



## Inside:



**Snow job**

page 3



**New designs at  
ArtFarm Park**

page 9



**A Buffalo  
transplant**

page 14

## Somerville finalizes new contract with SMEA Unit D



Contract signing with Mayor Wilson and SMEA Unit D. — Photos courtesy of City of Somerville

Somerville has signed a new union agreement that will raise pay and modernize benefits for Unit D employees — from ISD and Parking staff to social workers, specialized Police Department clerical staff, and DPW custodial and facilities supervisors — who keep Somerville's day-to-day services running. The newly signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) covers Fiscal Years 2023 through 2025.

"When City Hall runs well, the whole local economy is stronger," said Mayor Wilson. "That starts with the basics: strong services, a stable workforce, and fair union contracts that help us recruit and retain the people who keep this city moving. I'm grateful to Unit D and our team for the good-faith work that brought us to signing today."

Key provisions include:

• 3% retroactive cost-of-living

Continued on page 4

## The Inside-Out Gallery: How the Somerville Arts Council creates accessible art

By Matthias Gat

The Inside-Out Gallery provides a unique opportunity for artists to exhibit their work and for residents to freely engage with the art world.

In 2009, the Somerville Arts Council took advantage of an empty CVS window in Davis Square. They turned it into a free gallery for residents and commuters to view. The Arts Council asked the community to name the gallery. When two separate respondents wrote in with the same answer, the title was decided: The Inside-Out Gallery. The name is a play on words — the works are on the inside of the window, but out on display for everyone to see.

Heather Balchunas joined the Somerville Arts Council in 2009 and helps organize exhibits for the gallery. Since then, over 100 exhibitions have been curated under her management.

Reflecting on the gallery's impact, she says, "It has been a joy to be able to curate this window," but not just for herself. "Having other people be guest curators has been equally as fun because I get to help realize their own vision."

The gallery itself is used as a way to forge a stronger community through public art, encouraging everyone to engage with the art world. Because the gallery is free, Balchunas says it gives the opportunity for everybody to get exposed to many different styles of art.

Continued on page 4



A portrait of a woman with her facial features missing on display under a CVS Beauty sign. The mural is by Ariel Freiberg, made for the Inside-Out Gallery.

— Photos by Heather Balchunas



### BUSINESS BANKING

With a complete line of Online and Mobile Banking Services Business Banking is Better than Ever!

**Let's Do Business**

Contact Peter Majane at 781-443-5148  
or pamajane@winterhillbank.com

Learn more at [winterhillbank.com](http://winterhillbank.com)



Just SNAP, TAP and GO!  
Save a Trip to the Bank with Mobile Deposit



Call us Today  
617-666-8600 OR 800-444.4300  
[winterhillbank.com](http://winterhillbank.com)  
A Mutual Bank Serving The Community  
Since 1906

## T.J.SILLARI, INC. Over 50 Years Experience

Plumbing • Heating • Gas Fitting • Industrial Work • Water Heater Replacement • Complete Drain Service

Residential - Industrial - Commercial

**625-9877**

Proud to be a Somerville resident

Master Plmb. Lic. #6106



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 opened an overnight Winter Warming Center during the coldest months of the year to provide a safe, warm place to sleep for our residents experiencing homelessness. Open 5 p.m. – 7:30 a.m. daily through April 12. For questions about the Warming Center, call 311. If you need assistance getting to the Warming Center or after-hours assistance, please call (339) 242-4744. Email [warmingcenter@somervillema.gov](mailto:warmingcenter@somervillema.gov). The Cummings Building, 42 Prescott St.

\*\*\*\*\*

Somerville High School (SHS) and Somerville Public Schools invite all interested community members to visit during one of three Open House events on February 11 and February 12. Staff will provide an overview presentation on the state-of-the-art facility before students lead community members on a walking tour of the building. Tours will be held on Wednesday, February 11, from 8:15 to 10:00 a.m., and on Thursday, February 12, during two sessions: 8:15 – 10:00 a.m. and 12:45 – 2:15 p.m. In the event of inclement weather, tours will be rescheduled for February 24, with times to be determined. For more complete information and office hours, please visit [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/enrollment](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/enrollment).

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy birthday this week to the following: We want to wish Louise Mosca, a lifelong Somerville resident and former teacher's aide at Southern Jr. High and Somerville High School, a wonderful birthday. She will be turning 97 on February 1. *Continued on page 7*

## Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of January 28 – February 3 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
<b>Wednesday</b> January 28	Sunny	26°/8°	7%	4%	W 10 mph
<b>Thursday</b> January 29	Sunny	24°/4°	4%	2%	WNW 13 mph
<b>Friday</b> January 30	Sunny	21°/5°	2%	1%	W 11 mph
<b>Saturday</b> January 31	Partly Cloudy	25°/17°	20%	12%	NW 6 mph
<b>Sunday</b> February 1	Snow	26°/16°	55%	44%	NW 14 mph
<b>Monday</b> February 2	Partly Cloudy	31°/16°	22%	13%	NW 12 mph
<b>Tuesday</b> February 3	Partly Cloudy	35°/17°	4%	2%	NW 9 mph

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

## Residents are reminded to clear vents and tailpipes

After heavy snowfall, as we have gotten, please be sure to check that the vents and flues on the outside of your home – and your car tailpipe – are clear of snow and ice. Blocked vents or tailpipes can trap carbon monoxide (CO) in your home or car and cause CO poisoning. CO is colorless and odorless, and breathing in high levels can be fatal.

Take a walk around the outside of your home to check vents for appliances like your furnace, water heater, and dryer, and clear away any snow buildup. Pay special attention to vents that are low to the ground, which can get buried in accumulated snow or snow drifts. Vents can also be covered by shoveled snow piles, so make sure to check your vents a few times during snow cleanup.

Before you start your car, also be sure to clear snow from your tailpipe to prevent CO from filling the inside of the car.

Remember to install and regularly test home CO alarms to make sure they are working properly.

If you suspect CO exposure or your home's alarms sound:

- Get outside to fresh air immediately.
- Call 911 from a cell phone or a neighbor's house.

If you have symptoms, seek medical help. Symptoms may include shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, or headache.

Visit the Somerville Office of Emergency Management and the Somerville Fire Department websites for more safety information like this.



To prevent CO from filling the inside of the car, be sure to clear snow from your car's tailpipe.

— Photo courtesy of Lorraine Fitzmaurice

## The Somerville Times

[news@thesomervilletimes.com](mailto:news@thesomervilletimes.com)

[www.thesomervilletimes.com](http://www.thesomervilletimes.com)

Phone: 857-488-5138

@somervilletimes

[www.facebook.com/thesomervilletimes](http://www.facebook.com/thesomervilletimes)

Publisher – Somerset Valley Publishing Inc.

Editor – Jim Clark

Assignment Editor – Bobbie Toner

Advertising Director – Bobbie Toner

Arts Editor – Doug Holder

Writers: Jim Clark, Harry Kane,  
and Cathleen Twardzik

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

The Somerville Times is published every Wednesday

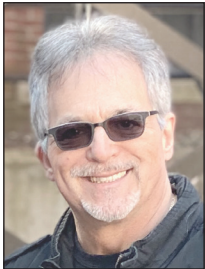
A proud member of the following newspaper organizations:



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.

# Snow job



At the first mumbblings of snow, we kids went into “snow day mode.” We watched Don Kent on Channel 4 and waited to see “Somerville” flash across the screen during the no-school warnings. If Sudbury flashed, no dice! But eventually, when we saw Somerville scroll across, we became jubilant! No school!

There’s nothing like a snow emergency to bring out the best in people. Not. But it does bring out a lot of hyped-up zombies who hit the stores mumbling, bread, eggs, milk ... bread, eggs, milk! We bought into the weather nerds that the end of the world was coming. First stop, Home Depot for rock salt, snow melt, and shovels. Or go to Tags, which is closer but a bit costlier.

Even though most of us have more than enough food to last a couple of days, we feel the need to “stock up.” Did the weathermen and women predict snow or the end of the world?

Hey, I was 25 during the Blizzard of ‘78. Now that was a snowstorm! Let’s face it, anyone who was alive during The Blizzard of ‘78 holds a winning card when talking about serious snowstorms. No cell phones!

Love thy neighbor, unless thy neighbor cuteth in front of you in the checkout line, beateth you to a parking space, or grabeth the last loaf of Wonder Bread.

In the final hours before the snow emergency restrictions clamp down, we become obsessed with final preparations. We can’t see the big picture. There will be snow, but we’re pretty sure we will live afterwards, and we will drive and walk another day.

During the Blizzard of ‘78, I remember trying to walk to Davis Square. The usual 3-minute walk took 45 minutes. Walking in the middle of the street was fun. With plastic bread bags over my socks, I’d try to keep the snow out of my green rubber snow boots from The Bargain Center. My friends and I made a lot of money shoveling.

In the old days, we would have been sledding at Powder House Park. I remember flying down the College Ave. side, right



across the busy street, and ending up in front of Loud’s Candy Shop. Details Mom never found out about.

In days of old, we would be excited for a snow day from school. We built snow forts, went sledding, and watched TV. We ate grilled cheese sandwiches and tomato soup.

