

Somerville's
original
independent
newspaper

The Somerville Times

www.thesomervilletimes.com



VOL. 10 NO. 7

SOMERVILLE, MASS. WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

Inside:



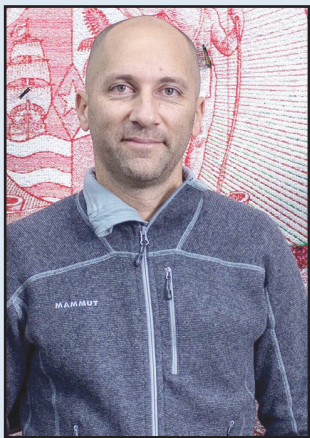
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Two arrested, two on the run after shots fired in Somerville



A shooting incident reported to have taken place at the Mystic Housing Development led area police departments to launch an area-wide search for those who were believed to be involved — Photos by Bobbie Toner

By The Times Staff

Gunshots were fired in Somerville on Tuesday afternoon, and a search throughout neighboring cities for four suspects yielded two arrests in Cambridge on a related charge of vehicular theft. Two remaining suspects believed to be involved in the incident are currently still being sought by authorities. The Somerville Police Department released the following information concerning the incident:

On Tuesday, February 15, at approximately 1:17 p.m., the Somerville Police Department responded to numerous 911 calls for multiple shots fired in the area of Mystic Avenue and within the Mystic Housing Development.

Police learned that at least two groups of males were involved in a shooting incident within the Mystic Housing Development. A witness provided a description of a vehicle *Continued on page 4*

The Thirsty Scholar pub reopens in Somerville

Shuttered since July of 2021, The Thirsty Scholar in Somerville has made its triumphant return under new ownership and management. Now open, the neighborhood bar – in part famous for making a special guest appearance in the 2011 blockbuster hit, *The Social Network* – debuts with a new chef, refined bar menu and the same pub charm.

Helming the kitchen is chef Matthew Bullock – an alum of Peregrine and Lord Hobo Brewing Company, amongst others – who brings his approachable culinary twists to barroom favorites like with his trio of Chicken Wings selections – buffalo, hoisin-chili or plain – served with blue cheese dressing (\$14) and Tater Tots, prepared salt and vinegar-style, with garlic-parsley aioli (\$8). For main courses, must-try dishes include the NE IPA Battered Fish & Chips, white fish with crisp potatoes, coleslaw and tartare sauce (\$18) and a stacked Scholar Burger with B&B pickles, a pimento spread, American cheese and shredded lettuce (\$15) with *Continued on page 4*



The pub that appeared in *The Social Network* returns with new chef, ownership.

— Photos courtesy of The Thirsty Scholar

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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.

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and City of Somerville staff invite you to attend the second community meeting to discuss 90 Washington Street, a 4-acre site near the East Somerville Green Line station envisioned as the future home of a new Public Safety Building and a range of civic, commercial, and residential spaces. The meeting will take place virtually on Wednesday, February 16, at 6:00 p.m. To learn more and register to attend, go to somer villema.gov/90washington.








The Somerville Arts Council and Nave Somerville present From the Inside Out Exhibition at Nave Gallery, 155 Powder House Blvd. through February 27. Our world shrunk during COVID. Like others whose work or schooling moved to their living spaces, many artists turned their focus inward. Some, fearing possible contamination of shared studio spaces or public transportation, moved their creative practice into their homes as well. It was a time of reflection. Relationships between interior and exterior shifted. New perspectives affected artist's work and lifestyle. For more information visit <https://somer villeartscouncil.org>.

On Thursday, February 17, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., join in a virtual evening about the history of sweets by beloved confectioner Jeremy Spindler of Spindler Confections. This event is part of the Bittersweet exhibition's Chocolate Stories Salon series and is co-sponsored by our friends and partners at Historic Somerville. Join in for a look at the fascinating candy history of the Boston metro area. You have likely heard of NECCO, but in its heyday the Boston area was home to over 140 factories producing a wide variety of chocolates and candies. Due to a variety of factors none of these companies exist anymore. However, there are still remnants of this once thriving industry sprinkled about the city. Sweet City: A History of Candy Manufacturing in Somerville, Cambridge, and Boston. Visit the Somerville Museum website for more information www.somer villemuseum.org.

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Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of February 16 – February 22 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday February 16	Partly Cloudy	43°/40°	4%	2%	S 14 mph
 Thursday February 17	Rain	58°/50°	43%	32%	SSW 18 mph
 Friday February 18	Rain	57°/22°	60%	49%	WNW 20 mph
 Saturday February 19	Sunny	40°/24°	2%	0%	SW 11 mph
 Sunday February 20	Sunny	37°/28°	1%	90%	WNW 12 mph
 Monday February 21	Partly Cloudy	45°/35°	3%	1%	SW 11 mph
 Tuesday February 22	Rain	49°/39°	27%	11%	SW 13 mph

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

TheSomervilleTimes.com Comments of the Week

Response to: Somerville implements snow shoveling pilot program

Chad Redstein says:

The money line: “The way that the city is enforcing the pilot is through fines.” We already have fines for not shoveling the sidewalks that we don’t even own. Are these “enhanced” fines? Besides generating “more” revenue how is this a pilot program? Also, maybe the city ought to consider buying sidewalk plows and cleaning the sidewalks in front of city buildings (always the worst offenders) before they start fining homeowners. Then use those plows to clean the sidewalks in “busy” areas. This city targets homeowners / businesses like no other city I’ve ever lived in. I get it – unlike the national average of 65% homeowners this city is closer to 20% as we have a lot more 2/3/4 family units, so a lot more renters. Pander to the renters and the homeowners are an easy low-cost political target. But at some point the city has to realize homeowners are residents and voters too.

TheoNa says:

Where is the pilot program? Does the city know the definition of a pilot program? A more realistic pilot program would be to leverage the city’s financial and political resources along with the equipment to implement a team that would actually perform the snow removal.

George Landers says:

The fines are sent to the property owner, NOT the renters. I am glad that the city has increased the fines, as so many of the homeowners here in Somerville live elsewhere, and because of the rent costs, they absolutely should clear the sidewalks after a significant snowfall. I have been a resident here since 1975, and most homeowners that I know in my neighborhood always clear their sidewalks, because they live in the property. The city does an amazing job at clearing the sidewalks on all city owned properties, including all the schools. The big change I noticed this year was the snow removal. It was completely random, and they contractor had a huge effect on the traffic, especially on the main roads. The city always removed snow while taking into account to minimize the inconvenience it causes to the residents. This year I believe there was an outside contractor remove the snow.

joey says:

The current system is perfectly fine. Sidewalks mostly get shoveled in a reasonable amount of time, there is a reporting system when there are problems, and there is a program in place for teens to volunteer to shovel for elderly people. The number of people who legitimately cannot go thru or around the relatively few number of un-shoveled sidewalks doesn’t remotely merit a city-wide sidewalk shoveling program. It would cost millions per year and there isn’t even the labor if we had the money. And what makes people think that a city-wide sidewalk shoveling program would instantly clear the sidewalks? It takes time even if the money and labor are there, certainly more time than the six hours the city gives residents. Keep the current system. Don’t try to reinvent the wheel over a problem that doesn’t exist. And don’t expect the city to take care of the sidewalks when they can’t even plow the roads.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

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The Somerville Times is published every Wednesday

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Life in the

VILLE

by Jimmy Del Ponte

Phone home



How many cookies did Andrew eat? Andrew ate eight thousand. How do you keep your carpets clean? Call Andrew eight thousand. That was a radio jingle fifty years ago. It was when you could just look at the dial and use the numbers that they sang.



Remember when everyone had a landline? We still have our original landline. I keep it for good luck, and to find my cell phone when I can't locate it. I just call myself and find my phone.

I remember there was a time that I memorized most of my friends' phone numbers and I can still remember a couple. There was no button you could press next to each friend's name, which meant you had to go through the dialing process.

My mother had a piece of paper with the phone numbers of all my dad's favorite haunts like The Coronet, Pat Connolly's, and Sligos.

Just about everybody today has a cell phone which, means your favorite people's phone numbers are just a click away. Do you know your wife's cell phone number? Do you know your kids' cell phone numbers? Chances are no. We just hit the button next to their name and presto you are in touch with your loved one.

