18th, 2023**, by contacting ryanc@sha-web.org or by phone at 617-625-1152 Ext.331.

Questions must be sent in writing to ryanc@sha-web.org no later than **Monday, February 2nd, 2023**.

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Notice of Self Storage Sale

Please take notice Prime Storage - Somerville located at 39R Medford St., Somerville, MA 02143 intends to hold an auction to sell the goods stored by the following tenants at the storage facility. The sale will occur as an online auction via www.storagetreasures.com on 2/8/2023 at 12:00 PM. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods and furnishings. Valdemar dos Santos unit #0111; Steven McCluskey unit #1282; Laqueen Battle unit #4252. All property is being stored at the above self-storage facility. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Certain terms and conditions apply. See manager for details.

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Answers

From on page 8

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Nike | 7. Here's Johnny |
| 2. Their team colors | 8. Three |
| 3. Brett Favre | 9. John Forsythe |
| 4. Vitameatavegamin | 10. Bikini Bottom |
| 5. Shades of Blue | 11. Dogs |
| 6. Cyndi Lauper | 12. John Lennon |

SHS Boys Varsity Basketball plays TD Garden

Somerville High School Boys Varsity basketball played Waltham Saturday night at the TD Garden for the Andrew James Lawson Foundation. Somerville lost the game 56-40. SHS's Franco Difusco was interviewed by WHDH about his amazing half court basket with 3 seconds left in the game that gave Somerville the win against Revere the previous Thursday night.

— Photos by Alex Fredette



Nuestra/Boston Garden moves towards opening dispensary in Somerville

CONT. FROM PG 5

where they are helped by employees with their order. Once they have finalized their order and go to check out, they must show identification again.

There will be security cameras in and outside the facility. They will be installed in every room that cannabis is handled inside, and there will be a 360-degree view of the premises outside. Perimeter and panic alarms will also be in several places around the building.

Security guards will be stationed throughout the retailer, as well as monitoring security cameras at all times during operating hours. The security footage will be monitored offsite by a 24/7 dispatch team available if anything should happen outside of business hours.

At the end of the day, all products will be locked in a vault that only limited staff have access to.

There will be a 24/7 contact number to call should there be any nuisance to surrounding businesses or residents. "Any neighbors, if you're

watching, and you want that number, we can give that out to you just before we open, so that if there's an issue, there's a complaint, if there's some kind of a nuisance, you'll have access to our manager to be able to address it," says Silverman.

Boston Garden aims to hire only diverse or local staff. They want to help the Somerville community in many ways, such as making contributions of at least \$2500 to charitable organizations in Somerville and having their staff spend 30 hours doing volunteer work around the city annually.

"There's all sorts of opportunities for cross-promotion," says Silverman, in response to a community member asking how Boston Garden will partner with other Somerville businesses. From handing out business cards and flyers from other companies to helping them out financially, Boston Garden is "always interested" in working together with fellow local organizations.

Another community member

brought up the construction process the location must go under and parking.

"If there are problems, I can only encourage you to speak to us," Silverman says, if any residents take issue with aspects of construction.

As for parking, Silverman explained that the retailer does not have their own parking, only public. They don't anticipate a problem with this, as cannabis establishments do not see nearly as much traffic as they used to because of the increasing number of them statewide.

Other questions about demolition during the construction process and whether Boston Garden was leasing or buying the location arose. Silverman stated there would be no demolition, but significant interior renovations, and they would be leasing the space.

Silverman and Rivera ended the meeting with closing remarks, thanking community members for their time, and encouraged anyone to reach out if they had further questions or concerns.

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By Bobbygeorge Potaris



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*On This Day in History***January 25**

0041 – Shortly after declaring himself a god, Caligula is assassinated by two Praetorian tribunes.

1458 – Matthias Corvinus, the son of John Hunyadi, is elected king of Hungary.

1639 – Representatives from three Connecticut towns band together to write the Fundamental Orders, the first constitution in the New World.

1722 – Czar Peter the Great caps his reforms in Russia with the "Table of Rank" which decrees a commoner can climb on merit to the highest positions.

1848 – Gold is discovered by James Wilson Marshall at his partner Johann August Sutter's sawmill on the South Fork of the American River, near Coloma, California.

1946 – The UN establishes the International Atomic Energy Commission.

1980 – In a rebuff to the Soviets, the U.S. announces intentions to sell arms to China.

1982 – A draft of Air Force history reports that the U.S. secretly sprayed herbicides on Laos during the Vietnam War.