Nowadays, snow is just a pain in the butt. Just walking without falling has replaced sliding down hills on sleds and hunks of cardboard. I like warmth and comfort and television. The good thing is that I have enough bread and eggs to open a restaurant, and enough snacks for the Super Bowl. Be careful out there.

Wedding / Event  
Photography & Videography

*Harry Kane*

860-840-3737  
www.KaneFilms.net  
HarryKaneFilms@gmail.com



Photo & Video Services  
for events in  
MA, CT, NY, RI



**LOS TORITOS**  
**MEAT & MARKET**

Fresh Quality Meat | Fresh Produce | Fresh Baked Bread | Speciality Items | Beauty Products | Butcher Shop & More



139 Broadway, East Somerville  
7AM - 10PM Daily



**Are You Sitting  
On A Fortune?**

**Call Our Team at CRG To See  
What Your Home Is Worth.**

**617-764-4342**

**699 Broadway Ave, Somerville, MA 02144**



## Money Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

**Q: Is it really worth setting up an IRS online account?**

**A: Absolutely—yes!** And setting it up is reasonably easy.

Creating an IRS Online Account is one of the smartest steps taxpayers can take to stay in control of their taxes. Here's why:

• **See where you stand:** Check if you owe taxes—or if the IRS owes you. Many people have unclaimed refunds or “credit interest” visible right on the dashboard.

• **Access prior records:** View Wage & Income transcripts (W-2s, 1099s) going back up to 10 years. Tax Return transcripts (the returns you actually filed) are available for the current year and prior three years.

• **Communicate securely:** As of 2026, the IRS offers secure messaging and document uploads for most notices. That means faster resolution, a written paper trail, and no more waiting on hold.

• **Track refunds faster:** It's the quickest way to update your direct deposit info—crucial now that the IRS is phasing out

paper refund checks.

**Bonus for Massachusetts residents:** Sign up for MassTaxConnect, the state's online portal. It's often more user-friendly than the IRS version and helps resolve identity verification issues that can otherwise freeze refunds for months.

**Any questions?** I'm Vincent Hicks, a CPA based in the Cambridge–Somerville area. Reach out at [vincent@hickscpasolutions.com](mailto:vincent@hickscpasolutions.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.*

## Somerville finalizes new contract with SMEA Unit D

CONT. FROM PG 1

adjustments for both FY23 and FY24

- One additional week of vacation
- Transition to a vacation accrual system, improving consistency and flexibility
- Increases to the longevity bonus
- Eligibility for the city's new paid FMLA benefit

As part of the market adjustment, starting rates for FY25 will increase by an average of 13%, while existing employee rates will increase by an average of 14%.

The MOA will now be submitted to the Somerville City Council for funding approval.



Somerville has signed a new union agreement that will raise pay and modernize benefits for Unit D employees.

## The Inside-Out Gallery: How the Somerville Arts Council creates accessible art

CONT. FROM PG 1

“Accessibility is important in art,” Balchunas says, “this is a way that anyone can have access to art, regardless of your income or your class.”

She emphasizes that this effort for inclusivity hasn't gone unnoticed by the community that is most often unable to engage directly with the art world.

“There are unhoused people that hang out near the CVS that have expressed their appreciation for the gallery.”

On display now is *Predilection for Structure*, a collection of paintings by David Palmquist.

Palmquist has worked at Vernon Street Studios since 2005 and has collaborated

with the Somerville Arts Council before. In a Q&A with the Arts Council, he credits artists like David Hockney, Mark Rothko, and others as major inspirations for his work.

He is “drawn to subject matter that abstract themselves into smaller divisions,” [1] a sentiment exemplified in his style, where lines are blurred, details are melded, and our viewpoint altered.”

Starting mid-February, works by Neetu Singhal [2] will be on display.

**Links:**

[1] <https://www.spraylux.com/statement.html>

[2] <https://www.neetusinghal.com/>



Two of Palmquist's paintings on display in the Inside-Out Gallery.

## Participate in Somerville's annual city census

The City of Somerville is encouraging residents to fill out and complete the city's annual census form, which is making its way to residents' mailboxes in mid-January.

Annual participation in the census is essential for keeping an accurate population count, and it updates or maintains your status as an active voter for upcoming elections. Failure to respond to the City Census may result in your removal from the voting rolls.

Return your completed census form: In person at City Hall (93 Highland Ave.) • Via mail to Somerville Election Department, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143 • Email: [census@somervillema.gov](mailto:census@somervillema.gov) • Fax: (617) 625-5643.

For more information, please call 311 (617-666-3311) or visit [somervillema.gov/elections](http://somervillema.gov/elections).



# Somerville invites residents to help shape FY 2027 budget priorities

Somerville residents have an opportunity to help shape the city's next annual budget. The City Council Finance Committee is inviting the community to share input on priorities for the city's Fiscal Year 2027 budget at a virtual community budget meeting on Tuesday, February 10, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held on Zoom and is open to all residents. Registration is encouraged but not required.

Community feedback helps shape budget decisions – guiding investments in City services, programs, and day-to-day operations. Residents are encouraged to attend and share what they want to see prioritized in the year ahead.

Experience with the city budget is not required. Councilors and the Mayor's Office are interested in hearing what services, projects, priorities, and goals matter most to residents, and any community members can contribute. Everyone is welcome.

And if you want to learn more about past budgets, visit [somervillema.gov/budget](http://somervillema.gov/budget). Each "fiscal year" starts in July and runs through the end of June the following year. Fiscal year 2027 runs from July 2026 through June 2027.

### Virtual Community Budget Meeting (FY 2027)

Date: Tuesday, February 10

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Register: [bit.ly/49PuSvU](https://bit.ly/49PuSvU)

### Language Access

Interpretation will be provided in Spanish and Portuguese. Interpretation in other languages is available upon request with advance notice.

Written comments will also be accepted through February 10, at 12 p.m.

If you're unable to attend the hearing, you can share comments in two more ways:

Emailing the City Council at [public-](mailto:public-comments@somervillema.gov)



[comments@somervillema.gov](mailto:public-comments@somervillema.gov).

Dropping off written comments at the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 93 Highland Ave.

Emailed comments and written comments must be received no later than 12 Noon the day of the Hearing to ensure

they are conveyed to the Committee for inclusion with the hearing testimony.

Note that the City Council always accepts comments at this address, but they cannot guarantee that comments received after the deadline will be read prior to the hearing.

Be sure to visit us online at [www.TheSomervilleTimes.com](http://www.TheSomervilleTimes.com)

YOU  
BELONG  
AT RCC



Visit [rcc.mass.edu/register](http://rcc.mass.edu/register) or call 857-701-1200 to get started.



# Beacon Hill Roll Call



Volume 51 - Report No. 4 • January 19-23, 2026 • Copyright © 2026 Beacon Hill Roll Call. All Rights Reserved. By Bob Katzen

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

**THE HOUSE AND SENATE:** There were no roll calls in the House and Senate last week. This week, *Beacon Hill Roll Call* reports on Senate roll calls from recent sessions

## EXTEND THE TIME TO FILE FOR AN ABATEMENT (S 2900)

Senate 36-1 approved an amendment that would increase from 30 days to 75 days the amount of time a property owner has to file for an abatement if they feel that their home evaluation was too high.

Amendment sponsor Sen. Nick Collins (D-Boston) said the amendment would help property taxpayers by simply extending the abatement period and giving them more time. He noted that currently we have the bomb drop on January 1 and people who are in the middle class don't have lawyers and accountants on retainer. He said that when the city increases your property value by 10 percent, you usually put your head down and just eat it, and that's not fair.

"I voted 'No' ... because tax classification, exceptions and credits, particularly when novel, should be addressed comprehensively and analyzed in the context of other new proposals and existing law," said Sen. John Keenan (D-Quincy), the only senator to vote against the amendment.

(A "Yes" vote is for the amendment. A "No" vote is against it.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

## FURTHER EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR SENIOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION (S 2900)

Senate 36-1, approved an amendment to a bill that would give cities and towns the option to create tax rebate programs for residents who already benefit from a local residential exemption. This new rebate program would allow cities and towns to set income and asset thresholds, tailoring relief to local residents' needs.

Amendment supporters said the amendment, sponsored by Sen. Nick Collins (D-Boston), would boost the existing senior property tax exemption by giving municipalities the option of further expanding eligibility by lowering the age eligibility, raising the income eligibility, raising the asset eligibility and raising the limit of possible exemption from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

"I voted 'No' ... because tax classification, exceptions and credits, particularly when novel, should be addressed comprehensively and analyzed in the context of other new proposals and existing law," said Sen. John Keenan (D-Quincy), the only senator to vote against

the amendment.

(A "Yes" vote is for the amendment. A "No" vote is against it.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

## SENIOR PROPERTY TAX DEFERRAL (S 2901)

Senate 37-0, approved a bill that would expand eligibility for the Senior Tax Deferral Program by lowering eligibility to qualify for it from the current 10 years to seven years of required state residency.

In addition, the bill allows the homeowner, or their heirs, one-year to pay back the deferral with accrued interest rather than immediately after sale or death; allows municipalities to raise income eligibility to the maximum circuit breaker amount; and delays the date on which a foreclosure petition may be filed until 18 months after their death.

