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McGrath Highway reconstruction project funds green lighted



The proposed reconstruction plans for McGrath Highway between Somerville and Cambridge have come closer to full realization with the acquisition of funding by MassDOT.

By Jim Clark

Funding has been secured that will allow the start of the McGrath Highway reconstruction project.

According to MassDOT, the proposed project consists of reconstruction of McGrath Highway (Route 28) between Broadway in Somerville and Rufo Rd. – 3rd St. in Cambridge.

The current design proposes to remove the McCarthy Overpass and replace it with at-grade signalized intersections.

The project focuses on improving community connectivity between different neighborhoods and accommodation for all roadway users through provision, expansion, and enhancement of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.

The project also includes safety *Continued on page 4*

Pintar Maletas Workshop with Laidy Saenz at the Somerville Museum

Globally, one out of seven people are immigrants, refugees, or migrants. Migration refers to the movement between two locations whether by choice or involuntarily. It may take time to plan travel or happen quickly. A suitcase or bag is often the beginning of this journey.

A suitcase becomes a new vehicle for carrying memories of home. What to pack? What is essential to establishing a new life? It may contain clothing, photographs, and other mementos of family and homes left behind.

Join artist Laidy Saenz at the Somerville Museum for a participatory workshop about the immigration experience as part of the exhibition, *Museo Inmigrante: Stories of Resilience from Somerville's Padres Latinos*. Pack and decorate a miniature suitcase and fill it with items to take to a new *Continued on page 4*



The Pintar Maletas Workshop, led by Laidy Saenz, will take place on Saturday, February 24, at the Somerville Museum.

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NEWTALK

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.

Join Mayor Ballantyne in celebration and the Somerville Arts Council tonight for their Local Cultural Council grant season and awards. Meet and network with the 2024 LCC grant awardees, LCC review panelists, and Arts Council staff and board. Wednesday, February 21, 6:30 p.m. Join in to celebrate these awardees and this community process at Warehouse XI, 11 Sanborn Court, Union Square. <https://fb.me/e/8c-7woC2eY>.








Protect yourself and loved ones against the flu this winter. Somerville's Health and Human Services department is hosting a free flu vaccine clinic on Friday, February 23, at the City Hall Annex (50 Evergreen Ave.) from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Walk-ins welcome. To register and to find other vaccine clinics, visit somervillema.gov/vaccines.

State Representative Christine Barber's Winter 2024 office hours are scheduled. Stop by and share your thoughts on local affairs and legislative priorities. Saturday, February 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Winter Hill Brewery includes Ward 4 Councilor Jesse Clingan and Andre Green, Ward 4 Somerville School Committee. March 9 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Yego Coffee, 1212 Broadway will include Ward 7 Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld, Leiran Biton, Ward 7 Somerville School Committee Member and Senator Pat Jehlen.

Continued on page 7

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of February 21 – February 27 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday February 21	Partly Cloudy	42°/33°	6%	3%	ESE 10 mph
 Thursday February 22	Cloudy	44°/35°	22%	17%	NE 8 mph
 Friday February 23	Rain	44°/29°	49%	41%	NW 12 mph
 Saturday February 24	Partly Cloudy	39°/28°	23%	16%	NW 11 mph
 Sunday February 25	Partly Cloudy	40°/28°	8%	5%	NW 10 mph
 Monday February 26	Sunny	43°/33°	10%	6%	NW 10 mph
 Tuesday February 27	Rain	47°/35°	31%	27%	W 12 mph

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

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SCES hosting nutrition and health webinars

The intersection of health and nutrition will be the focus of two webinars hosted by Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services in March. The first is:

Science Based Nutrition for Brain Health

The foods we eat can protect our brain or harm it. Join researcher, lecturer and advocate Dr. Emerson-Lombardo for a discussion about which foods to enjoy and which to avoid, as we seek to make our brains more robust and resilient. The discussion will highlight delicious and easy-to-prepare options that support brain health.



The Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services Nutrition program is co-hosting a webinar on these topics with Dr. Emerson-Lombardo March 6 from 1 to 2:30. Add this Zoom link to your calendar and join: https://eldercare-org.zoom.us/j/82096919882?pwd=HSbEXoM4aIN2q2rUSbCSB-G5ubOOLuz.1&mc_cid=6cc8acfd45&mc_eid=5fc3d8a7d0#success

SCES is also hosting a webinar about how older adults can best navigate the nutrition landscape on March 21. For more details, go to: https://eldercare.org/sces-hosting-health-and-nutrition-webinars-in-march/?mc_cid=6cc8acfd45&mc_eid=5fc3d8a7d0

Be sure to visit us online at

www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

Life in the

VILLE

by Jimmy Del Ponte

A Friendly place



At the corner of Cedar St. and Highland there's a bank. It used to be Friendly's Ice Cream shop. I can still taste the lime Rickeys and vanilla cokes not to mention the Fribbles. Back in the 70's it was a great hangout especially after Somerville high events. I'd like to share the following memories of that Friendly's location.

"My favorite was the Swiss Chocolate Almond Sundae and of course any number of Fribbles."

"One of my favorites, best French fries and grilled corn muffin."

"Cheeseburger on the set up with those crinkle-cut fries and a Fribble!"

"My wife worked there back in '71, claims she was let go for not being friendly, lol."

"I remember I was a frequent flyer going to Friendlies after a basketball game."

"Shrimp salad sandwich 65 cents and a fountain coke 10 cents."

"We would shovel snow until we had enough money to go get a hot cocoa."

"That was my hangout all through high school in the early 70's and, of course, the place we all went after basketball and hockey games."

"My husband and I used to go there and get the tuna melt. Great memories there."

"We called it Saint Friendly's. We skipped church and went for a with our collection \$."

I always think of Friendly's when I drive by the bank. There was also a Dairy Queen down the street on Cedar. The old Friendly's will go down on the list of Somerville's favorite hang outs.



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One (1) INCOME-RESTRICTED CONDOMINIUMS FOR SALE
Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and 7-11 Aldersey Street, LLC are pleased to announce **one (1) income- restricted condominium unit for sale through** the City of Somerville Inclusionary Housing Program at **7-11 Aldersey Street**



Unit Number and Tier:	Sale Price:	Minimum 3% Down Payment:	Estimated Initial Condo Fee:	Minimum Household Size*
Unit 7B (3-Bedroom @ 80% AMI)	\$281,151	\$8,434.52	\$130	3 people
Annual Gross Income Limits	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people
Tier P1 (maximums): 80% AMI:	\$106,650	\$118,450	\$127,950	\$137,450
Asset Limit (excluding restricted accounts): \$75,000				

INFORMATIONAL VIDEO: Visit [somervillema.gov/inclusionaryhousing](https://www.somervillema.gov/inclusionaryhousing)
APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE: **Friday, February 1st, 2024, to Friday, March 1st, 2023**
Online at: [somervillema.gov/inclusionaryhousing](https://www.somervillema.gov/inclusionaryhousing)
Hard copies and more information: Call: (617) 625-6600 X 2566 or email: inclusionary@somervillema.gov to request a hard copy

APPLICATION DEADLINE: **Friday, March 1st, 2024, at 12 pm**
Faxed to: 617-591-3235; Emailed to: inclusionary@somervillema.gov
Mailed/Dropped off to: City Hall Annex-50 Evergreen Ave., Somerville, MA 02145

OPEN HOUSES:
Thursday, February 8th
6pm-8pm Sunday, February
10th 11am-1pm

LOTTERY: **Thursday, March 14th, 2024, at 11am** | View the lottery here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82251560949?pwd=WTBJKzZWNHd3Y2FH5nlaY1BzSlc3UT09>

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays @ 5:30-7:30 PM
Online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81106664399>
Call in: +1 (305) 224-1968 / Access code: 811-0666-4399

* Units are subject to Affordable Housing Restriction in perpetuity, other restrictions may apply
Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the City of Somerville or to attend meetings, should contact the ADA Coordinator, Adrienne Pomeroy, at 617-625-6600 x2259 or apomeroy@somervillema.gov.