Bile: The Gut's Soap



By Dr. Ian Halim

You've probably heard the expression, "like oil and water," to describe two people who don't get along. It's not just a throw-away phrase. The opposition between oil and water is key to understanding how living things work—including, especially, an underappreciated bodily fluid called bile.

But before we get to that, you can test the idea that oil and water don't mix, using just what's in your cabinet at home. Try pouring vegetable oil into a glass of water, for instance. You'll see pockets of oil form, or a separated layer of oil. Like is attracted to like, with oil sticking to oil, and water sticking to water. And unlike repels unlike, making oil and water separate. If you try to rinse a greasy pan in the sink with just water, it won't work. The water will flow over the oily surface, without really mingling with it. The water doesn't seem to get in there and shake up the oily gook.

But why? To explain this, we have to dip into chemistry. Water is made up of tiny particles too small to see with the naked eye, called molecules. And water is polar, meaning that one part (or pole) of each water molecule has an electric charge that's more negative, while the other part is more positive. The more positive hydrogen atoms of one molecule attract it to the more negative oxygen atoms of nearby molecules. The same principle explains why substances that divide into tiny electrically charged ions, like table salt, dissolve in water.

This starts to explain why water sticks to water, but it doesn't explain why oil sticks to oil, or why water and oil repel each other. Oil molecules are different from water. They are nonpolar, with a pretty even distribution of electrical charge, so they have only very weak electrical attractions to one another. Intro chemistry courses sometimes use these weak attractions to explain why oil sticks together and separates from water. But there is a better, more accurate explanation. It's a little tricky, but oil and water's mutual repulsion is so important in biology that it's worth trying to be accurate.

When water and oil separate, each water molecule gains the opportunity to interact with a larger number of adjacent water molecules—like extroverts at a party separating from introverts, so that they have more extroverts to talk to. And it's actually this freedom for more different water-water interactions that favors the separation. In chemistry and physics, arrangements of matter and energy tend to become more disordered over time—a principle called entropy. But if oil molecules were more widely dispersed in water, these scattered and isolated oil molecules would block many of the polar attractions between water molecules, creating a more ordered system, with less freedom for different water-water interactions—like introverts blocking extroverts from talking. The tendency toward entropy or disorder opposes this kind of limitation on water molecules' freedom to interact. So, water and oil separate, and water molecules have a field day with disorder and entropy, relishing their various polar interactions. If this seems too difficult, that's why intro chemistry classes usually fudge it.

This isn't just about oil and water. Other biological substances are broadly categorized as fat-soluble or water-soluble. Or, to use

the technical terms, hydrophilic substances are attracted (-philic) to water (hydro-) and lipophilic substances are attracted (-philic) to fats (lipo-). This is one of the basic organizing principles of biological systems, explaining how many things work in the human body. For instance, water soluble wastes are more readily eliminated in the urine, which is mostly water. And fat soluble substances—like steroid skin ointments—pass more easily through the non-polar surfaces of cell membranes (such as the surfaces of skin cells).

Soaps, however, are different—and now we're starting to approach bile, our main subject here. The molecules that make up soaps have polar portions, with a positive or negative electric charge, as well as non-polar portions, without an electrical charge. This dual characteristic is known as amphiphilic, meaning "liking both." Because amphiphilic substances, like soaps, have this dual quality, they can mix with both water-soluble substances as well as non-polar, fat-soluble substances. But, even more than that, amphiphilic substances allow these water-soluble and fat-soluble substances to mix with each other. That's why soap is so helpful for cleaning food off of dishes. Food contains water-soluble, hydrophilic substances (like sugars), as well as oils, fats, and other fat-soluble, lipophilic substances. Adding soap to a dirty dish allows grease and water to mix freely so that these things may be more readily cleaned off.

The food we eat, just like the food residue on the dishes piled up in our sinks, contains a mixture of water-soluble and fat-soluble substances. So in order to extract energy and nutrients from our food, fat-soluble and water-soluble substances must be able to mix freely with one another in our gut too. Therefore, we need something similar to dish soap within us—a kind of

internal soap—not for cleaning, exactly, but rather to allow these water-soluble and fat-soluble substances to freely intermingle.

In this sense, bile is the answer. Bile salts are the amphiphilic, soap-like ingredient that allows grease, oil, fats, and water-soluble substances to mix freely with one another, so that we can absorb fats and fat-soluble vitamins. This special stuff is made by the liver, from which it either drains through bile ducts and into the small intestine, or collects in a pouch-like structure called the gallbladder. When bile is needed, the gallbladder contracts, forcing a squirt out into the small intestine.