Supporters said the measure will allow seniors to keep more money in their pockets at a time when property values and tax bills are steadily climbing.

"Property tax deferral is an important program that can help older adults stay in their homes," said amendment sponsor Sen. Pat Jehlen (D-Somerville). "It allows older adult homeowners to defer all or part of their property tax bill, which is paid back to the municipality with interest when the property is sold. It can be a better alternative to reverse mortgages, especially if the municipality sets the interest rate lower than the 8 percent cap. It is underutilized, and this legislation will remove one barrier by extending the time a municipality can reduce the interest rate, and the time before foreclosure is allowed. Many cities and towns can do more to inform older homeowners of this option, and this is a chance to do that."

(A "Yes" vote is for the amendment. A "No" vote is against it.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

## KEEP DARK MONEY OUT OF LOCAL BALLOT QUESTIONS (S 2898)

Senate 6-31, rejected an amendment to a bill requiring more frequent public reporting of fundraising and spending by groups supporting or opposing statewide ballot questions.

The amendment would apply the state's campaign finance election laws to political expenditures of more than \$1,000, made by persons, corporations, associations, organizations or other groups of people, to influence the outcome of local ballot questions in cities and towns. The

person or group would be required to file disclosure forms and failure to comply would be punishable by a 1-year prison sentence and/or a \$1,000 fine.

Sen. Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester), the sponsor of the amendment, did not respond to repeated requests by *Beacon Hill Roll Call* asking him to comment on his amendment.

Supporters said that the amendment will close a loophole that allows unlimited amounts of unreported funds by outside individuals and groups to influence and sway the local voters' decision. They noted the flow of dark dollars out the vote of the local voters.

"[The] amendment promoted the idea of more transparency on the local level for political spending, when it comes to ballot questions," said Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton). "These laws already exist on the state level, and I think that residents should be able to understand who is supporting local ballot initiative questions and what their implications are."

"I voted 'Yes' on this amendment because it guarantees transparency in local ballot question," said Sen. Patrick O'Connor (R-Weymouth). "Any individual or entity who is spending a significant amount of money to influence decisions on a ballot question should have to publicly disclose where this money is coming from. This would close a disclosure gap in municipal elections, deter outside influence and keep consistent with existing campaign finance principles. I think that this would keep democracy in check as oftentimes municipal elections are overlooked. Consistency across the board would be the most beneficial to all."

Amendment opponents said the amendment goes beyond the subject matter of the bill which deals with statewide ballot questions. They argued that the gist of the amendment is already in several separate bills that are pending before the Legislature. They said the Senate should consider this amendment as a separate bill which would be the subject of a public hearing and be vetted through the legislative process.

"I voted against the amendment because I believe Sen. Julian Cyr's [separate] bill ... is the more appropriate vehicle for meaningful municipal election funding reform," said Sen. John Keenan (D-Quincy). "This is important legislation that I hope to see passed in the Senate soon."

Sen. Sal DiDomenico (D-Everett) did not respond to repeated requests by *Beacon Hill Roll Call* asking him why he led the charge against the amendment and to comment on why he opposed it.

*Continued on page 13*

COMMENTARY

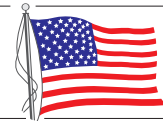
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Cold enough for you?

Our View Of The Times



Enough is enough already. Let's hope we have seen the end of it for now. Only time will tell, but when it comes to putting up with the tiresome digging out and warming back up, we surely wish for the best.

As if clearing our sidewalks and driveways isn't hard enough, we have had to contend with ridiculously cold, record-breaking low temperatures.

Remember, when cold snaps like this

happen, the temperatures outside can actually be much colder than you think. Always play it safe and follow some simple guidelines, such as those that have been offered by the city. Here are some important highlights:

- + Make sure your heating system is working, and you have enough heating fuel.
- + Know where your electricity, gas, and water switches and valves are located and

how to shut them off. You may need to turn off water pipes if your pipes freeze or burst.

- + Make sure your vehicle's gas tank is at least half full and pack an emergency kit that includes blankets and/or warm clothing.
  - + Try to minimize time outside, even for pets.
  - + Check on neighbors and family, especially the elderly and infirm.
- Watch for signs of cold-related health con-

cerns like frostbite and hypothermia, and call 911 immediately for any emergencies.

A whole lot more information on how to deal with these extreme temperatures can be found on the city website: <https://www.somervillema.gov/coldweather>.

Let's all be careful out there – and in there as well. We don't want to see any of us falling victim to the savagery of old Jack Frost!

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

We wish her a special day and many more to come. Happy birthday to **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**. Happy birthday to our good friend and a great guy, former Alderman **Bob McWatters**. We wish him the very best and hope he enjoys his day. Happy birthday to **John Arvantis**, who is celebrating this week. Happy birthday to **Jason Ribeiro**. We hope he has a great day this week. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Cathy Palumbo Demasi**, **Edward Hardy**, **Michael Kennelly**, **Maria**

**Nella Nunes-Rollins**, **Edward W Hardy**, **Geraldine Nevaras**, **Paula Monaco-DiNitto**, **Simon Shapiro**, 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.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Wilbert Pineda**, a longtime Somerville resident, community advocate, and former candidate for Somerville Ward 7 City Council, is exploring a run for **State Representative in the 34th Middlesex District**. Pineda is considering a campaign focused on addressing the rising cost of living, protecting civil rights, and providing accountable, transparent lead-

ership for students, renters, small businesses, and working families in Somerville and Medford.

\*\*\*\*\*

Local Somerville non-profit arts organization **Around Hear** is holding, in partnership with the **Somerville Housing Authority**, a free concert on **Saturday, February 7, 2 – 4 p.m., Mystic Activity Center, 530 Mystic Ave**. Get in the mood for **Valentine's Day** with a program of heart-on-sleeve music for violin and piano, performed by Around Hear co-directors **Marji Gere** and **Dan Sedgwick**. For those of you who listen best with your hands, this concert will feature a

special Valentine's active listening activity. Choose cards from their Valentine card station and write messages to your special someone(s) while you listen. There will be a dessert potluck following the concert. Bring a sweet to share or just come and taste the sweet offerings.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Valentine's Day** is just around the corner, and spring isn't far behind. Get ready with items from **Kitty Connection's Online Auction, Friday, January 30, through Sunday, February 1**. Kitty Connection is a non-profit dedicated to finding loving homes for local pets, and the "Love, Hugs, and Bunnies" *Continued on page 11*

# FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

# Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#1007

1. What is the term for a massive snow slide down a mountain?
2. What is the crystallized frost that appears on trees in very cold conditions known as?
3. Which U.S. region is famous for its "lake-effect" snow?
4. What is the term for snow that becomes granular and coarse after melting and re-freezing?
5. How many AFC Championships have the New England Patriots won?
6. What does the green dot on a NFL players helmet mean?
7. What was the name of the song the Chicago Bears recorded during their 1985 Super Bowl-winning season?
8. What Quarterback has the most career games in AFC championships?
9. What NFL player has won the most MVP Awards?
10. What NFL player has won the most MVP Awards?
11. Who is the voice actress known for voicing Bart Simpson on *The Simpsons*?
12. Caprese salad typically includes tomatoes, basil, and what variety of cheese? *Answers on page 10*

## The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Only one person in two billion will live to be 116 or older.
2. The U.S. Air Force introduced Bob Ross to painting.

### STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

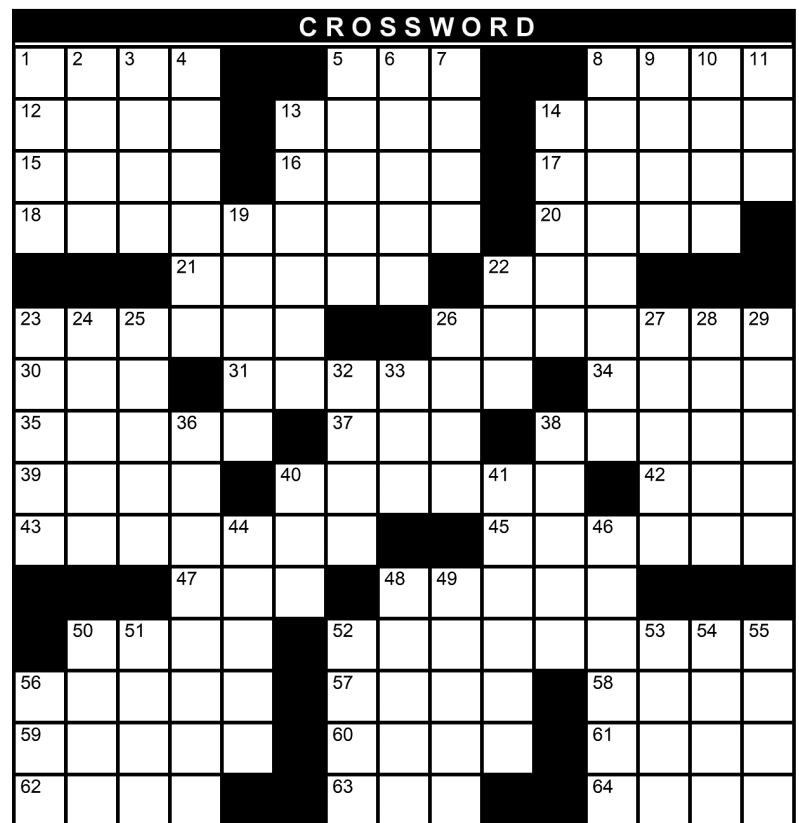
LOVE'S IN THE AIR

#### ACROSS

1. Biology lab supply
5. Aldous Huxley's drug of choice
8. Certain Courtney
12. Tear violently
13. Color of a bruise
14. Al Roker's show
15. Pupil control
16. Any minute, to Shakespeare
17. Sheep-like
18. H. P. of science fiction fame
20. Hibernation stations
21. Boat station
22. Tennis shot
23. Packed in container
26. User-friendly interface, acr.
30. Genetic info carrier, acr.
31. Love unquestioningly
34. Equal to 1.3 ounces in Asia
35. Not a minor
37. Poem addressed to certain subject
38. Hundred, in Italian
39. Nothing
40. Relating to clone
42. Division, abbr.
43. Sloughed off skin
45. Fluffy dessert
47. All good things come to this?
48. Between Octs and Novs
50. \_\_\_\_ Verde National Park
52. B-52s "little old place" (2 words)
56. Singing femme fatale
57. Deed hearing
58. Reverberated sound
59. Blue-Green scum, pl.
60. Misery cause
61. Actress Perlman
62. Scheme
63. Right coast time
64. Made by tailor