Alternative travel options during Green Line closures

There will be multiple Green Line branch closures from Tuesday, February 20 through Friday, March 8. Travel alternatives during this time include a combination of free accessible shuttle buses and fare-free bus and Commuter Rail options. Transit Ambassadors and other MBTA personnel will be available to assist riders throughout the Green Line. Riders should plan for extra travel time during these closures.



Full Closures: Tuesday February 20 – Friday March 8

Green Line B: No trains between Copley and Babcock St.; Shuttles are available between Copley and Babcock St.; An accessible van will be available during weekdays only; The 57 bus is free to ride between Kenmore and Packard’s Corner; The bus will not stop at Blandford St. Please follow signs to BU East instead.; No fares will be collected from riders traveling west from Babcock Street; Commuter Rail is fare-free between Lansdowne, Back Bay, and South Station.

Green Line C: No trains between Copley and Cleveland Circle; Shuttles are available between Copley and Cleveland Circle; No shuttles at Saint Mary’s St., Kent St., or Brandon Hall.

Green Line D: No trains between Copley and Brookline Hills; Shuttles are available between Copley and Brookline Hills; An accessible van will be available during weekdays only; No fares will be collected from riders traveling west from Brookline Hills; Will run between Union Sq and Government Center on a loop.

Green Line E has regular service and will make all downtown stops, as well as all stops to Heath St. Riders should anticipate longer waits between Government Center and Copley. No fares will be collected at Copley. **Orange Line** is a good alternative for service downtown. Back Bay station is fare-free.

Note: The 9 and 39 bus stops on Huntington Ave @ Forsyth Way move to 465 Huntington Ave in front of the Museum of Fine Arts.

For updates and more info about the closures, go to: <https://www.mbta.com/projects/alternative-travel-options-during-green-line-closures> – MBTA

McGrath Highway reconstruction project funds green lighted CONT. FROM PG 1

improvements, increased green space, physical separation of bicycles and pedestrians from motor vehicles wherever feasible, and the removal of a physical and visual barrier (the overpass) within the community.

Based on current planning, McGrath Boulevard would have fewer lanes for traffic, feature dedicated bike paths, create more space for trees, and

allow for the possibility for new housing.

The new street configuration will have two lanes of two-way traffic, along with additional turn lanes at intersections.

The funding was announced at a virtual public hearing last week, with officials from MassDOT and the City of Somerville announced that work to demolish the obsolete highway could begin by 2028.

The project team estimates that a four-year refinement of planning process will be required before actual work will begin.



The proposed McGrath Boulevard intersection.

Pintar Maletas Workshop with Laidy Saenz at the Somerville Museum

CONT. FROM PG 1

place. These suitcases will become part of the exhibition and then can be kept by each participant once the exhibition ends.

Laidy Saenz is an interdisciplinary artist investigating themes of hybrid identity, migration, and memory. She often draws from ancient Peruvian cultures to create paintings, wearables, and installations. Saenz uncovers hidden metaphors and properties embedded in her media at the nexus of heritage and modernity by blending materials like plexi with Andean textiles and manipulating them with traditional fiber techniques, laser cutting, and 3D printing technologies.

Materials will be provided and this event is being supplemented by a Somerville Art Council's LCC grant.

Saturday, February 24, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Admission: \$10 (no discounts for active Somerville Museum members).



Somerville artist Laidy Saenz.

'Kaleidoscope: Queer Visions' call for art



Kaleidoscope: Queer Visions is a call for art, sponsored by the Mass Cultural Council, the Somerville Local Cultural Council, and the Boston Figurative Art Center.

This is a call to the queer, creative community to reflect and create with the following questions: What does a queer future look like? What does a queer timeline feel like? What missed moments do you long for? What would queer liberation feel like in your body?