Bile's fat-dissolving function is crucial, allowing us to harness not just energy from dietary fat, but also the critical fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K (medical students rely on the word-like mnemonic, "ADEK"). Vitamin K, for instance, is essential for the proper clotting of blood. So when we're deficient in vitamin K, our blood can't block off the flow from a small cut, and we're at risk of it becoming a runaway hemorrhage.

Of course, bile has other functions too. Red blood cells are packed full of a substance called hemoglobin that carries oxygen from our lungs out to our tissues. When our body retires red cells, after about 120 days, we eliminate hemoglobin as waste. As part of this process, we convert it into bilirubin, which gives bile its characteristic green-yellow color.

Bile also dissolves lipophilic cholesterol and excretes it in our stool. And it helps kill any bacteria introduced into our gut by what we eat and drink. And it's also alkaline or basic—the opposite of acidic—so it helps neutralize the stomach acid entering the small intestine to prevent acid damage and ulcers. It does many important things.

Bile can also be involved in diseases. Normally, it's a

green-yellow liquid, but it can thicken into sludge, or even harden into bile stones, known as gallstones. Sometimes these stones are harmless, but sometimes they can be very painful when the gallbladder squeezes against them. Gallstones can also block the tubes that carry bile into the small intestine, even plugging up these ducts and obstructing the flow of bile. The presence of gallstones in the bile ducts has an unwieldy name, "choledocholithiasis" meaning bile (chole-) duct (docho-) stones (-lithiasis).

When the flow of bile is blocked, bilirubin can accumulate in the body, even yellowing the whites of the eyes, the underside of the tongue, and the skin (a condition called jaundice). Bile stones can also make it easier for the gallbladder itself to get infected, causing cholecystitis (a word meaning gallbladder inflammation, but usually referring to the infection of the gallbladder, specifically).

For now, though, you would do well just to remember that one of the most important things that bile does is act like a soap, allowing all the fat-soluble and water-soluble things in our food and drink to intermingle with one another, so that we may absorb all of those intermixed nutrients, and excrete cholesterol. The next time you eat a rich and fat-laden piece of chocolate, you can thank (or curse) the bile that permits you to harness all that energy. In our gut, oil and water can mix after all.

Somerville Bagel Bards member and physician-humanist, Ian Halim, writes about how medicine relates to everything from ethics to botany – aiming to make science accessible to the widest possible audience. Ian earned his PhD in Greek & Latin literature and his MD at Columbia University in New York City and is now training at a hospital in Boston.



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

The Comic Cruelty of Inishiren (spoilers included)

By Off the Shelf Correspondent Ed Meek

Irish feuds run like fissures through my family history. My younger brother fled to northern Maine thirty years ago and didn't even come back for the funerals of our parents. He resented the criticism my parents leveled at him for not being the person they wanted him to be, and he resented my sisters and me for remaining close to our parents. My uncle Dan did not speak to my mother and father for ten years after his wife lost her engagement ring and my mother had the gall to give her sister a replacement. So, I was re-disposed to identify when the musician Colm (Brendan Gleeson) picks a fight with his friend Padraic (Colin Farrell).

"I don't like you no more," Colm says.

In a conventional plot, this might be the climax when a particular action turns one character against another. A guy has sex with his friend's wife for example. But in this case, we are to assume that Colm and Padraic were fast friends for years, drinking together every afternoon at the local pub after a long day of composing music in Colm's case and hanging out at his house with his pet miniature donkey in Padraic's case. We're sympathetic toward Padraic as the film opens since he seems a bit simple and childlike. "Are we rowen (fighting) then?" he asks the barkeep. "We must be rowen. I didn't know we were rowen but we must have been rowen."

But why would these two ever have been friends? There's no telling but the earnestness of Padraic contrasted with Colm's lugubrious demeanor makes Colm's announcement funny. Thus begins a series of cruel jokes. As in *Seven Psychopaths*, Martin McDonough starts with an unlikely premise, a "what if" and proceeds from there to magnify the conflict. If you buy in, it can feel like a fun carnival ride.

When Padraic won't accept Colm's directive to stay away, Colm, a fiddler, cut off one of his fingers to spite Padraic. And when Padraic haplessly persists in being friends, Colm continues to dismember himself. The fact that musicians, like baseball pitchers, go to



great lengths to protect their hands makes this incongruous. Worse still, one of the digits is swallowed by Padraic's cute donkey, killing the poor animal.