#### DOWN

1. Seed cover
2. Biking helmet manufacturer
3. Tel \_\_\_\_, Israel
4. #64 Across, redone
5. Like 1969 landing
6. Laugh with contempt
7. Fender-bender damage
8. a.k.a. hickey (2 words)
9. Norse deity
10. "Off The Wall" shoe
11. Needle hole
13. Macy's Thanksgiving offering
14. Commotions
19. Silica variety
22. NaOH
23. Solder together
24. Dewey Decimal Classification, a.k.a. Relative \_\_\_\_
25. Pleasant Island
26. Small songbird
27. Harry's and Hermione's magic tools
28. Bigfoot's cousins
29. Hand cover, with love
32. Lemming relative, or anagram of love
33. Tokyo, formerly
36. Couch for two
38. Lumps in liquid
40. Knave
41. Unit of electric current flow
44. Absurd
46. Theater guides
48. Nutritious beans
49. Black tie one
50. Grain grinder
51. "Cogito, \_\_\_\_ sum"
52. Stud site
53. Occasional heart condition
54. Prepare to swallow
55. Riddle without solution
56. Tree juice



**SWITCH & GET \$25**

**Off First Month of New Service!**  
USE PROMO CODE: **GZ590**

**Consumer Cellular**

CALL CONSUMER CELLULAR **888-804-0913**

© 2023 Consumer Cellular Inc. For promo details please call 888-804-0913

© StatePoint Media

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



Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

# See updated designs for Somerville's ArtFarm Park

A decade in the making, plans for Somerville's unique ArtFarm park are taking shape. At a public meeting on February 9, city staff will present the latest community-driven designs that aim to transform the city's former waste transfer site into a creative hub where gardens, public art, and recreational space bloom above a massive underground flood-control system.

Community members are invited to come learn about the project's history, design development, and key park features – as well as upcoming timelines. Participants can attend either in person or online.

While a new park for Somerville, there's history here. Designs for ArtFarm were

first drawn up in 2014. The idea arose after the demolition of the Waste Transfer Station at 10 Poplar Street left a blank slate. But the City also needed critical stormwater control. So, this being Somerville, a creative plan to do both was hatched.

The park plans were modified to first accommodate the Poplar Street Pump Station ([voice.somervillema.gov/poplar-pump](http://voice.somervillema.gov/poplar-pump)) and a 4-million-gallon underground stormwater storage tank under construction since 2023. This two-for-one approach aims to deliver the park atop the critical new infrastructure that will mitigate flooding in the city's eastern half (including the Ward 2 and 3 areas) as climate

change brings more precipitation.

For the surface, residents worked with the Somerville Arts Council and the Public Space and Urban Forestry team to envision a common space that "grows" Somerville's vibrant arts scene, provides opportunities for recreation, and supports community agriculture.

ArtFarm has since become a key part of the Brickbottom Neighborhood Plan ([voice.somervillema.gov/brick](http://voice.somervillema.gov/brick)) adopted in 2024, calling for the district to be defined by art and creativity. All are invited to learn about the project and what comes next at the upcoming meeting.

**Meeting Information:**



Date: Monday, February 9, 6 p.m.  
Location: Triangle Coffee Bar (100 Chestnut St.)

Join via Zoom: [bit.ly/4sWOnf8](https://bit.ly/4sWOnf8)

For more information and to stay up to date with this project, visit [voice.somervillema.gov/poplar-artfarm](http://voice.somervillema.gov/poplar-artfarm).

## Applications now open for three income-restricted rental units at two properties

Applications for three income-restricted rental units in Somerville are now open. Maloney Properties, in partnership with the City of Somerville, has three studio income-restricted apartments available across two properties: The Guild (154 Broadway) in East Somerville and Prospect Union Square (50 Prospect Street). Apply now through Friday, February 6.

As is standard, the units were first offered via Somerville's Consolidated Rental Waitlist before being opened to all eligible applicants making at or below 110%

of Area Median Income (AMI). All income-eligible households, as well as mobile voucher holders, are now welcome to apply. This is a first-come, first-served opportunity. Apply for these units online at: [bit.ly/4rdwfMj](https://bit.ly/4rdwfMj).

Being on the Consolidated Rental Waitlist can make it easier to apply for housing opportunities. To learn more and for future opportunities to join it, visit [somervillema.gov/consolidated-rental-waitlist](http://somervillema.gov/consolidated-rental-waitlist).

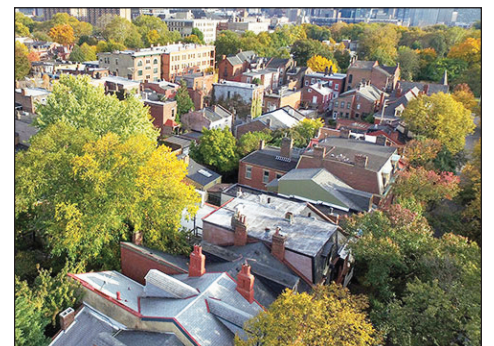
More information on household income limits:

2025 Income Limits for 110% AMI units	1 Person	2 People
Minimum	\$92,651	\$105,851
Maximum	\$127,358	\$145,552

Application assistance is available during the Inclusionary Housing Program's virtual office hours every Thursday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom: [bit.ly/3LJiN3w](https://bit.ly/3LJiN3w).

Multilingual resources and application support will be available throughout the application period.

To learn more about Somerville's inclusionary housing and other opportunities, visit [somervillema.gov/inclusionary](http://somervillema.gov/inclusionary).



To sign up for updates, click the green box labeled "Affordable Housing Alerts: Sign Up Now."

## Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



### Brunch Oats

A perfect recipe for brunch. I use a rice maker to cook, then keep the oats warm until I'm ready to serve. That means I can prepare other dishes without having to constantly stir the pot. Well, at least not this pot anyway.

- 2 Parts Steel Cut Oats\* see note
- 4 Parts Water
- Salt-Just a Pinch
- 1/3 Cup Almond Butter, Cashew Butter or Peanut Butter
- 1 Teaspoon Cinnamon
- 3 Tablespoons Brown Sugar (optional)
- 1/3 Cup Slivered Almonds
- 2 Bananas, Diced

\*I use the quick cooking oats. They take about 20 minutes in a rice cooker, or 5-7 minutes stovetop. Place the oats, water and pinch of salt into the rice cooker or a pot on the stovetop. Once cooked, add the nut butter of your choice, cinnamon and brown sugar and blend. Scoop into 4-6 small servings or 4 healthy size serving and garnish with diced bananas and slivered almonds. If you opted not to add in the brown sugar, you can sprinkle some over the finished servings or drizzle with honey.

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



LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notices can also be viewed on our website at [www.thesomervilletimes.com](http://www.thesomervilletimes.com)



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

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a virtual public hearing on **Tuesday, February 3, 2026**, at 6:45pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be conducted via remote participation. A recording of these proceedings can be found online here: [Agendas, Minutes, & More](#).

**TO USE A COMPUTER**

Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_fZaGmRfSPu4QkqUCOMXlg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fZaGmRfSPu4QkqUCOMXlg)

**TO CALL IN**

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

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

**DETERMINATIONS OF PREFERABLY PERSERVED (STEP 2 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)**

**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.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases>. Interested persons may provide comments to the Historic Preservation Commission at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov).

1/21/26, 1/28/26 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, February 4, 2026**, 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. A recording of these proceedings can be found online here: [Agendas, Minutes, & More](#).

**TO USE A COMPUTER**

Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Pi68lleyQ\\_Sy0ExpGMeLJQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Pi68lleyQ_Sy0ExpGMeLJQ)

**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:

**12 Linden Street** Yang Ge seeks relief from SZO 3.2.18.a.ii. to add a second curb cut on a front lot line in the Urban Residence (UR) zoning district, which requires a Hardship Variance.

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).