Remember when you actually had to do some work to call someone on the phone? In the old days of Somerville, I remember some of the extensions which were PR6, M06, and S06. PR was Prospect, MO was Monument and SO was for Somers-et. Here are some memories of those trusty old land lines.

"Don't have a landline now, but memory of having had one was the 20-foot cord.



We could reach all over the house."

Here's another comment about those long cords: "The cords! Those cords getting tangled and lifting the phone up in the air with the ear/mouth piece. Dangling to unwind. Those were the days my friends – lol."

Here's a friend who shares: "We still have a landline. They're a must for power outages. They never lose their signal. Needed for fax from way back 617-623-17**. Grandparents from even further back. PR6-45**."

Here's another reader's comment: "We no longer have a landline. I still remember my Som number, 625-7145. I won-

der if any of my old girlfriends remember it. LOL."

Check this out! "My favorite memory is the day my four-year-old cut the damn cord because he wanted something from his mother!"

Who would have thought that there would be a time when just about every human being alive owns and carries a personal telephone. I'm gonna press "Joe" to call my son. His cellphone number? Who knows? Just to be safe, I keep a small piece of paper with my important phone numbers on it in my wallet, just in case. No need any more for that emergency dime in my shoe.

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Citywide drainage and water quality master plan community meetings:

Help Somerville plan for flood mitigation

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the City of Somerville Engineering Division invite you to a series of community meetings to discuss flood mitigation in Somerville.



The city is developing a Citywide Drainage and Water Quality Master Plan, a collection of infrastructure projects that will reduce flooding, improve water quality, and mitigate combined sewer overflows. After years of modeling and evaluation, the Engineering Division and its consultants have developed 30 projects that would address the root causes of flooding and prepare Somerville for climate change.

Now, the city is ready to present these ideas and get feedback from the public. Community input will help identify preferred alternatives and determine which of those 30 projects are included in the final Drainage and Water Quality Master Plan.

The proposed projects will be presented over the course of three meetings. Each meeting will focus on a different geographic area of the city:

- Wednesday, March 2, at 6:00 p.m.: Wards 2 and 3 (Union Square area)
- Wednesday, March 9, at 6:00 p.m.: Wards 1 and 4 (East Somerville, Winter Hill, and Ten Hills areas)
- Wednesday, March 16, at 6:00 p.m.: Wards 5, 6, and 7 (Davis Square area and West Somerville)

Each meeting will also be recorded and posted on the project website, along with surveys and additional opportunities to provide input. To learn more and register for the meetings, visit somervillema.gov/drainageplan.

THE WEEK IN CRIME

By Jim Clark

Stoplight napper gets a night in jail

Somerville Police officers were dispatched to the intersection of Elm St. and Mossland St. last week for a check condition.

Upon arrival, the officers observed a vehicle at the intersection stopped for an extended period of time for at least three light cycles.

The officers honked their cruiser's horn at the driver operating the vehicle in front of them, but there was no immediate response.

The officers turned on their blue lights and approached the driver side window and observed the operator, later identified as Robert Leblanc, hunched over his wheel asleep.

After tapping on the wheel and waking Leblanc up, the officers were able to get his proper identification and had him turn off his vehicle.

According to reports, an odor of alcoholic beverage was detected on Leblanc, who reportedly also had glassy eyes and slurred speech.

At this point the officers asked Leblanc to step out of the vehicle and he complied.

While talking to Leblanc, the officers noticed that he was unsteady on his feet. When asking him where he was coming from, he reportedly provided the officers with different stories several times.

The officers informed Leblanc that they would be conducting Standardized Field Sobriety Tests consisting of the horizontal gaze Nystagmus (HGN), the walk-and-turn, and the one-leg stand tests.

Due to his poor performances on these tests, and all of the other factors observed by the officers, Leblanc was informed that he was being placed under arrest on a charge of operation of a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor.

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Two arrested, two on the run after shots fired in Somerville

CONT. FROM PG 1

vehicle that fled the scene; a description was broadcasted to surrounding police jurisdictions. Somerville Police, along with the State Police conducted an extensive search of the immediate area. One firearm was recovered. One individual who is believed to have been involved in this incident, was located near the Healy School and apprehended.

A short time later, a Medford Police Officer located the fleeing vehicle in Cambridge. Two of the four occupants fled; the Medford Officer was able to detain two others until Cambridge Police arrived. The vehicle was determined to have been stolen in Boston. Cambridge Police placed the two individuals in custody for Receiving Stolen Property who will be questioned regarding the Somerville shooting.

It is not clear whether the individuals are known to each other. Nor is the motive for the incident determined at this time. Police Chief Charles Femino stated he will be deploying additional resources in the area and would like to commend his officers who demonstrated a calm and professional manner throughout this incident.

Although we believe there is no ongoing threat to the immediate area, we ask residents to remain alert and report any suspicious activity to the Somerville Police Department. If there is an immediate threat to public safety, please call 911 for an immediate response. For non-emergency reports, please call 617-625-1600 ext. 7226.

The City of Somerville and Somerville Police are committed to keeping our community safe. We also understand that violent incidents can be traumatizing and unsettling. If you need someone to talk to or help accessing resources, please call the Trauma Response Network at 857-221-0942.



The Thirsty Scholar pub reopens in Somerville

CONT. FROM PG 1

the option to top it with bacon (\$2) or a fried egg (\$1). For those with a sweet tooth, don't miss the Carnival Fried Dough with a choice of powdered sugar, cinnamon, chocolate syrup, caramel and whipped cream (\$8; half-priced nightly after 9:00 p.m.).

Staying true to its roots, The Thirsty Scholar remains the ultimate neighborhood watering hole featuring a rotating selection of nearly 20 beers on draught, an additional dozen available by the bottle or can, and a list of classically crafted cocktails like a Boulevardier with Fistful of Bourbon, Campari and sweet vermouth (\$12) and an Old Fashioned with Jefferson's Bourbon, simple syrup and angostura bitters (\$13). The beer carte du jour includes rare craft beers, hoppy IPAs, refreshing hefeweizens and summer ales, rich porters and stouts as well as crisp lagers.

The perfect spot to unwind at the end of the day or catchup with friends over the weekend, The Thirsty Scholar is open 4:00 – 11:00 p.m. for food and drinks with the bar remaining open until 1:00 a.m. nightly. In the coming weeks, The Thirsty Scholar will debut entertainment including a weekly trivia night.

The Thirsty Scholar is located at 70 Beacon Street in Somerville. For more information, please call (617) 497-2294 or visit www.thirstyscholarpub.com.



Somerville School Committee discusses Brown School renovations

By Fernando Cervantes Jr.

On February 7, Somerville Public Schools (SPS) hosted their monthly School Committee meeting.

The meeting revolved mainly on the Superintendents efforts regarding diversity and Black History Month.

At the beginning of the meeting, there was a section for public comment, there were some participants, mostly talking about the need for renovations at the Benjamin G. Brown School near Powderhouse and Davis Square.

Ryan Williams was one of the parents advocating for these renovations. “The city continues to study the problem but this continued indecision is in fact a decision,” Williams said.

Another parent, recounted anecdotes from fellow Brown School parents. “My son Ethan suffered a fractured arm by a simple trip in the schoolyard heading out to PE. He was not running or doing anything athletic, in fact he was walking in the class line,” they said.

Following public comment, Superintendent Mary Skipper gave her monthly report. This monthly report revolved around different



— Photo courtesy of Google Street View

diversity efforts across Somerville Public Schools and Black History Month celebrations.

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis, Director for Equity and Excellence, also gave a presentation highlighting these efforts.

Another item on the agenda was the school calendar for the next academic year. The committee voted to approve this calendar, which was unanimously passed.

“I wanted to remind the public that the 17th is now the last day of school because we’ve had the two days of cancellations,” Skipper said.

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne was also in attendance at the

meeting. Here, she addressed the calls from parents to renovate the exterior playground at the Brown School.

“I know it’s urgent, and the underlying values of my administration is to keep children safe. We are moving forward, I have met with staff, they’re going to be reaching out with next steps and they’re working really hard with the goal of getting something done this Summer,” Ballantyne said.