These acts are vaguely predicted by an old crone, one of the many ridiculous characters on the island of Inishiren, an "island off an island" as Padraic's sister says. Inishiren, although beautiful, is populated by "mental cases" as Padraic's sister tells Padraic before she leaves for the mainland. Those mental cases include a policeman who beats both Padraic and his own developmentally delayed son. When not working, he sits home drunk and masturbates wearing nothing but his hat.

Maybe you find all this hilarious, a term whose meaning has shifted from really funny to a version of awkward humor. Isn't it hilarious when Republican governors bus undocumented migrants thousands of miles and drop them off in blue states? Of course, cruel humor is nothing new but the preponderance of it in humor-horror and violent films might have something to do with the rise in cruelty in our culture. From the cruel attacks by Trump on Mexicans and the disabled, to the "lock her up" chants, to the personal attacks on Nancy Pelosi, to the sucker punching of women by young males. Not to mention our perverse system of justice where DAs and politicians are rewarded for getting tough on crime. The result is an excess of arrests and brutality (especially involving Black men). We lead the

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walked to the fence to guide
them in patiently sitting by
the hospital bed as they
wrapped you your sheet
lifted your washed and broken body
onto a gurney – the dog watched.
They zipped and once again he
led them out to the gate.
I turned off the bed – the mattress

deflating – the snake like hissing
at its unnatural end.
All is silence.
That night I still slept
on the couch – I had
forgotten how
to use a bed

— Anne Elezabeth Pluto

Lyrical SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Anne Elezabeth Pluto grew up in Brooklyn, NY before it was cool. She is Professor of Literature and Theatre at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA where she is the artistic director of the Oxford Street Players. She is an alumna of Shakespeare & Company and was a member of the Worcester Shakespeare Company 2011 – 2016. She was a member of the Boston small press scene in the late 1980s and is one of the founders and editors at *Nixes Mate Review* and *Nixes Mate Books*. Her publications include chapbooks: *The Frog Princess*, White Pine Press (1985), eBook *Lubbock Electric*, Argotist ebooks (2012), *Benign Protection*, Cervena Barva Press (2016), the edited print edition of *Lubbock Electric Nixes Mate Books* (2018), and full length collection *The Deepest Part of Dark*, Unlikely Stories Press, NOLA (2020).



Dog and Bed

Your death was easier
in winter – the dog still
alive – my constant companion
learning to navigate the world
with only his right eye – I had
to bring myself completely to
the table – the one where
I hand fed him on the kitchen
floor disguising medications
to look and taste like treats.
He was brave – the cold January
afternoon when you died – he sat
next to me – suspended – the pewter
silence of the new year pressing
in my throat – the hospice nurse
came to fill out papers – and the funeral
director sent two young men –
they were late – it was a good day
for death – and we waited
warped in silence.
When they arrived – the dog

Historical Fact

CONT. FROM PG 9

Iwo Jima flag raiser, Sergeant Henry O. Hansen. Hansen lived to raise both flags on Mount Suribachi but was killed on the island ten days later. Until today he is still not recognized for both flag raisings.

The Medal of Honor is the



nation’s highest and rarest decoration bestowed upon some of the bravest heroes who risked everything above and beyond the call of duty. Somerville’s Medal of Honor Square is situated in Davis Square at the corner of Cutter Avenue and Summer Street in front of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and the Winter Hill Bank building. Dedicated in 2007, it honors the three Medal of Honor recipients from that post. They are:

- Private George Dilboy, a United States World War I Army soldier killed in France and America’s first Greek American hero.
- U.S. Navy Commander George L. Street III, Submarine Captain during World War II. The book and later movie, Run Silent, Run Deep, starring Clark

Gable and Burt Lancaster are said to be based on his crew’s exploits.

- United States Navy Captain Thomas G. Kelley Retired, a Vietnam veteran who was awarded by President Nixon in 1970. Tom Kelley was also Secretary of Veterans’ Services for the Commonwealth Massachusetts for twelve years. Today, a future United States Navy destroyer is soon to bear this retired Vietnam Medal of Honor recipient’s name, Captain Thomas Gunning Kelley.