1/21/26, 1/28/26 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
**JAKE WILSON**  
 MAYOR

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

There will be a Public Hearing before the City Council's Committee on Finance on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 6:00 PM, on the Order of Finance Committee Chair Ben Wheeler, to solicit public input on budget priorities.

This meeting will be held in the Committee Room, on the 2nd Floor of City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, and by remote participation, using the Zoom platform.

Interpretation in Spanish and Portuguese will be available via Zoom during the meeting.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the Committee Room, on the 2nd Floor of City Hall.
2. To attend remotely, enter the link exactly as it appears below into your internet browser. You will then be asked to register for the meeting. [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Y6\\_ig7n6Tue56jEnUWsPMg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Y6_ig7n6Tue56jEnUWsPMg)
3. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may send written comments by US mail to the City Clerk, 93 Highland Avenue, 02143, or by email to [publiccomments@somervillema.gov](mailto:publiccomments@somervillema.gov). Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Council.

**THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.**

**KIMBERLY M. WELLS**  
 CITY CLERK

1/28/26 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
**PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
 RFP #26-31

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department, invites sealed bids for:

**Acquisition of Property by Lease for a Nibble Shared Community Kitchen in Union Square**

The City of Somerville, acting through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department invites sealed proposals for a lease of commercial space for approximately 450 sq. ft. located in the Union Square neighborhood for use as a shared kitchen as part of the Somerville Art's Council's "Nibble" program. The acquisition by lease is subject to certain conditions set forth in the Request for Proposals (RFP).

The RFP and specifications may be obtained online at [www.bidexpress.com](http://www.bidexpress.com), <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or from the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **Friday, December 19, 2025**. Sealed proposals will be received at the above office until: **Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 2:00PM**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please contact Felisa Gárate at [fgarate@somervillema.gov](mailto:fgarate@somervillema.gov) for more information.

**Felisa Gárate**  
 Senior Procurement Manager  
 617-625-6600 x3406

1/28/26 The Somerville Times

**Somerville 2026 Excise Tax Bills Arriving in January**

Residents should please note that motor vehicle excise tax bills for 2026 are being sent one month earlier this year. Bills will issue on January 26, 2026, and are due February 25, 2026.

Somerville residents who own a vehicle with a valid Massachusetts license plate are responsible for paying their excise tax bill each year. Payments can be made:

- Online via the link on the city's website at [somervillema.gov/payonline](http://somervillema.gov/payonline)
- In-person at the Collector's office at City Hall (93 Highland Ave.). Valid ID required if you do not bring the bill with you when making payment in person.

- Via mail using the provided envelope.
- Or by check, which can be dropped off in the stainless-steel payments box outside the front entrance of City Hall.

Regularly check your mailbox to avoid missing payment deadlines. Payment is required even if a physical bill is not received. To request a duplicate copy, please contact the treasury department to have a duplicate bill mailed, or "self-authenticate" online and pay via the city's website at [somervillema.gov/payonline](http://somervillema.gov/payonline).

For more information, contact the Tax Collector's office at [Treasury@somervillema.gov](mailto:Treasury@somervillema.gov) or call (617) 625-6600 x-3500. For general information on how to make a payment, contact 311 at 617-666-3311 or via chat/app/email/etc. at [somervillema.gov/311](http://somervillema.gov/311).

**TO PLACE LEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE SOMERVILLE TIMES, CONTACT US BY 12 PM MONDAY PHONE: 857-488-5138**

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

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Avalanche                            | device in their helmet, enabling them to receive instructions from coaches |
| 2. Hoarfrost                            |  |
| 3. The Great Lakes region               | 8. Super Bowl Shuffle  |
| 4. Corn snow                            | 9. Tom Brady (13)  |
| 5. The snow line                        | 10. Peyton Manning (5)   |
| 6. 12                                   | 11. Nancy Cartwright   |
| 7. The player has a radio communication | 12. Mozzarella   |

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

auction will raise funds to support the care of **homeless cats and dogs** awaiting their forever families, including the cost of pre-adoption veterinary procedures. Visit <https://www.myminiauction.com/kittyconnection> for more information.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Valentine's Day Mixer** by the **Somerville Museum** on **Friday, February 13**, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 1 Westwood Road. Bring a special someone, a friend, or treat yourself to a special pre-Valentine evening at the Museum with live Latin music from **CuraSón**, promoting love and connection by playing original music that comes from the heart. Enjoy mocktails, a chocolate tasting, sweet and savory snacks, and a free digital portrait while exploring our galleries featuring their current exhibit: *Crafting the Mind*. Sip and chat, dance and laugh, or sit and craft at the weaving table while meeting new people. For more information, visit: <https://www.somervillemuseum.org/>.

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** for a night of local love at **The Crystal Ballroom** featuring some of Somerville's best. Their **2026 Spring into Action celebration** on **March 26** brings together local flavors and fantastic live music from **West of Willow** and **The Loomers**. Be part of it and celebrate their community with them. Save the date; tickets drop in February. For support or additional information, please contact [mconlan@shcinc.org](mailto:mconlan@shcinc.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Winter Hill Community Innovation School PTA** is hosting a **Cutest Critter Contest**, a fun fundraising event for their school. Submit your pet's photo with a \$20 donation and give them a shot at awesome prizes: 1st place: A free exam by a local veterinarian, as well as six months' worth of preventative, 2nd place: A pet gift basket tailored to your pet - worth over \$50, 3rd place: A gift card to **Scratches and Boops Pet Boutique Shop**. Not entering a pet? No problem, you can vote for your favorite furry pals for just \$1.50 per vote. Voting ends on **Puppy Bowl Sunday**, February 8. For more info or to donate, visit: <https://givebutter.com/CfLdZn>.

\*\*\*\*\*

The **City of Somerville** is seeking one new resident to join the **Somerville Affordable Housing Trust (SAHT)** in a volunteer role. The current vacancy is for a **City Resident representative**. Appli-

cants must be Somerville residents who are income-eligible for state and/or federal housing programs. If you're passionate about advancing affordable housing in our community, this is a great opportunity to make an impact. Applications are due by **Friday, February 6**. Please submit a resume, cover letter, and any relevant supplemental materials. Email: [housingtrust@somervillema.gov](mailto:housingtrust@somervillema.gov) or mail **Sheniqua Roper**, City of Somerville, OSPCD Housing Division, 50 Evergreen Ave., Somerville, MA 02145. For questions or more information, contact **Housing Trust** at [housingtrust@somervillema.gov](mailto:housingtrust@somervillema.gov) or call 617-591- 3200 ext. 2587.

\*\*\*\*\*

Registration for **Somerville Open Studios 2026** is open **through February 15**. If you want to apply for financial aid, the deadline is **Sunday, January 18**. The event is **Saturday and Sunday, May 2 – 3**. Visit their website for registration details <https://www.somervilleopenstudios.org/web/join>.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

Take steps to protect yourself and loved ones against **COVID-19, the flu, and other illnesses** this winter. Somerville's **Health and Human Services Department** is hosting free vaccine clinics at locations across the city. Upcoming clinic: **Tuesday, February 3**, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., City Hall Annex, 50 Evergreen Ave. For more information, visit: <https://www.somervillema.gov/vaccinations>.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Do you love to sing?** You are invited to join the **Community Gospel Choir** and sing in their free **Gospel Music Concert**, which will be held on **Sunday, February 22**, 3 – 5 p.m., at the **Somerville Community Baptist Church** in Davis Square (the concert is in honor of **Black History Month**). Singers of all ages and backgrounds are welcome to join the Choir. The only requirements are that you love to sing and you want to sing Gospel music. All songs will be taught. Rehearsals led by Choir director **Stacie Clayton** will

be held on **Sundays, February 1, February 8, and February 15**, from 12:30 to 2:15 p.m. in the **Sanctuary** at the **Somerville Community Baptist Church**, 31 College Avenue, two blocks from Davis Square. For more information, see [www.ILoveSCBC.org](http://www.ILoveSCBC.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

Apply today for **Creative Space** at **Somerville's Armory**. All creative disciplines are encouraged to apply for open spaces **now through March 11**. The city is now accepting **Requests for Proposals (RFPs)** from arts and creative enterprises interested in leasing space at the city-owned Armory at 191 Highland Ave. Full details on eligibility, available spaces, lease terms, evaluation criteria, and how to submit a proposal are available on the **Armory Master Plan SomerVoice page**, which will serve as the primary hub for this process: [www.voice.somervillema.gov/armory-master-plan](http://www.voice.somervillema.gov/armory-master-plan).

\*\*\*\*\*

Some reminders for the **2025/2026 snow season**: Snow emergency parking is **on the odd side of the street** all winter, unless posted signage says differently. Sign up for alerts or update your information at [somerville-ma.gov/alerts](http://somerville-ma.gov/alerts). You can call 311 (617-666-3311) if you need assistance. Flashing blue lights at major intersections indicate a snow emergency. Snow emergencies are announced on the city's website, social media feeds, City TV, and via information shared with local media. Property owners are responsible for clearing snow from sidewalks within six daylight hours of the end of snowfall. For more information on the city's snow policies, visit [somervillema.gov/snow](http://somervillema.gov/snow).