For more information on school committee meetings residents can visit: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-leadership/somerville-school-committee/school-committee-meetings>.

City creates senior liaison and subcommittee for seniors

By Kyle Dante

On February 10, 2022, the Somerville City Council unanimously changed the Committee on Equity, Gender, Families, and Vulnerable Populations to the Committee on Equity, Gender, Seniors, Families, and Vulnerable Populations.

The ruling also led to two approved additions: creating a senior liaison and subcommittee for older adults. The liaison is intended for the benefit of Somerville residents at the minimum age of 65 years and older. Also, the special subcommittee concerns the issues of older adults.

The City Council meeting received a petition from 102 Somerville residents, both young and old. The petition ad-

vocated for creating the subcommittee and senior liaison, which is intended to create better communication between the city and the older demographic.

Additionally, it can provide context and concern on city issues for the older demographic. Some problems addressed include city services, safety, affordable healthcare and housing, taxes, and the impact on city decisions. As eleven percent of Somerville consists of the 60+ demographic,

“Aging is not a disease, it is a process,” said Elaine Corey. “However, we feel our needs are ignored.”

“There is not a lack of needs, we are not fully responding to their needs,” Councilor At-Large Kristen Strezo said. Taking into account areas of need is consid-

ered vital for communication. It is akin to meeting the needs of a hospital. Failure in meeting these needs can create distrust.

In a unanimous decision, the City Council wants to earn the trust of the undersigned. Procedurally, it gives more attention to issues. If the Council fails its objective, however, further discussion will continue.

The liaison and subcommittee were unanimously decided upon, along with the name change. However, it will take time to process both the liaison and subcommittee and fulfill the stated needs.

The decision is expected benefit all parties on mutual trust and understanding. It can lead to further developments on issues for older demographics over time.

The Somerville Times Historical Fact of the Week



Eagle feathers #248

They Were There

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

Thirty-seven of today’s United States were not involved in our eight-year Revolutionary War because they didn’t exist at that time. The fortitude of those original colonies forged the existence of those who followed and allowed them to enjoy our bountiful country today. Only thirteen experienced it. Massachusetts was the first. After victory, their hard-fought seeds of freedom were spread from coast to coast.



♦ September 1, 1774 – The hostilities began in today’s Somerville (once part of Charlestown) with the British seizure of 240 half-barrels of Colonial Gunpowder. The 260-troop landing was at today’s Assembly Square on the Mystic’s shore. This was before these soldiers marched on to the Powder House and was the actual beginning of the Revolutionary War. This action brought thousands of Minutemen to arms the following day and is thought to be a miracle that it ended without bloodshed. It was the first hostile act of the Revolution; and because calm prevailed, violence was averted until eight months later at Lexington.



♦ April 18, 1775 - Paul Revere evaded capture by the British Cavalry in Somerville and rode on to complete his ride to Lexington.

♦ April 19, 1775 - The day-long battle of Lexington and Concord was fought through Somerville and ended at Charlestown’s Neck. The last Patriot casualty was Somerville’s sixty-five-year-old James Miller who was killed by the British at the base of Prospect Hill

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Beacon Hill Roll Call



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THE HOUSE AND SENATE. *Beacon Hill Roll Call* records local representatives’ and senators’ votes on roll calls from the week of February 7-11.

SOLDIERS’ HOMES OVERSIGHT BILL (H 4441)

House 156-1, approved and sent to the Senate a bill that would make major changes to the oversight and governance structure of the state’s veterans’ homes in Holyoke and Chelsea. The proposal follows the deaths of 77 veteran residents in 2020 as a result of a COVID-19 outbreak at the Holyoke facility.

Key provisions include requiring superintendents of the two soldiers’ homes to be licensed as nursing home administrators and either be a veteran or someone with experience managing veterans in a nursing home or long term-care facility; establishing an ombudsperson for each facility to advocate on behalf of the veterans and staff; requiring the Office of Veterans’ Homes and Housing to submit an annual report including findings on the quality of care provided at the homes at each facility; establishing a 17-member statewide Veterans’ Homes Council to manage and control the homes and confirm and remove superintendents; and establishing the Office of the Veteran Advocate, an independent office that will be led by a person appointed by the governor, attorney general and auditor.

“I believe this comprehensive bill takes the necessary steps to protect deserving Massachusetts veterans,” said Rep. Paul McMurry (D-Dedham), House chair of the Veterans and Federal Affairs Committee. “It’s not about partisan politics, and it’s certainly not about control. It is first about ensuring that a tragedy like this never happens again and providing our veterans the best possible care we can. I believe this legislation takes the necessary steps forward toward achieving that worthwhile goal.”

“Today, with the best interests of our veterans and their families in mind, the House took action to ensure greater accountability and oversight for veterans’ homes in Massachusetts,” said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). “This legislation takes significant steps to change how our veterans’ homes are governed and managed and establishes protocols that are designed to identify and correct any examples of mismanagement or inadequate care as quickly as possible.”

“I don’t think this bill address the core concerns of the people who testified before the investigatory committee,” said Rep. Chris Markey (D-Dartmouth) who cast the only “No” vote. “I [favor] a centralized chain of command and a single person who is responsible for the hiring and firing of the superintendent.”

Rep. Linda Dean Campbell (D-Methuen) voted “Present” on the bill. “Like the Inspector General of the commonwealth, I have serious concerns about the new bill,” said Campbell who along with Sen. Mike Rush (D-Boston) last year had filed a different bill that she says was more comprehensive. “The Inspector General has stated in a letter his office finds that the current and proposed structure for the governance and oversight of the homes are flawed,” said Campbell.

Campbell said that her bill included provisions that are not in the current measure including ones that would have elevated the secretary of veterans’ services

to a full Cabinet-level position and given the governor authority to appoint or remove a facility’s superintendent and deputy superintendent based on consultation with other officials.

Campbell continued, “In the original bill filed, we identified qualifications for service on a statewide council with expertise in financial management, health care administration, clinical services, treatment of PTSD and labor relations, among others. Our original bill intends for statewide representation on this council, as these homes are for all veterans in the commonwealth, not just veterans located geographically near to the homes. Accordingly, the original bill also calls for participation by a female veteran, the fastest growing population of any veterans’ group and a member of the LGBTQ veterans’ community, among other veterans’ groups that served in various conflicts. The bill passed by the House ... has none of these provisions and no qualifications to serve on this council.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the bill. A “No” vote is against the bill.)

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

DRUG COSTS (S 2651)

Senate 39-1, approved and sent to the House a bill aimed at addressing the high and rapidly increasing costs of prescription drugs in the Bay State. A key provision provides immediate price relief for insulin used by one in ten people living with diabetes who must take it daily or risk major health problems. The measure limits out-of-pocket spending for insulin by eliminating deductibles and coinsurance and capping co-pays at \$25 per month. Rising insulin prices have resulted in some people paying out-of-pocket costs of \$1,000 or more per year, leading to some patients decreasing their insulin dose or not taking it at all.

Other provisions include requiring pharmaceutical companies to notify the state in advance of new drugs coming to market, and of significant price increases for existing drugs; providing patients with greater access to mail-order prescriptions; and several transparency and accountability mandates.

“This legislation moves the commonwealth one step closer to a system that delivers affordable, high quality and accessible care for our residents,” said Sen. Cindy Friedman (D-Arlington), Senate chair of the Committee on Health Care Financing. “[The bill] ensures that more consumers can access prescription drugs at a fair price, by capping out-of-pocket insulin costs, providing relief for certain high-cost drugs, improving patient access to medications and pharmacies of their choice and enhancing transparency and oversight within the pharmaceutical industry.”

“Our Helpline takes calls from people across the state who can’t afford their medications,” said Amy Rosenthal, executive director at Health Care For All. “Individuals and families in Massachusetts have been struggling for far too long to access and afford the prescriptions they need, and this legislation provides critical financial relief at a pivotal time. By passing this bill today, senators took an important step to rein in excessive drug costs, bring-

ing oversight of pharmaceutical companies and pharmacy benefit managers in line with other health care industries in the state.”

Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton), the only senator to vote against the measure, acknowledged that there are many laudable parts of the bill but criticized parts to which he objected and resulted in his vote against it. “[The bill] unfairly penalizes individuals who receive mail-order prescriptions by raising the cost of their drugs,” said Fattman. “Many people today use mail order prescriptions from pharmacies because of the convenience and the fact that there are certain discounts offered for out-of-pocket costs. The number of people that use this program has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic, as it was seen as a safer and more convenient alternative for many people who wanted to avoid going to the store and being in public. The passage of this bill will force all current mail-order pharmacy patients, many of whom are older or ill, to pay higher out-of-pocket cost because they will not be allowed to take advantage of these discounts. [That provision] is a poison pill, and in good conscience, I can’t vote to increase costs for drugs for those who want them delivered via mail.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the bill. A “No” vote is against the bill.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen	Yes
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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 February 7-11, the House met for a total of six hours and 26 minutes and the Senate met for a total of four hours and 11 minutes.

Mon. Feb. 7	House 11:02 a.m. to 11:24 a.m. Senate 11:09 a.m. to 11:26 a.m.
Tues. Feb. 8	No House session No Senate session
Wed. Feb. 9	House 11:03 a.m. to 12:13 p.m. No Senate session
Thurs. Feb. 10	House 11:00 a.m. to 3:54 p.m. Senate 11:42 a.m. to 3:36 p.m.
Fri. Feb. 11	No House session No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



May your President's Day be merry and bright!

Our View Of The Times



The Presidents Day holiday puts us in mind of those great leaders who governed us throughout our country’s tumultuous history: The American Revolution, the Civil War, two world wars, the Great Depression, the Civil Rights movement, Vietnam, and so on.

Greatness was thrust upon certain holders of that office by events that shaped their legacies, while others are

relegated to general obscurity due to a lack of conflict and controversy during their times in office. Each one’s tenure in office should be regarded as equally important. In as much as big events could have elevated their place in history at a moment’s notice.

The man or woman who assumes the role of Commander and Chief of our nation must be ready willing and able to rise

to the occasion when called upon to do so. Each one of us, whoever we may have supported in the past, has searched our hearts to determine who we feel will best fill those shoes every time we vote.

Most of us are confident that our favored candidate will be up to the task. Others see a lack of integrity or the skills required to do the job well among those who choose to run.

Let us hope that each holder of the office in the future will rise to the occasion and realize the potential they may have to become as great as the others who have gone before them. The right choices will be as important in the future as in any other time in our nation’s history.

It’s not an easy job, as everyone must surely realize. Let us on this day honor those who step up to that challenge.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Happy birthday this week to the following: Happy birthday to **Donna Ali-brandi**, who is celebrating this week. We hope she has a great day. Also celebrating this week is **Denise Racicot-Kallis**. We wish her the very best of birthdays. Happy birthday another popular lady, **Celia Taylor**, we hope she has a great day. Happy birthday to local realtor **Sammy Alves**, who is celebrating this week. We wish her a nice day. A big happy birthday to a real good guy, **Elio LoRusso**, who is celebrating this week as well. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Dave Ortega, Jeannie Malone DeMase, Jol-le Hochman, Dee Manuel-raposo, Barbara L Amaral, AnneMarie Gates** and **Sheila Borges-Foley** a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

The **CHA Somerville Vaccine Center** is now accepting walk-ins, as supply allows. The center is open to all, five days a week and some Saturdays. You can get booster shots for ages 12+ and initial vaccines for ages 5+. The vaccines are free, regardless of immigration or health insurance status, and you don't need to

show ID. Full hours and details are here: challiance.org/vaccine. You can still make an appointment at tinyurl.com/metronorthvaccine. If you're a CHA patient you can also make an appointment through **MyChart**: challiance.org/mychart. If you need assistance finding a COVID-19 vaccine or booster, you can call 3-1-1 (617-666-3311).

Massachusetts has established a temporary program **requiring employers make paid leave time available for employees impacted by COVID** or who **have side effects from vaccination**. Learn more: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-temporary-emergency-paid-sick-leave-program>.

The **Somerville Community Growing Center** will host a **Winter Sowing Workshop, Saturday, February 20, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** February and March are a quiet time in the garden, and now is the perfect time to get a head start on planting by doing some winter-sowing of hardy cool season plants. Growing Center volunteer, **Danielle Krcmar**, will lead in transforming plastic jugs into mini-greenhouses. Seeds, Soil and empty jugs will be provided. If you have extra

empty clear gallon jugs, please feel free to bring them. Visit www.thegrowing-center.org for more information.

If your **child or teen** is struggling with **stress or anxiety**, you can help by reaching out, listening, understanding, offering support, and connecting the student with key staff at school. Learn more about the **#SomervilleTogether** campaign for youth mental health at <http://bit.ly/3s5uMfu>.

Looking for a way to **practice social distancing** but still remain connected to other people? Look no further than the **Somerville Council on Aging's Friendly Phone Caller program**. They have many wonderful volunteers who are waiting to give you a call. Whether you are looking to make a new friend or would just like a friendly chat to look forward to every week, this program has you covered. Call **Natasha** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 to learn more about the program and to sign up.

Live Music is back at **Sally O'Brien's**, 335 Somerville Ave., Somerville. This week features **The Return of the Big Band, BT/ALC Big Band, Thursday**

February 17 at 7:30 p.m., Tim Gearan & Friends, Saturday, February 19 at 7:00 p.m. and Dub Apocalypse, Sunday, February 20, 9:30 p.m. Visit www.sallyobriensbar.com for a full list of future shows.

Rent a space at the **Arts at the Armory's unique spaces**. Are you looking for a unique and memorable venue for an event? Their historic and spacious **Performance Hall**, intimate and charming **Café**, and comfortable and functional **B5 meeting/classroom/rehearsal space** are all available to rent. Learn more about our spaces here. For more information, please contact events@artsatthearmory.org.

If you are experiencing **symptoms of COVID-19** or were **exposed to someone with COVID-19**, you should get tested. Find a testing site near you or where to get an at-home test kit at somervillema.gov/covidtesting. If you test positive: The CDC advises to isolate for at least five days.

The **City of Somerville** is looking for feedback on the **Pearl Street Reconstruction and Safety**

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#814

1. Which Super Bowl Halftime Show preceded a stadium blackout?

2. How much does the Lombardi Trophy weigh?

3. Which player has the most Super Bowl rings in the history of the game?

4. What artist had the highest-rated Super Bowl Halftime Show to date?

5. Who was the first singer to perform at a Super Bowl Halftime Show?

6. Which state has provided the most native-born sons as

presidents?

7. Which president never voted until his own election?

8. What is the most expensive dessert in the world?

9. What pepper went into the Guinness World Records in 2013 for being the world's hottest chili?

10. What is the capital of Afghanistan?

11. Where are the Alps mountains located?

12. What is the highest-grossing film of the 90s?

Answers on page 11

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Movie trailers got their name because they were originally shown after the movie.

2. The real name of Monopoly mascot Uncle Pennybags is Milburn Pennybags.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

U.S. PRESIDENTS

ACROSS

1. Short for specification
5. Knave
8. Like President Eisenhower's head
12. One fourth of a Presidential term
13. Take-out handout
14. The Beast's problem in "Beauty and the Beast"
15. Pres. Eisenhower established this space agency
16. Thought
17. Body of water
18. #22 and #24
20. First-rate, slangily
21. Terminate, as in mission
22. Lingerie staple
23. Public speaker
26. Ivory tickler
30. "Fresh Prince of ____-Air"
31. Most likely to win
34. Pot contribution
35. By surprise
37. Indian restaurant staple
38. Lacking justification
39. Office communique
40. Greece and Bulgaria peninsula
42. Overnight stop
43. Indifferently
45. Sturdily built
47. English course abbreviation
48. "_____' it easy"
50. Oliver Twist, e.g.
52. University of Virginia founder
56. African prairie
57. Second most-popular Presidential birth state, after Virginia
58. Arm bone
59. Poem at a funeral
60. German title
61. Arnold Lobel's "Mouse ____"
62. High school club
63. Clinton ____ Rodham
64. Hitler's Deputy

DOWN

1. Update a FitBit
2. Sound of bells
3. "At ____, soldier."

CROSSWORD

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

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4. Modern tie forerunner

5. Aromatic lumber

6. Beside, archaic

7. Two of the same

8. The only President who was a bachelor

9. ____ 51, Nevada

10. Law school entry requirement, acr.

11. Bear's room

13. Edith Piaf's hit

14. Meat of coconut

19. Digital tome

22. Trash container, e.g.

23. One of three Presidents to win a Grammy

24. James Dean's famous role

25. Remember this battle

26. First to serve coast to coast

27. Indo-Aryan, as in languages

28. Did not smell good
29. Like yellow polka dot bikini

32. June 6, 1944

33. Salt in cocina

36. a.k.a. Silent Cal

38. Loosen ropes

40. Deli acronym

41. ____ help

44. Hawaii's number

46. Mob offensive

48. High-pitched laugh sound, in print

49. Like Bananas Foster

50. "All's well that ends ____"

51. Away from wind

52. Second most common Presidential first name, after James

53. Type of gin

54. Cross to bear

55. Midday slumbers

56. Chill, with 'out'

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

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

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

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Soulution to last week's sudoku puzzle:

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

Soulution to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

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.