With a population of 80,842, Somerville is the most populous city in New England with 19,248 residents per square mile. Through the years, she has been familiar with ship monikers. The first one built and christened by Governor John Winthrop was

The Blessing of the Bay. It slid down the ways into the Mystic River on the Fourth of July, 1631. She was the precursor of our Coast Guard and Navy. Before it was destroyed in battle, the SS John Winthrop honored him. A sampling of other Somerville note-worthy is:

- SS Marguerite LeHand – Twenty-one year (1920- 1941) private secretary to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Somerville’s children’s library is named after her.
- SS Charles Tufts - Somerville native and namesake of Tufts University.
- USS Somers – Honors Commandant Richard Somers, the namesake of our City of Somerville. Six ships have carried on his name.
- Somerville was promised a



WWII Liberty Ship in her name but the sudden ending of the war canceled it.

The log span of ships being named after citizens or notables who have touched Somerville has gone on from 1631 to 2023 ... close to 400 years.

Kudos and thanks to Captain Thomas G. Kelley!

Newstalk

CONT. FROM PG 7

Somerville Homesless Coalition’s Spring Into Action Event will be returning to **The Somerville Theatre’s Crystal Ballroom** on **Thursday, March 23.** #Feel-GoodFriday. For more information and to purchase tickets go to: <https://fundraise.givesmart.com/e/01Y6qw?vid=wre5o>

Kids 10-18 years old are invited to the **Half-Day Wednesday Video Game Hangout at Somerville Public Library (MA) Central Branch Teen Room** every **half day Wednesday**. Starts at 12:15 p.m. Hang out with peers, play multiplayer Nintendo Switch games on the big screen, try Super Smash Bros., Mario Kart, Rocket League or bring your own games.

Mayor **Katjana Ballantyne** announces that the **City of Somerville** is now seeking proposals that aim to address the **gender wage gap**, particularly for women of color who face the greatest pay disparity. Programs that create and maintain employment opportunities for

low- and moderate-income women residing in the city are sought. The grants are made possible by the city’s **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds**, the **Job Creation and Retention Trust, city funds**, and **funds generated from development impact fees**. Proposals will be accepted until **January 31**. Interested organizations can download the Request for Proposal package here: www.somervillema.gov/wfd. Print copies are available by emailing WFD@somervillema.gov. For further information, please contact WFD@somervillema.gov.

Join **Groundwork Somerville** for **Foraging for Local Wild Food Part I**. Guest presenter, **Shane Jordan**, will discuss the basics of foraging and plant ID along with the history of foraging as it intersects with class and race. Shane is based in Somerville and has been foraging for over a decade. He is most interested in the intersection of economics, ecology, philosophy, history, science, and politics. **January 31, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.** via zoom

\$0 – \$15 sliding scale. All funds will go toward the construction of a community compost bin at **South St. Farm**. Register online through our website.

The **Arts at the Armory’s Performance Hall** is available to rent for weddings, parties, and private work functions. With a new stage, aesthetic improvements to the space, and a capacity of 395, the **Performance Hall** is a versatile, conveniently located venue in the heart of Somerville’s **Spring Hill neighborhood**. Did we mention there is ample off-street parking? Learn more at artsatthearmory.org, and fill out the Event Contact Form to book the Performance Hall.

CAAS would like to hear from you in their **Community Needs Assessment survey**. They will use the results to improve their understanding of the challenges facing this community and to develop a plan to meet them. They will also share the assessment with you and the broader community. This survey

is available in several languages. Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential and anonymous. The deadline is **January 31**. Survey in English: (<https://forms.gle/JEVTUxo5c652Pd7>). Survey in Spanish: (<https://forms.gle/DcMsXVFnyQeYmLck9>),- Survey in Portuguese (<https://forms.gle/Vv626PAMaRVmJNDD9>)

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

Don’t forget, if you would like to subscribe to receive a **digital edition** of our paper, go directly online to our website over to the right side and fill out your email address to receive a free, full PDF copy of the paper.

Off The Shelf

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world in incarceration and many of those prisoners are unfit mentally. In addition, the punishment of prisoners continues after they’re released with disenfranchisement and criminal records that keep them from finding jobs.

If you buy Inishiren as a microcosm for the mainland

and the civil war on it, maybe you just nod along with the movie although the feud doesn’t really fit that conflict. A better analogy might be Brexit where England hurt its own economy in the name of reclaiming its identity to get back at the rest of Europe. Then there’s the Republican Party

whose leaders run for office in order to dismantle the government and destroy the planet to get back at the liberals.

The island scenery is stunning and the acting is fine, but at is core *The Banshees of Inishiren* is bitter and mean-spirited. Maybe that’s appropriate. Or maybe it’s just cynical.



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