\*\*\*\*\*

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](mailto:closet@connexionumc.org) to coordinate a pickup. Questions email: [closet@connexionumc.org](mailto:closet@connexionumc.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

Somerville's **Teen Shoveling Program** is back for the 2025/26 season, providing a paid opportunity for youth to assist local seniors and homeowners with disabil-

ities 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](http://somervillema.gov/shoveling), contact **Daniel Harris** at [dharris@somervillema.gov](mailto: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](http://somervillema.gov/311).

\*\*\*\*\*

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 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).

\*\*\*\*\*

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 Continued on page 13



## Somerville Fair Housing Commission Question of the week



**Q:** My wife and I are in our 70s. We want to buy a small home just for the two of us but we don't want to break into our retirement investments to do it. Is it possible to get a mortgage at our age? I think we have good credit, never checked yet. We are both retired.

**A:** Age and "legitimate source of income" are both protected classes covered by state and federal fair housing laws. Lenders may not discriminate on those grounds. They may not even ask how old you are. Like any potential borrower, you'll be judged on whether you have a record of paying bills promptly, how much other debt you're currently carrying, and whether you have sufficient dependable income to handle the proposed housing expense.

Income from social security and retirement funds will qualify just fine.  
(from Edith Lank's column in the *Rochester, NY Democrat & Chronicle*)

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

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

To donate visit:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-somerville-times>

Share with your friends and neighbors!  
Let's keep local news alive, together.

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

Visit us online at [www.TheSomervilleTimes.com](http://www.TheSomervilleTimes.com)

## BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



What did the icy road say to the car?  
"Want to go for a spin?"

The "Original"  
**All Types Vent Cleaning**  
Restaurant Hood Cleaning  
Dryer Vent/ HVAC Cleaning  
Power Washing  
Licensed and Insured  
in Massachusetts  
We travel all over  
Massachusetts  
Call today to find out  
our weekly specials!  
Call Jimmy 857-366-3761

To advertise in  
**The  
Somerville  
Times**  
call  
**Bobbie Toner**  
**857-488-5138**

## Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Snow Bear... — Photo by Denise Provost

## On This Day in History

### January 28

0028 – The Roman Emperor Nerva names Trajan, an army general, as his successor.

1547 – Henry VIII of England dies and is succeeded by his nine-year-old son Edward VI.

1757 – Ahmed Shah, the first King of Afghanistan, occupies Delhi and annexes the Punjab.

1792 – Rebellious slaves in Santo Domingo launch an attack on the city of Cap.

1915 – The U.S. Coast Guard is founded to fight contraband trade and aid distressed vessels at sea.

1921 – Albert Einstein startles Berlin by suggesting the possibility of measuring the universe.

1955 – The U.S. Congress passes a bill allowing mobilization of troops if China should attack Taiwan.

1964 – The Soviets down a U.S. jet over East Germany killing three.

1970 – Israeli fighter jets attack the suburbs of Cairo.

Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 6

In December, the House gave initial approval to a related bill that would apply the state's campaign finance election laws to political expenditures of more than \$1,000, made by persons, corporations, associations, organizations or other groups of people, to influence the outcome of articles that appear on Town Meeting warrants. The person or group would be required to file disclosure forms and failure to comply would be punishable by a 1-year prison sentence and/or a \$1,000 fine.

(A Yes" vote is for the amendment. A "No" vote is against it.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen No

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

CHALLENGE TO POSSIBLE MARIJUANA BALLOT QUESTION REJECTED

The State Ballot Law Commission, a five-member body appointed by the governor, issued a decision overruling the objection filed against an initiative petition that would place on the 2026 November ballot a question asking voters to repeal the current laws that legalize, regulate and tax the retail sale of adult recreational use marijuana in Massachusetts. The proposal to put the question on the ballot had garnered the required 74,754 signatures and it will now, like ten other petitions, go before the Legislature for consideration. If not approved by the Legislature by May 6, 2026, proponents must gather another 12,429 signatures by July 1, 2026, in order for the question to appear on the November 2026 ballot.

The commission's decision cited the lack of admissible evidence presented by the objector. The commission wrote, "The objector's call that the unsupported allegations contained in the objection raise serious questions about the petition's integrity that warrant further scrutiny from the commission itself, rings hollow given that absolutely no admissible evidence has been presented or offered supporting the allegations made."

REGULATE AND RESTRICT CIVIL ARRESTS IN COURTHOUSES BY ICE AGENTS (SD 3607)

Sen. Lydia Edwards (D-Boston) has filed legislation that would require ICE agents to obtain a judicial warrant in order to take someone into custody in a courthouse or on courthouse grounds, for a civil immigration crime such as being present in the U.S. without lawful

status and overstaying a visa.

The proposal also requires agents to identify themselves to uniformed court personnel and state the specific law enforcement purpose for their presence in the courthouse, and the proposed enforcement action the agent intends to take. Another provision prohibits ice agents from wearing masks unless medically necessary.

Edwards said that "the proposal is rooted in a simple principle: courthouses must remain safe spaces where justice is practiced without fear." She noted that Increased ICE activity in and around courthouses undermines the sense of safety within these buildings and grounds and has had a chilling effect on access to the courts - prohibiting residents from fully exercising their right to due process.

"Courthouses exist so people can seek justice - not to be places of fear or enforcement ambush," said Edwards. "When individuals are too afraid to show up to court, justice breaks down for everyone. This legislation is about defending the rule of law, safeguarding due process and ensuring our courts remain places where fairness and equal access are upheld for all."

MAKE ASPARAGUS THE OFFICIAL STATE VEGETABLE (HD 5474 and SD 3498)

Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) and Rep. Homar Gomez (D-Easthampton) filed a bill, requested by some third-grade students at Hadley Elementary School, to make asparagus the official state vegetable. Other areas in the nation are also working to designate their state as the asparagus capital of the world.

"It kind of started by us asking what our state vegetable was, and we really didn't have one," said 8-year-old student James Rathbun. "We thought that was interesting, and it would be cool to invite the senator and representative to the class and ask them to make a bill."

According to the students, back in the 1950s and 1960s, almost 100 percent of asparagus grown in the Bay State came from fields in Hadley, unofficially making the town the asparagus capital of the world.

"I filed this bill because Western Massachusetts should be more visibly represented across the commonwealth, and there's no better way to do that than through our amazing

farms," said Rep. Gomez. "The work the children did truly made this a no-brainer for me."

"When a classroom filled with passionate third graders advocate for asparagus to become the official state vegetable, I listen closely," said Sen. Comerford. "It was inspiring to meet with these students at Hadley Elementary School as they shared the history and regional significance of asparagus - also known as Hadley Grass. I am grateful to these young people for reminding us how democracy works."

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 January 19-23, the House met for a total of 46 minutes and the Senate met for a total of 37 minutes.

Table with 2 columns: Date and Session Details. Rows include Mon. Jan. 19 (No House session, No Senate session), Tues. Jan. 20 (House 11:03 a.m. to 11:29 a.m., Senate 11:15 a.m. to 11:37 a.m.), Wed. Jan. 21 (No House session, No Senate session), Thurs. Jan. 22 (House 11:03 a.m. to 11:18 a.m., Senate 11:03 a.m. to 11:18 a.m.), Fri. Jan 23 (House 11:01 a.m. to 11:06 a.m., No Senate session)

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 11

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. We offer great discounts to help our advertisers be able to ad-

vertise. Thank you all so much for your support! \*\*\*\*\* Through the generosity of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and under the direction of Mayor Ballantyne, the Council on Aging can provide Durable Medical Equipment at no cost to Somer-

ville 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 the medical equipment needed. For additional information or for an application, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600,

ext. 2321. \*\*\*\*\* Don't forget, if you would like to subscribe to receive a digital edition of our paper, go directly online to our website, over to the right side, and fill out your email address to receive a free, full PDF copy of the paper.



## OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

## Poet Mark Pawlak: A Buffalo transplant with a long New England literary pedigree

Interview by Off the Shelf Correspondent John Wisniewski

John Wisniewski, a prolific interviewer of my acquaintance, asked if he could interview poet, publisher, activist Mark Pawlak. Mark is a highly regarded poet, publisher, and a mainstay of the poetry scene in the Boston/Cambridge and greater New England area.

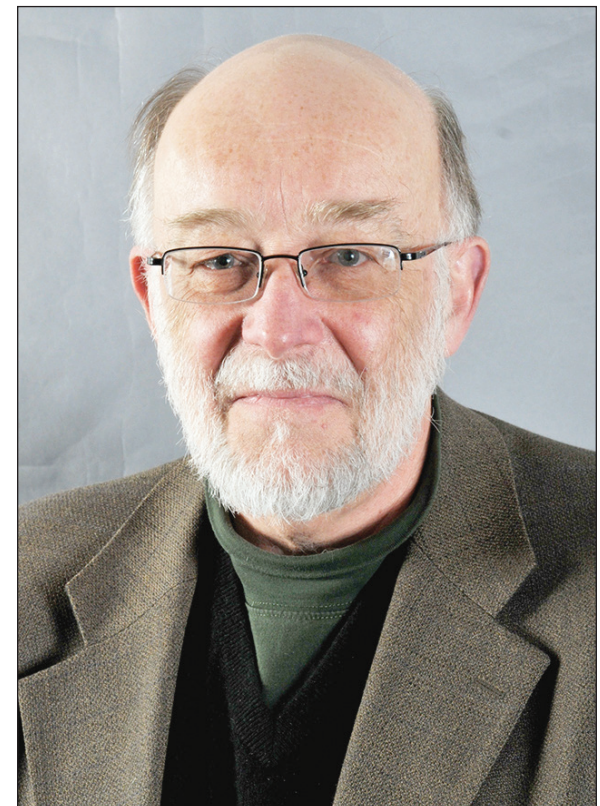
**John Wisniewski:** What was it like growing up in Buffalo, NY?