Tying up some loose ends



By Ken Brociner

While I realize that it's possible that no one thought twice about something I wrote about Joe Curtatone in my last column, I regretted it immediately after seeing it in print on December 22. And I am not referring to an overly harsh comment I directed at our former mayor. Not at all. As you can see, what I said was actually in praise of Curtatone's stewardship of Somerville during the 18 years he was mayor.

Here is what I wrote: "I hope and trust that our city will continue to thrive as it has for the last 18 years under the leadership of Mayor Joe Curtatone."

"Thrive"? According to the latest census figures, 11.5 percent of our community lives below the official poverty line. Furthermore, thousands of people were forced to move out of Somerville altogether because they couldn't afford to live here any longer due to the steady increase in rents.

Just to be clear, I am not raising

this in order to point the finger of blame at Joe Curtatone. The number of people living in poverty and the increase in rents in any given city have much more to do with the built-in inequities in our political and economic system than they have to do with the policies of any city administration.

This one was on me. I should have found a better way to refer to Curtatone's role in the overall improvement of life in Somerville while also taking into account the fact that for a sizeable segment of our community, the day-to-day struggle to get by would overshadow any sense that Somerville has been "thriving" these past 18 years.

Speaking of "Mayor Joe," the send-off he was given here in Somerville and in the Boston media was so one-sided, you might think that he walked across the Mystic River on a regular basis.

No doubt Curtatone accomplished a heck of a lot in his years as mayor. In fact, in 2006, just five months into his second term, the *Boston Globe* named Somerville as "the best run city in Massachusetts." Curtatone's innovative use of data to guide city policies (ResiStat), his emphasis on participatory democracy in drawing up long-range

plans for Somerville's future (Somervision), and his display of political courage and plain human decency in standing up for the rights of immigrants facing deportation are just a few of Joe Curtatone's innumerable achievements in the 18 years he led our city. But there were also many instances of questionable ties to developers, less than truthful statements about why he vetoed a "pay to play" ordinance that had been passed by the Board of Aldermen, among other flaws that are also part of his legacy.

I hope that at some point in the future, we'll see some well-researched, even-handed accounts of Joe Curtatone's mayoralty. These past 18 years will, in all likelihood, become known as the "Curtatone era" in the history of Somerville. It will be ripe for historians to dig deep and come up with some fresh perspectives that should help us better understand the many changes our city has gone through over the past two decades.

From a strictly personal point of view, despite the many highly critical columns I wrote for the Somerville Journal throughout his time as mayor, I always liked Joe C. And I found myself liking him more than ever as I witnessed how deeply affected he was by the impact that the

pandemic has been having on so many Somervillians. In my eyes, he became a real mensch when it was most needed.

While I have never seen any opinion polls about how people view politicians who use teleprompters to deliver speeches, I would imagine that most people feel that doing so is an unfortunate necessity in the age of media driven politics.

I also assume that most people think that watching a politician in an unscripted debate is a far better way to get to know what they are really all about than watching them read a speech from a teleprompter.

However, I believe that in the case of Katjana Ballantyne, the exact opposite is true. In the many mayoral debates that led up to the November 2 election, Ms. Ballantyne certainly did well enough to hold her own. After all, she won a resounding victory on election day. But unless you know her personally, or had seen her in more informal settings, the impression you might have gotten of her from those debates may have been far removed from the kind of person and leader she really is. Between the enormous pressure of participating in televised debates and the time constraints involved in trying to summarize your plans for

change in two minutes segments chopped up over the course of an hour, it's extremely difficult for all but the most polished debaters to effectively convey the essence of who they are and what the full range of their plans add up to.

Even though I've known and admired Katjana since she first ran for the Board of Aldermen 9 years ago, in all honesty I was surprised by how moved I was by her Inaugural Address. Instead of having to deal with the stress of performing well in a debate, by using a teleprompter she was able to relax, look us straight in the eye (via the camera) and speak from her heart about her plans to make Somerville a more inclusive and equitable city.

Given the depth of Katjana Ballantyne's commitment to achieving her progressive, people-oriented agenda, her keen intelligence, and her warm-hearted nature, I came away from watching her speech feeling very confident about the future of our city.

Ken Brociner has lived in Somerville since 1975. His essays, columns, and reviews have appeared in Dissent, In These Times, the Boston Phoenix, and the Somerville Journal, among other publications.

Historical Fact CONT. FROM PG 5

and whose memorable last words were, "I'm too old to run."

- ♦ May 27-28, 1775 – This was known as the Battle of Chelsea Creek. Americans blew up the British schooner H.M.S. Diana and disabled an accompanying sloop. They took Diana's main mast to Somerville's Prospect Hill where it was later used to fly the first flag of the United Colonies, the Grand Union Flag.
- ♦ June 17, 1775 - The Battle of Bunker Hill ended at Winter Hill. It was the first major and bloodiest battle of the Revolution and claimed 1,058 British and 450 American casualties.
- ♦ January 1, 1776 - In the presence of General Washington on Prospect Hill, the new flag of the United Colonies was unfurled in defiance to the British. This was also the commencement day of the Continental Army.
- ♦ February, 1776 - Colonel Henry Knox delivered fifty captured Ticonderoga cannons to the American Army. Many were positioned at forts in Somerville, and the roar of their cannons and mortars helped end the 11-month Boston siege.
- ♦ October 17, 1777 - British General


John Burgoyne's Army surrendered at the Battle of Saratoga. His army consisted of British, Hessians, Canadians and Tories.

- ♦ November 7, 1777 - Forty-two hundred prisoners (2,300 English and 1,900 German/Hessians) were brought to Somerville. They were guarded here for the next year under American General William Heath and his soldiers, until they were moved inland. Winter Hill's Heath Street bears his name.
- ♦ October 19, 1781 - The Revolution lasted eight long years and ended in Yorktown, Virginia. For the war's first four years, Somerville suffered more than most locations. It had experienced firsthand the Powder House raid, Paul Revere's alarm, the ongoing Battle of Lexington, the digging of seven fortresses into her grounds, the Battle of Bunker Hill, the Siege of Boston, and the one-year-long imprisonment of the captured British/Hessian Army on her soil. To our Patriots, the imposition was worthwhile as long as the Flag of the United Colonies on Prospect Hill and those that followed still waved.



LEGAL NOTICES

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



**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, March 02, 2022**, at 6:00pm through Got-oWebinar.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to planning@somervillema.gov.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4273468966157869070>
Webinar ID: 865-909-323

TO CALL IN

Phone number: 1 (562) 247-8422
Access code: 981-822-994

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

26 Clyde St #2 Jeff Byrnes seeks approval to exceed the maximum width of a dormer for a project in the Neighborhood Residence (NR) 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 mail to Planning & Zoning Division, 3rd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143; or by email to planning@somervillema.gov.

2/16/22 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING SERVICES
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB# 22-41**

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

Taxi Services for Residents

The bid package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's electronic bidding platform at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, February 16th, 2022**. Sealed bids will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2:00 pm, Wednesday, March 2nd, 2022**.

The City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor informality in the IFB process, and accept the proposal(s) deemed to be in the best interests of the City of Somerville.