Submissions are requested by March 25. The event is scheduled to take place from May 6 to May 11, with a variety of programming throughout the week, culminating in a day-long celebration on May 11 with workshops, an open mic, and more.

Things to note: Anyone who identifies with the queer community, including questioning folks or those who are not out publicly, is welcome to apply. In order to ensure a diverse range of representation and voices highlighted in this exhibit, we will be prioritizing submissions from QTBIPOC and disabled folks. Depending on the number of submissions, submitting unfortunately does not guarantee inclusion in the exhibit.

- ✦ Details and submission: tinyurl.com/queervisionssubmit
- ✦ Event dates: May 6 - May 11
- ✦ Submission deadline: March 25
- ✦ Notifications by April 5

Questions? Concerns? Comments? Ideas? Want to get involved with organizing this project? They'd love to hear from you! Please reach out to kaleidoscopequeervisions@gmail.com

About the curator:

Sarah Rose Smiley, she/they, is a queer, white, disabled, femme artist & teaching artist based in Somerville. Her current painting series, Rose Colored, is an alternate timeline in which queerness inhabited their body more joyfully and freely at an earlier age. Rose Colored is about giving her younger self the moments they missed. View their work here: <https://www.sarahrosesmiley.com>.

LEGAL NOTICE

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE



OFFICE OF BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

Ordered: The Board of Elections Commissioners is hereby directed to cause notice to be given in the manner prescribed by law that meetings of the qualified voters of this city will be held in the several polling places which have been designated by said Council for or within the voting precincts in which they respectively are qualified to vote, said polling places are located as follows, namely for;

In City Council

- WARD ONE**
Precinct 1. A room in the MICHAEL E CAPUANO SCHOOL, 150 Glen Street;
Precinct 2. A room in the MICHAEL E CAPUANO SCHOOL, 150 Glen Street;
Precinct 3. A room in the EAST SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL, Glen Street Entrance directly across from 68 Glen Street;
Precinct 4. A room in the EAST SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL, Glen Street Entrance directly across from 68 Glen Street;
Precinct 4A. A room in the EAST SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL, Glen Street Entrance directly across from 68 Glen Street;
- WARD TWO**
Precinct 1. A room in the THE POLICE STATION, 220 Washington Street;
Precinct 1A. A room in the THE POLICE STATION, 220 Washington Street;
Precinct 2. A room in the ARGENZIANO SCHOOL at Lincoln Park, 290 Washington Street;
Precinct 3. A room in the ARGENZIANO SCHOOL at Lincoln Park, 290 Washington Street;
Precinct 4. A room in the ARGENZIANO SCHOOL at Lincoln Park, 290 Washington Street;
- WARD THREE**
Precinct 1. A room PROPERZI MANOR, 13-25 Warren Avenue;
Precinct 2. A room in the CUMMINGS SCHOOL, 42 Prescott Street;
Precinct 3. Gym at ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH; 179 Summer St;
Precinct 4. Gym at ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH; 179 Summer St;
- WARD FOUR**
Precinct 1. A room in the MYSTIC ACTIVITY CENTER, 530 Mystic Avenue;
Precinct 2. A room in the PEARL ST PARK BUILDING, 240 Pearl Street;
Precinct 2A. A room in the PEARL ST PARK BUILDING, 240 Pearl Street;
Precinct 3. A room in the BRAZILIAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 212 School Street;
Precinct 4. A room in the HEALEY SCHOOL, 5 Meacham Street;
- WARD FIVE**
Precinct 1. A room in the ARMORY, 191 Highland Avenue;
Precinct 2. A room in the ARMORY, 191 Highland Avenue;
Precinct 3. Gym in the JOHN F KENNEDY SCHOOL, Sartwell Avenue Entrance directly across from 19 Sartwell Avenue;
Precinct 4. Gym in the JOHN F KENNEDY SCHOOL, Sartwell Avenue Entrance directly across from 19 Sartwell Avenue;
- WARD SIX**
Precinct 1. A room in the GEORGE DILBOY POST, 351 Summer St;
Precinct 2. A room in the SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH, 31 College Avenue;
Precinct 3. A room in the WEST BRANCH LIBRARY, 40 College Avenue;
Precinct 3A. A room in the WEST BRANCH LIBRARY, 40 College Avenue;
Precinct 4. A room in the GEORGE DILBOY POST, 351 Summer St;
- WARD SEVEN**
Precinct 1. A room in the SENIOR CENTER, TAB BUILDING, 167 Holland Street;
Precinct 2. A room in the WEST SOMERVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL, Raymond Ave Entrance-Directly across from 17 Raymond Ave;
Precinct 3. A room in the VNA ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY, 405 Alewife Brook Parkway;
Precinct 4. A room in the WEST SOMERVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL, Raymond Ave Entrance-Directly across from 17 Raymond Ave;