**Mark Pawlak:** Many friends here in Boston, where I have lived for more than 50 years, assume, because of my four plus decades association with Brooklyn as an editor of Hanging Loose Press, that I grew up in New York City, but I'm a native of Buffalo, like Bert Stern, Fanny Howe, Henry Braun and Elizabeth Swados, to name a few other poets. A baby boomer, I grew up at a very special time. The U.S. post war economy was expanding at a rate never seen before. Buffalo was a thriving industrial city of steel mills, auto plants, foundries, etc. That all came to a crashing end soon after I left for college. It was also a time of opportunities for working-class kids like me, opportunities unheard of by my parents depression era generation, attending college, to name just one, even an elite college like MIT, where I studied physics as a scholarship student.

Buffalo's Polish immigrant population in the 1950s was second only to Chicago in size. My family lived in the predominantly Polish East Side of the city. We lived first with one, then the other pair of my grandparents, where Polish was spoken more often than English. One grandfather worked on the railroad, the other in a foundry. My parents, who both attended Polish Catholic grade schools, grew up bilingual, but I was encouraged to learn only English. My father, who didn't finish high school but got a GED, started out as a welder at the Curtis Radiation factory, where I learned Joyce Carol Oats' father also worked. Later, he got an unskilled job at the Buffalo Water Works. Our lives were governed by his ever-changing shift-work schedule. When my brothers were born, we moved into an apartment in a public housing development. ("Birthday" in 'Away' Away is my latest poem about my 1950s Buffalo childhood.)

I attended the local Catholic elementary school that bordered the housing project. Nuns impose a strict discipline to keep the large, crowded classrooms from becoming unruly. The curriculum was narrow: reading, writing, arithmetic, and religious instruction. Resources were meager. For example, when I announced that I had received the Christmas gift of a Gilbert Chemistry set, the nuns appointed me roving science instructor, visiting classrooms to give chemistry demonstrations.

By the early 1960s, my family joined the "white flight" from city to suburb, a trend common to many big cities, fueled by racism, I'm not proud to admit. Like countless families at the time, my parents were able to buy a house in a new suburban development and afford a middle-class lifestyle despite still holding working-class jobs. I started 9th grade at a Buffalo public high school, but halfway



through my sophomore year, when we moved out of the city, I transferred to Maryvale public high school in the suburb of Cheektowaga.

I was a typical Sputnik generation science geek in middle and high school, but supplemented my reading of science fiction, technical manuals, and biographies of scientists with novels and poetry. I loved 19th-Century American authors: Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Mark Twain, and Whitman, but I didn't attempt to write poetry until college. When I started to, it was to impress an English major girlfriend, but I didn't produce anything memorable.

**JW:** Why did you decide to leave a career in physics to become a poet and essayist?

**MP:** The anti-Vietnam War movement had a lot to do with it. Opposition to that war reached a peak of activity during my senior year at MIT, 1969-1970. Students and many faculty at MIT and on most other college campuses in greater Boston were demonstrating in the streets, occupying buildings, and generally disrupting "business as usual." Revelations surfaced at MIT about its complicity in the war effort, where almost 80% of research funds came from Defense Department grants. Instead of "The Idea Factory," we began to call MIT "Pentagon on the Charles." My own physics research involved high-power lasers as diagnostic tools for a big fusion project. (Back then, it was thought that energy from controlled fusion would be achieved in less than a decade. Fifty years later, the same claim is being made today!) It became clear to me as my graduation approached that if I followed the career path to become a physicist in grad school and after, there was a very high likelihood that my research would eventually become weaponized. I didn't want

Continued on page 15

# Lyrical

## SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Peter F. Crowley is a prolific writer from the Boston area whose work spans short fiction, op-eds, poetry, and academic essays. His writing has appeared in publications such as *Pif Magazine*, *New Verse News*, *Counterpunch*, *Common Dreams*, *The Galway Review*, *Digging Through the Fat*, and *The Opiate*. He was a finalist in both the short story and poetry categories of Adelaide's Award Anthologies. He is the author of two poetry collections, *Those Who Hold Up the Earth* and *Empire's End*, as well as a short fiction collection, *That Night and Other Stories*.

### A poem I will write

One day I will write a poem  
that will be profoundly noble,  
and widely praised

I will become famous,  
adored by the morally sound  
and astute, clever people

It will be a fine life with large sums of money,  
a houseboat in the Bahamas  
and a throne 'neath coconut trees

The piece will be read for centuries,  
nay millennia, be studied in schools,  
my biography analyzed

All thanks to this poem  
that I will one day  
write

— Peter F. Crowley

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)

Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 14

to have anything to do with that, so I dropped out and became an anti-war activist and a teacher.

My final two undergrad semesters at MIT, I enrolled in a poetry workshop taught by Denise Levertov, poet-in-residence that year. That was a transformative experience. Denise and her husband, Mitchell Goodman, were nationally prominent anti-war activists and spokespeople (see Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*). The other students in the workshop were a remarkable group, drawn from other area colleges, not just MIT. About half of them have become well-published poets. One, Arthur Sze, is the current US poet laureate. Denise welcomed and encouraged my decision not to pursue a career in physics. But, I didn't decide to become a poet overnight, it happened gradually in the years after MIT, when she mentored me and championed my poetry, eventually introducing me to my first full poetry collection (*The Buffalo Sequence and Other Poems*, Copper Canyon Press, 1977).

**JW:** Could you tell us about writing *The Buffalo Sequence*? Who were some of your inspirations while writing this?

**MP:** In 1972, I joined a collective of other recent college grads and grad students, plus a group of teens to start an alternative high school, The Group School (TGS), in Cambridge. The late '60s and early '70s saw the emergence of a national "free school" movement, a response to deep dissatisfaction with traditional education. Our school's philosophy was that students needed to fully participate in shaping their education, not just the curriculum, but in all aspects of running the school. TGS was tuition-free and designated for working-class teens. The students came from the housing projects and the surrounding working-class neighborhoods of Cambridge. I taught math, science, and creative writing there until I left in 1980 to teach at UMass Boston.

The founding group of students came from North Cambridge, many from the Jefferson Park Housing development. I was 23, then, just 5 or 6 years older than them. Traditional teacher/student roles dissolved at TGS. I came to view the students as my friends, and in many ways I learned as much from them as they did from me. Importantly, they put me in touch with my childhood growing up in a Buffalo housing project, much like where they lived. Becoming intimate with their lives and reflecting on my childhood was the inspiration for the poems I was writing then, which became *The Buffalo Sequence*. (I've written a lengthy personal essay about this, which is archived in the TGS website <https://www.thegroupschoo.org/memories-and-memoirs/oirz9b2dtu91itvo489lhggh4p9393-ayz3m>).

**JW:** Do you find inspiration in the Objectivism school of poets?

**MP:** Yes, indeed, and Doc Williams, too, of course, who they took off from. Did you know that the Objectivist Press in 1934 published the first iteration of Williams' *Collected Poems 1921-1931*? ABE Books is selling a copy of this rare hardcover for \$1,184!

I was most directly influenced by Charles Reznikoff and Lorine Niedecker; later by George Oppen, too. Reznikoff's urban poems, composed during his daily walks along the streets of Manhattan, were a big influence on the flaneur poems in my collection *Reconnaissance* (Hanging Loose, 2016), and Niedecker influenced the poems that percolate throughout my poetic journals in that same collection. Observational Poetics is the name I've given my work. It draws directly upon an ancient Song Dynasty text that Resnikoff liked to cite: "Poetry presents the thing in order to convey the feeling. It should be precise about the thing and reticent about the feeling."

Reznikoff, who was employed editing law journals, later elab-

orated on the term, explaining that an Objectivist is "a writer ... who does not write directly about his feelings but about what he sees and hears; who is restricted almost to the testimony of a witness in a court of law; and who expresses his feelings indirectly by the selection of his subject matter." George Oppen, for his part, summed up his Objectivist poetics thus: "Thinking with things as they exist," elaborating upon Williams' "No ideas but in things."

The poet Harvey Shapiro, editor of the *New York Times Book Review* in the 1960s, whom I knew and published, was a second-generation Objectivist. He knew them all. Zukovsky was a neighbor of his in Brooklyn Heights. Harvey told me that whenever he visited Reznikoff's apartment in Manhattan, Rezi would press upon him copies of his many self-published books. He had a closet stuffed with them. Reznikoff didn't have publisher until he was 68, when *New Directions* introduced him to a wide audience with *By the Waters of Manhattan*. Shapiro described what he learned from his Objectivist mentors once in an interview: "...from them I got the sense that the world did not exist to be exploited in rhetoric. That there was a way of writing about objects, things, landscapes, trees, that gave the object its own life, its own space, while still permitting the poet's imagination to create the poem."