Please email purchasing@somervillema.gov for more information.

**Thupten Chukhatsang
Senior Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3400**

2/16/22 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING SERVICES
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB# 22-39**

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

Traffic Signs and Related Equipment

The bid package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's electronic bidding platform at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, February 16th, 2022**. Sealed bids will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **1:00 pm, Wednesday, March 2nd, 2022**.

The City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor informality in the IFB process, and accept the proposal(s) deemed to be in the best interests of the City of Somerville.

Please email purchasing@somervillema.gov for more information.

**Thupten Chukhatsang
Senior Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3400**

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING SERVICES
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB#22-42**

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

2022 Spring and 2022 Fall Tree Planting and Related Services

An Invitation for Bid may be obtained online at www.bidexpress.com, <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **2/18/2022**. Sealed bids will be received at above office until: **03/04/2022 12:00PM EST**. The Procurement Chief reserves right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please contact Andrea Caruth at acaruth@somervillema.gov for more information.

**Andrea Caruth
Deputy Chief Procurement Officer
617-625-6600 x3400**

2/16/22 The Somerville Times

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

Project. You can get the survey in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Nepali, and Haitian Creole.

Prepare for the **2021/2022 snow season** by reviewing parking rules and signing up for alerts. Because this winter begins in an **odd-numbered year**, snow emergency parking will be on the **odd side of the street** all winter, unless posted signage says differently. Check streets 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.

Somerville's **Winter Farmers Market** takes place **Saturdays, 9:30 – 1:30 p.m., through April 16**, at **Arts at the Armory**, 191 Highland Ave. Offering the best locally grown and produced agricultural items and more. They offer a diverse range of local and New England produce, as well as cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, pastries, chocolate, and wine. They feature rotating guest vendors each week, as well as live entertainment and activities. Check out the

schedule and map at www.somwintermarket.org. They accept SNAP/EBT & HIP, CREDIT and DEBIT cards. \$15 SNAP match for EBT customers.

Mark your calendars. After a long three-year hiatus, the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** is very excited to announce that its **Spring into Action event** is returning the evening of **Thursday, March 24**. This year they are bringing the fun and energy to the **Somerville Theatre's newly refurbished Crystal Ballroom**. Join them for an evening of cocktails, live jazz, passed apps, local bites and live music. All proceeds from this event will benefit Somerville Homeless Coalition clients facing homelessness, eviction and food insecurity. They look forward to sharing news about their work in the community and how YOU help them to continue advancing their mission of finding everyone a home. Single Ticket Price: \$125, Discounts available for bulk ticket orders. For more information, visit their event page <https://igfn.us/e/TRWwTw>.

The **47th Boston SciFi festival** will

celebrate the creativity of science fiction and cinema at the **Somerville Theatre**, Davis Sq. The festival will run **through February 21**. They will host a live and a virtual event this **President's Day holiday**. There are feature, shorts, talks, events, **The Marathon** and more. Visit www.somervilletheatre.com for a full schedule.

Somerville's **requirement to wear a face covering in public indoor spaces** remains in effect. Make sure your mask covers your nose and mouth at all times when in public spaces and that it fits snugly around the sides of your face.

If you are unable to access a **COVID-19 vaccine** due to **transportation challenges**, but otherwise are able to leave your home, please call 3-1-1 to get connected to **transportation assistance**.

Individuals who are homebound are encouraged to schedule an **in-home COVID-19 vaccine appointment** through the state's **COVID-19 In-Home Vaccination Program**. The program is open to all individuals who are

homebound, including 5- to 11-year-olds, and individuals seeking both initial or booster doses. To schedule an appointment, call the **In-Home Vaccination Central In-take Line** at (833) 983-0485. The Intake Line is open **Monday through Friday** from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Representatives are available in both English and Spanish, and also have access to translators for over 100 languages. Due to high demand, the current estimated wait time for an in-home vaccination appointment is 4-6 weeks.

The **Somerville Council on Aging** hosts **Bingo, Tuesdays** at **Ralph & Jenny Center** and **Thursdays** at **Holland Street** starting at 10:00 a.m. **Grab and Go lunch** available following Bingo. RSVP to **Debby Higgins** by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at DHiggins@Somervillema.gov.

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.

An interview with Jose Falconi and Santiago Montoya, curators of ‘Bittersweet’

By Ryan DiLello

On Monday evening, I had the pleasure of interviewing Jose Falconi and Santiago Montoya, the curators of a recent exhibit at the Somerville Museum, titled Bittersweet. Originally from Peru, Falconi is a Professor of Art and Human Rights at the University of Connecticut. Santiago Montoya is a Colombian artist and entrepreneur.

Bittersweet is the latest installment of a project which the artists began in Colombia under the title El Dorado Chocolate-erie, a reference to the mythical gold-covered city that expeditionists sought throughout the 16th century.

And while the promises of hot chocolate, cacao-infused sweets, and hand-made ceramics were sufficient to draw a crowd, it was the idea of a promise itself that Falconi and Montoya hoped to lay bare for audiences to reflect on.

“We are charging promises,” Falconi said. “If you want a cup of cacao, you have to make a promise to the city of Somerville. The currency is the promise itself.”

Promises are important to Falconi and Montoya, especially unfulfilled ones.

“Colombia is not a failed state, but it has a long, long, history of unfulfilled promises,” Falconi

said. “Unfulfilled, clearly because of the material conditions in the country. You may have it written, but it is not honored. In Latin America, there is a heightened sensation around those [unfulfilled promises], especially in Colombia. In [the United States], you are beginning to really live in that way – when you realize all the promises of democracy, voluntarism, equality, haven’t really been fulfilled for a certain part of the population. But that very sensation [of unfulfillment] is pervasive in the region [Colombia].”

The effects of unfulfilled promises are impossible to constrain to political life, and not just in Colombia. For promises are the very mechanism by which people conduct their social lives. From managing schedules, to buying goods, to setting goals for ourselves – “at any exchange level, there is a promise inherent,” Falconi said.

And from time to time, we break promises. Plans change, we forget commitments, and sometimes we fall short of our goals. The same dynamic extends from the individual to a globalized level of exchange, policy, and diplomacy. “There is deep fragility,” Falconi said.

On many occasions throughout Latin American history, the fragile values that uphold prom-



Bittersweet curators Jose Falconi and Santiago Montoya.

ises have buckled to capitalistic impulses for the extraction and consumption of commodities, Montoya explained. Montoya’s artistic background explores currency, the pieces of paper which we promise value to, by the Federal Reserve.

“The globalization of the economy, that comes precisely from Potosi, where the abundance of silver made it possible to have an economy that was more widely accepted,” Montoya explained.

And as the global economy grew, Latin America served as a hotbed for particularly valuable commodities.

“Rushes have not just been accessory to the economic system of Colombia; they have been

structural,” Falconi explained.

“We’re talking from the exploration of the country itself, produced by the rush of gold,” Falconi said. “But then you had quinine in the colonial period which recently made a very interesting appearance with Trump trying to promote it as a drug with COVID, then you had rubber, then you had emeralds, you had cocaine. All of those things have been important ways in which the economy has articulated itself and produced a very particular culture in the way in which it articulates itself.”

Falconi and Montoya informed me that they have hosted several exhibits in the past, exploring each of these rushes with

thought-provoking experiences. Now in Somerville, “the capital of candy,” the artists are investigating the city’s history of chocolate-making, an industry deeply embedded in slavery and the slave trade.

The exhibit is called Bittersweet – a word that reflects the combination of bitter cacao with sweet sugar to make chocolate, and a word that juxtaposes the sensual pleasure of an indulgence and the bitter history of consequences.

Catch the next event in the Bittersweet project, Thursday, February 17, at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom. Register and learn more at: <https://www.somervillemuseum.org/bittersweet>.

Somerville Redevelopment Authority monthly meeting, February 16

The Somerville Redevelopment Authority monthly meeting is this Wednesday, February 16 at 5:30 p.m. The Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan is on the agenda to be discussed as well as other areas of development in Somerville:

- 90 Washington Street Demonstration Project Plan Update
- Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan (WHURP) Update
- Union Square Update
- Boynton Yards Update
- Assembly Square Update

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this public meeting of the SRA is being conducted via remote participation.