**JW:** Could you tell us about writing your most recent poetry collection called *Away Away*?

**MP:** I keep a journal where, in addition to diary entries, I copy quotations from my reading and jot down observations that I later turn into poems. It was my way of keeping in touch with my poet self during the years I worked full-time, 11 months a year, as an administrator and professor at UMass Boston, while also editing *Hanging Loose* magazine and books. I'd work up the jottings into poems during summer vacations. All the poems in 'Away' *Away* were written after I retired from UMass, but nearly all of them were still derived from my journal, which I keep to this day. In addition to individual poems, I've written poetic journals and travelogues influenced by Basho's *Narrow Road to the Interior*, which combines prose descriptions of places he visited and people he encountered, interspersed with haiku. I've freely adapted his haibun form, but instead of haiku, I've turned my epiphanies into short poems. There are two poetic diaries and a travelogue in this collection, plus a "pillow book," modeled on the diary by that name compiled by Sei Shōnagon, a 11th-Century court lady to the Chinese Empress Consort Teishi.

The title poem *Away* is a 7 poem sequence describing the remote easternmost corner of Maine, bordering Canada and the Bay of Fundy, where my wife and I vacation for two weeks every August. The final section of the book consists of poems written during and about the COVID pandemic.

**JW:** Any story you could tell us about Denise Levertov?

**MP:** I refer you to my memoir **My Deniversity: Knowing Denise Levertov** (MadHat Press, 2021), which is full of stories about her. One story from the memoir, about her political activism in Boston, circa 1970, can be found online in the *Arrowsmith Journal* (<https://www.arrowsmithpress.com/journal/praxis>).

**JW:** What was it like counseling inner city teenagers while you were writing *The Buffalo Sequence*? Did you feel that you learned something from them?

**MP:** I think I previously answered this, but I'll add the following. I shared an apartment in North Cambridge with another Group School teacher, in the same neighborhood where most of our students had grown up and still lived. The Jefferson Park housing development was just a few blocks down the street. Traditional teacher/student roles didn't exist at TGS. Students called me by my first name. After school hours, I often hung out

with them. If one of the students played hooky for more than a day, my roommate or I would go find them and persuade her or him to come back. If one of them got arrested for petty theft, breaking and entering, or car theft, we'd get the call to come bail them out and later serve as character witnesses in court. If one of them was kicked out of his home by parents, we took him in to ensure he didn't end up living on the streets, often for just a day or two until things were resolved, but other times for extended periods. Fifty years later, I'm still in regular contact with quite a few of my former students. I find it shocking to realize that some of them are now in their 70s!

**JW:** You are also a literary editor and publisher. You joined West End Press as an editor and later Hanging Loose Press. Could you tell us about editing *When We Were Countries: Outstanding Poems and Stories by High School Writers*.

**MP:** John Crawford started *West End Magazine* circa 1969 out of the West End bar, which he frequented as a grad student at Columbia. When he moved to Boston in late 1972, he immediately looked up Denise Levertov, whom he'd previously met in New York. I was introduced to John in Denise's kitchen over lunch. John published a few of my poems in *West End*, then proposed to devote the entire next issue to my complete *Buffalo Sequence*, paired with a book-length poem by Richard Edelman, another protégé of Levertov's. That double chapbook appeared in 1974. Subsequently, John invited me to join West End Press, which began to publish books as well as the magazine. Its mission was to publish neglected working-class and minority writers. I stayed as an editor with *West End* until 1979, by then, John had moved the operation to the Midwest and eventually settled in Albuquerque.

I was invited to join Hanging Loose Press as an editor in 1980, replacing Emmett Jarrett, one of the founders. The remaining three founding editors, Ron Schreiber, Robert Hershon, and Dick Lourie, were all 10 or more years older. *HL* magazine began as loose, mimeographed pages inserted in an envelope with art on the cover, and it literally hung loose, hence the name. That format remained for 28 issues. The current issue, #118, is a 150-page, perfect-bound, glossy publication with an 8-page color art insert, a format we adopted over three decades ago. Hanging Loose, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, is the oldest independent literary press still in existence. Since 1976, we've published books as well as a magazine, almost 300 titles to date, primarily poetry.

Every issue of *Hanging Loose* magazine features a special section devoted to high school-age writers. These teen poets consistently produce mature, well-crafted, stunning work. One year, Adrienne Rich selected three of them to be included in the Best American Poetry annual. Every 10-15 years, we go back and cull the best teen poems that first appeared in the magazine and compile a "best of" anthology. *When We Were Countries* is the fourth such anthology. The others are *Smart Like Me*, *Bullseye* and *Shooting the Rat*, each of which received glowing reviews.

**JW:** What are you currently working on, Mark? Any future plans and projects?

**MP:** I'm compiling a "new and selected poems of witness and resistance," i.e., a selection of my political poems spanning four decades. I've also written and published many essays and memoirs over the years. I hope to find the time to gather them for book publication in the near future.

*John Wisniewski is a freelance writer who has written for Paraphilia Magazine, L.A. Review of Books, Toronto Review of Books, Small Press Review, Chiron Review, and now KGB Litbar. He currently resides in West Babylon, NY.*

The Somerville Times  
**Best of Somerville 2025**  
 Cast your vote!

You have until January 30, 2026 to vote for your favorites in each category. To cast your vote, email us at thebestofsomerville@yahoo.com. The winners will be announced on February 4, 2026. If you don't see your favorite category here, simply add it in your email.

**Foods & Restaurants**

- Best Breakfast
- Best Combination Breakfast & Lunch
- Best Italian Food
- Best Chinese Food
- Best Mexican Food
- Best Portuguese Food
- Best Local Deli
- Best Variety and all around Restaurant
- Best Seafood
- Best Irish Pub
- Best Local Bar
- Best Thai Food
- Best Hamburger
- Best Mac & Cheese
- Best Hot-Dog
- Best Roast Beef Sandwich
- Best Pizza
- Best Bakery

- Best Sub Shop
- Best Coffee Shop Franchise
- Best Coffee Shop local
- Best Bar Food

**Best of Somerville Services**

- Best Electrician
- Best Plumber
- Best Attorney
- Best Teacher
- Best City Worker
- Best Receptionist
- Best Real Estate Agent/Realtor
- Best Real Estate Rental Agent
- Best Compost Company
- Best Bank Teller
- Best Bank Employee
- Best Waitstaff
- Best Bartender

- Best Cook
- Best Caterer
- Best Barber
- Best Hair Salon
- Best Doctor
- Best Nurse
- Best Coach
- Best Police Officer
- Best Fire Fighter
- Best Photographer
- Best Somerville Historian
- Best Eye Doctor
- Best Orthodontist
- Best Mortgage Officer
- Best Somerville Artist
- Best Somerville Poet
- Best Somerville Writer
- Best Somerville Celebrity
- Best City Elected Politician

**Best of Somerville Businesses**

- Best Somerville Bank
- Best Real Estate Company
- Best Insurance Agency
- Best Creative Business in 2025
- Best Florist
- Best Laundromat
- Best Liquor Store
- Best Gas Station
- Best Auto Body Shop
- Best Tow Company
- Best Law Firm
- Best Pest Exterminator
- Best Convenient/Neighborhood Store
- Best Somerville Non Profit Agency
- Best Bar For Bands

**Best Idea in 2025**  
**Worst Idea in 2025**

The Somerville Times **BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

To advertise in our Business Directory, call 857-488-5138.

**T. J. SILLARI, INC.**

Over 50 Years Experience  
 Proud to be a Somerville Business Resident



- Plumbing • Heating
- Gas Fitting • Industrial Work
- Water Heater Replacement
- Complete Drain Service

Residential - Industrial - Commercial

Master Plmb. Lic. #6106 **625-9877**

**The Law Offices of Richard G. Di Girolamo**

**Richard G. Di Girolamo, Esquire**  
**Anne M. Vigorito, Esquire**  
**Breanna L. Rolland, Esquire**

ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW

- Real Estate Law
- Zoning
- Civil Litigation
- Criminal Defense
- Family Law
- Personal Injury

TELEPHONE: (617) 666-8200

FAX: (617) 776-5435

EMAIL: digirolamolegal@verizon.net

424 BROADWAY, SOMERVILLE, MA 02145



Cleaning. Restoration. Construction.

**SERVPRO® of Arlington, Somerville, Charlestown**

**617-629-5331**

Independently owned and operated

**LEARN TO DRAW AND PAINT**  
 Artist and art teacher Geoffrey Halverson



[www.geoffreyhalverson.com](http://www.geoffreyhalverson.com)

Flexible Schedule - 2 hour classes  
 Perfect for beginners and intermediate students  
 Location of classes in North Cambridge (Huron Village)  
 Call: 617-501-6217 • halverson12g@yahoo.com

**Monica Calvo Realtor®**

Real Estate Professional  
 Cell: 617-605-3308

Email: mcalvo@relocationnewengland.com

Web: remaxpartnersrelocation.com

**RE/MAX**  
 PARTNERS RELOCATION

44 Park ST  
 Andover MA 01810

Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated



**Advertise your business here**

**call 857-488-5138**

Be sure to visit us online at  
[www.TheSomervilleTimes.com](http://www.TheSomervilleTimes.com)