The meeting will be held using GoToWebinar.

To Use a Computer: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2298436020352478990>
Webinar ID: 144-595-155

Phone number: +1 (562) 247-8321
Access code: 493-353-127

View the agenda at: <https://www.somervillema.gov/sites/default/files/sra-meeting-notice-agenda-02-16-22-26.pdf>



Somerville Baseball

Somerville Baseball Registration is open for the Spring 2022 season. Somerville Baseball offers programming for youth ages 5 to 15. Registrations runs until March 1.

Visit www.somervillelittleleague.org to learn more about Somerville Baseball, and click on the registration tab to register.

Ms. Cam’s

Olío

Answers

From page 8

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Super Bowl XLVII, 2013 | 7. Zachary Taylor |
| 2. 7 lbs. | 8. Strawberries Arnaud |
| 3. Tom Brady | 9. The Carolina Reaper |
| 4. Katy Perry, 2015 | 10. Kabul |
| 5. Carol Channing, 1970 | 11. Europe |
| 6. Virginia | 12. Titanic |

'Black is a Rainbow Color' workshop for Prospect Hill Academy Charter School families

In celebration of Black History Month, renowned artist and award-winning children's book illustrator Ekua Holmes hosted over 30 Prospect Hill Academy Charter School (PHA) families for an interactive virtual workshop on Thursday, February 10. Prospect Hill Academy is a PK-12 charter public school with campuses in Cambridge and Somerville. The school serves over 1,000 students from diverse backgrounds, with over 57% of students identifying as Black. With a robust slate of celebrations planned through-

out February to celebrate Black culture and excellence, the workshop with Ekua Holmes was designed to bring families together through an interactive experience that encourages dialogue about racial identity. Ms. Holmes shared impressions of her joyful upbringing in Boston as well as images that inspired her to become an artist. She explained to the young audience her process of collecting all sorts of paper that she utilizes in her beautifully colorful collages and talked about incorporating images from her daily life into



PHA pre-K student Theodore, from Somerville, watches the Black is a Rainbow Color workshop with artist Ekua Holmes.



PHA Kindergartner Xavier, with his mother Tori, from Revere, pose with the artwork they created during the Black is a Rainbow Color workshop with artist Ekua Holmes.

her paintings and illustrations, including those that were recently exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. After Ms. Holmes and PHA Head of School Dr. Angela Allen read aloud Ekua Holmes and Angela Joy's book Black is a Rainbow Color, Ms. Holmes

lead the participating children aged 4 to 10 through an artmaking workshop. With materials provided by PHA, the children created an amazing array of collages and drawings that they happily shared on screen. Ms. Holmes hopes that the experience will

encourage the children to continue to create meaningful art and maybe even become artists themselves. The workshop was generously sponsored by First Republic allowing each participating child to receive a copy of Black is a Rainbow Color.

Tufts University Department of Music Presents 'Afropop Night Live'

The Tufts University Department of Music presents Afropop Night Live in the Distler Performance Hall at the Perry and Marty Granoff Music Center on Friday, March 4, at 8:30 p.m. Afropop Night Live is Boston's Afrocentric live music and dance party. Featuring local, national, and international African, Afro-Latin and Afro-Caribbean music, the series welcomes everyone to celebrate and unify our unique and diverse Boston community. This March 4 performance will feature Kotoko Brass Band (Boston/Ghana) and New Nile Orchestra (Vermont/Ethiopia) to bring some premiere local African artists and dance music to the doorstep of the vibrant Tufts' community.

The Granoff Music Center is located at 20 Talbot Avenue on Tufts' Medford/Somerville campus. The event is free; no tickets required. This event will be live streamed through Tufts Music Live Streaming. Due to COVID regulations, live audience attendees at Tufts Music events must present a Tufts ID or Covid Vaccination Card showing that they have been vaccinated and boosted. For more information, please visit go.tufts.edu/musicevents or call the Granoff Music Center Box Office at 617.627.3679.



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By Bobbygeorge Potaris



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On This Day in History February 16

- 1760 – Cherokee Indians held hostage at Fort St. George are killed in revenge for Indian attacks on frontier settlements.
- 1923 – Bessie Smith makes her first recording, "Down Hearted Blues."
- 1934 – Thousands of Socialists battle Communists at a rally in New York's Madison Square Garden.
- 1937 – Dupont patents a new thread, nylon, which will replace silk in a number of products and reduce costs.
- 1951 – Stalin contends the U.N. is becoming the weapon of aggressive war.
- 1952 – The FBI arrests 10 members of the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina.
- 1965 – Four persons are held in a plot to blow up the Statue of Liberty, Liberty Bell and the Washington Monument.
- 1966 – The World Council of Churches being held in Geneva, urges immediate peace in Vietnam.

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OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Somerville writer Steven Beeber:
Finding the bagels, knishes and schmaltz in Punk Rock

I caught up with Somerville writer Steven Beeber, author of *Heebie-Jeebies at CBGB's: A Secret History of Jewish Punk*. This study of the intersection of Punk Rock and Jewish culture must make for a very interesting read. I don't know if any Punk Rock dirges have made it into a hymnal yet or can be interpreted through Talmudic Law ... but hey, as the Bard wrote, "Ah, Sweet mystery of life."

Doug Holder: How has living in Somerville been for your writing life. Do you think it is a good place for creatives?

Steven Beeber: Somerville is an excellent place to be a writer. I've heard it said that there are more writers here per capita than anywhere else in the country. I'm not sure that's true – I'm not a statistician – but I do know that in a field that can often be lonely and isolating, that there is a genuine community here, which is so important. It's not Paris in the '20s, maybe, but the cafes are plentiful and the gatherings regular, so it isn't far off. Also, my wife and I both have writing "sheds" in our backyard, so that's yet another plus. On a more serious note, it should be said that the institutional support from the city itself is amazing. The Somerville Arts Council, among other institutions, is pivotal to providing not just support, but a forum in which writers can reach an audience.

DH: How in the world is Jewish culture reflected in, of all things, Punk Rock?

SB: Jewish culture, as opposed to Judaism the religion, is deeply embedded in Punk, especially the original version of Punk that came out of New York City. Needless to say, New York is home to many Jews, and this was especially true in the 1950s and '60s, the period during which the Punks came of age. The character of Jewish culture – ironic, humorous, attuned to the injustices inflicted upon the marginalized – is all but synonymous with Punk. Add to that a preoccupation with neurosis, anxiety, and, above all, Nazis, and you have all the ingredients to birth a new rock movement. Ultimately, I would say that Punk was a reaction to the Holocaust by the first generation that was raised in its aftermath.

DH: Did the Ramones, John Zorn, Lou Reed, the Dictators, etc., ever talk extensively about their Jewish background in regard to their music?

SB: Only John Zorn did before I approached them about my book. His Radical Jewish Culture movement took the unspoken elements of NY Punk to an explicit level, which makes sense since he is categorized as Post-Punk more than Punk. But in regard to the others, all of them did speak about their backgrounds extensively on record for my book.



Tommy Ramone (born Tamas Erdelyi), for instance, was raised in anti-Semitic Hungary until coming to NY as a child, and his idea for what became the Ramones bore all the hallmarks of his conflicted feelings about being an outsider. In many ways, Tommy was the mastermind behind the band, the original manager who insisted that they look and behave a certain way, the one who came up with their signature drum sound and joined the band because no one else could be taught to play it, the one who, most pivotally, insisted against the other members protests, that Joey be the lead singer. While Dee Dee and Johnny felt that Joey was the opposite of what a rock star should look like, Tommy knew that it was this very quality that made Joey perfect. As I say in my book, this look was about as Jewish as it could be, to the point where Joey could have passed for an anti-Semitic caricature in the official Nazi newspaper *Der Sturmer*.

In regard to The Dictators – all of whom were Jewish – the lead singer, Handsome Dick Manitoba, and the original songwriter, Richard Meltzer, were especially forthcoming about the connection, though others such as the producer, Sandy Pearlman – of "Mo cowbell" fame – and lead guitarist and band founder, Andy Shernoff, were clearly influenced by their backgrounds.

Lou Reed, of course, wrote indirectly about his Jewishness from the beginning and more explicitly about it near the end. *The Black Angel's Death Song*, from the Velvet Underground's debut, appears to be about the killing fields of Holocaust-ravaged Poland, and *Egg Cream*, from one of his last albums, extolls the magic of that "Jewish elixir" that was so much a part of his New York Jewish boyhood. Reed also took part annually in the gathering known as The Downtown Seder, a hip Passover gathering organized by the Knitting Factory founder Michael Dorf, in which Reed would read the traditional Four Questions attributed to the Wicked Child.

Many other members of the Continued on page 15

Lyrical
SOMERVILLE
edited by Doug Holder

Carolynn Kingyens credits her love of music and acute observation coupled with being an outsider (always looking in) that would later put her on the path to poetry and short fiction. She is the author of two poetry collections: *Before the Big Bang Makes a Sound* and the newly released *Coupling*, both published by Kelsay Books (*Coupling* is available on Amazon). In addition to poetry, Kingyens writes essays, book and film reviews, micro fiction, and short stories. Today, she lives in New York and Canada with her husband and two amazing daughters.



Coupling

I listened to you retell it
to our new friends
from our new church,
the story of how
we first met.

I sat in silence
with my hands
under the table,
wrapping my dirty,
cloth napkin
around a small fist.
Your version of events
were tidy and clean,
when you said
you knew I was the woman
you were destined to marry
the moment you saw me
in your doorway,
punctual as always,
asking for Harrison,
my blind date,
and your perpetually late
roommate.

Our new friend, Allison,
cocked her head,
cooing out
a falsetto's squeal
to her mute husband:
Isn't that romantic?

If she only knew our truth;
you had no interest
in wanting to marry me
the day I showed up
in your messy doorway
with empty chip bags
and T-shirts
strewn across wood floors,

it had nothing to do
with coupling.

I was ripe, hot,
willing to please –
not yet the bitch
you would later marry.

I was naïve in a white,
strapless sundress,
and long hair
still shower-damp,

smelling of mint
and clover.

I let you kiss my mouth,
my neck, my back
in your bedroom;
let you hide me
inside your closet
when Harrison rapped
on your door,
asking about a girl.

— Carolynn Kingyens

Survey highlights local impacts of Meals on Wheels

By Nathan Lamb

Meals on Wheels supports independence, reduces loneliness, and helps with food security, according to a recent survey of residents receiving the meals through Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES).

More than 240 Cambridge and Somerville residents responded to the survey, which is conducted annually by the SCES Nutrition program to assess the impact and quality of the program.

Just under half of survey respondents said they would have a shortage of food without Meals on Wheels, with 72% saying the program provides their main meal of the day.

Two-thirds of respondents reported that they live alone, with only their Meals on Wheels driver checking-in daily. A similar percentage indicated they feel less lonely because of their driver.

SCES Nutrition Director Meghan Ostrander said the data highlights how Meals on Wheels is helping local older adults maintain health and independence.

“The meals we deliver fill a critical nutritional need, but it’s only part of the story,” said Ostrander. “There are many days that our drivers are the only outside contact for the people we serve. The drivers provide both a friendly interaction and check on the client’s well-being, both of which have taken on greater importance during the prolonged isolation many of us are facing during the pandemic.”

Other notable responses from the survey include:

94% rated experiences with their driver as “excellent” or “good.”

90% said the program helps them live independently in the community

88% said they would recommend the meals to a friend

87% said the meals help them eat healthier

84% said the meals help them feel better

82% said they receive five or more meals per week through the program

78% said the meals help them maintain a healthy weight

The SCES Meals on Wheels program serves more than 1,000



Meals on Wheels Driver Martha Crowley packs meals for morning delivery at Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services.

older adults and people with disabilities in Cambridge and Somerville. In addition to the standard menu, Caribbean, Chinese, Portuguese, low lactose and vegetarian meals are available. Therapeutic meals to accommodate medical conditions are also available.

SCES Meals on Wheels is available to Cambridge and Somerville residents age 60 and

older, and their spouses or dependents with disabilities. The program is free, but voluntary donations are requested.

In addition to Meals on Wheels, SCES Nutrition offers congregate meals, nutrition counseling, low-cost nutrition supplements, and a monthly grocery supplement program for eligible homes.

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES) is a non-profit agency that supports the independence and well-being of older adults in Somerville and Cambridge. For free advice and guidance on questions of aging, caregiving or disability, contact our Aging Information Center at 617-628-2601, email info@eldercare.org, or visit our website eldercare.org.

Somerville Bicycle Network Plan Workshop 1

Virtual Meeting on Tuesday, February 22, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

The Mobility Division is hosting a series of virtual Bicycle Network Planning workshops in February and March. Join in for these small group sessions to discuss potential connected bike routes.

Each workshop include a brief project overview and an interactive mapping exercise where we talk through a variety of scenarios together to draw routes. This exercise focuses on opportunities for the future and design for connectivity throughout the entire city.

Registration slots are limited. Please only sign up for one workshop. To register, visit somervillema.gov/bikenetwork. The full list of workshops is available on the project website.



Somerville writer Steven Beeber

CONT. FROM PG 14

Punk scene also spoke at length about their Jewish backgrounds, including, among others, Lenny Kaye of The Patti Smith Group, Tuli Kupferberg of The Fugs, Alan Vega of Suicide, and Punk manager and impresario, Danny Fields, to whom Legs McNeil dedicates his oral history of Punk, *Please Kill Me*. My book, *The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGB's: A Secret History of Jewish Punk*, contains profiles based on extensive interviews with almost every early Punk rocker of importance.

DH: The Punk Rock scene originated in the Lower East Side of New York City, once the home of many Jewish immigrants in the early part of the last century. This was fertile ground for the Jews starting out in America. How did this neighborhood help to birth this new genre of rock music?

SB: I actually published an essay about this very subject in a collection called *Jews: A People's History of the Lower East Side*. In it, I posited that the LES was pivotal to the burgeoning Punk scene. Not only did Hilly Kristal – born Hillel Kristal on a Zionist Socialist collective in New Jersey – choose that location for CBGB, the club that became ground zero for the scene.

Tuli (Naphtali) Kupferberg of The Fugs and Lou Reed

of The Velvet Underground both performed there regularly during the late '60s when future punks such as Chris Stein of Blondie religiously went to see them. Tuli remained there most of his life, and Richard Hell (Richard Meyers) fled there from anti-Semitic Lexington, Kentucky as a teenager. I could go on, but the bottom-line is that many of those who laid the groundwork for Punk and many of those who brought it to fruition, both lived and worked there, and even if they didn't, they were influenced by its volatile mix of gritty urban drama and theatrical liberal schmaltz. It's no mistake that CBGB was within spitting distance of Ratners, Katz's and the Second Avenue Deli.

DH: I am Jewish, and have a weakness for the Concord, Grossinger's style of Jewish Borscht Belt humor. How did this play out in this music scene?

SB: The Borscht Belt is at the heart of everything. The Punk rockers as teens idolized Lenny Bruce, who began in that world before becoming too risqué to continue there. But other Borscht Belt comics, while tamer on the surface – at least in terms of four-letter words – still held the same attitudes as Bruce and dealt with them in the same way. So much of Borscht Belt humor is a coded at-

tack on the mores of polite society, a sendup of the stuffy, hypocritical world in which Jews found themselves.

Think, in an earlier era, Groucho doing his number on society doyenne Margaret Dumont. At the same time, this humor was also self-directed, a way of defusing the attack through self-deprecation that at times hinted at genuine internalized self-loathing. Jerry Lewis and his arrested development act, Henry Youngman and his “take my wife, please.” Groucho himself and his, “I wouldn't belong to any club that would have me as a member.” Remember too, though, that Groucho is also renowned for his reply to a restricted club that denied his half-Jewish daughter admittance: “If she keeps out of the water from the waist up, maybe you could let her in the pool?”

DH: I don't know if my old Rabbi would agree with your thesis. Has the book been used for serious study in the Jewish academy?


SB: Yes. But I wouldn't say it's limited to the Jewish academy. I have been asked to speak on the topic at conferences and universities around the world, and in fact am pretty well known in Germany. You know the phrase, “I'm big in Japan?” I often say I'm big in the other former Axis power.

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