ON TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024

AT SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING, when the polls shall open and there and then between that time and the closing of the polls, which shall be at EIGHT O'CLOCK in the evening, the said qualified voters will give their ballots for Presidential Preference and one man and one woman for the State Committee for the Second Middlesex Senatorial District and Members of the Ward and City Committees.

Nicholas P. Salerno, Chairman
Douglas M. Bosley
Austin Brower
Kelly J. Cooper
BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

The City of Somerville does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, national origin, sexual preference, disability, or any other protected category in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services or activities. Auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, reasonable modifications in policies and procedures will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.

2/21/24 The Somerville Times

Beacon Hill Roll Call



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Beacon Hill Roll Call can also be viewed on our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com

THE HOUSE AND SENATE: There were no roll calls in the House or Senate last week. This week, *Beacon Hill Roll Call* reviews local senators’ votes in the 2023-2024 on several proposals to raise or lower taxes. Included are comments from legislators and others at the time the measures were voted upon.

TAX RELIEF PACKAGE (H 4104)

Senate 38-1, approved a tax relief package that supporters said will provide \$561.3 million in tax relief in fiscal year 2024 and \$1.02 billion per year in subsequent years.

Provisions include increasing the rental deduction cap from \$3,000 to \$4,000; reducing the estate tax for all taxpayers and eliminating the tax for all estates under \$2 million by allowing a uniform credit of \$99,600; increasing the refundable tax credit for a dependent child, disabled adult or senior from \$180 to \$310 per dependent in taxable year 2023, and then to \$440 in subsequent years while eliminating the child/dependent cap; doubling the refundable senior circuit breaker tax credit from \$1,200 to \$2,400; increasing the refundable Earned Income Tax Credit from 30 percent to 40 percent of the federal credit; and reducing the short-term capital gains tax rate from 12 percent to 8.5 percent.

Other provisions double the lead paint tax credit to \$3,000 for full abatement and \$1,000 for partial abatement; ensure that employer student loan payments are not treated as taxable compensation; make public transit fares, as well as ferry and regional transit passes and bike commuter expenses, eligible for the commuter expense tax deduction; increase from \$1,500 to \$2,000 the maximum that municipalities may pay seniors to do volunteer work to reduce their property taxes; raise the annual authorization for the low income housing tax credit from \$40 million to \$60 million; and allow cities and towns to adopt a local property tax exemption for affordable real estate that is rented by a person whose income is less than a certain level set by the municipality.

“We are thrilled to deliver on our promise to pass tax cuts that will result in real savings for the people of Massachusetts, including the country’s largest child and family tax credit that will go back in the pockets of parents and caregivers,” said Gov. Healey. “Everywhere we go, we hear about how people are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living. This tax package delivers savings for those who need it most, while making long overdue changes that will better allow Massachusetts to compete with other states.”

“This tax relief package strikes the critically important balance of providing permanent financial relief to residents and businesses across Massachusetts, without compro-

mising the long-term financial security of the commonwealth,” said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). “I’m confident that this tax reform legislation will help to make Massachusetts more affordable for all residents, while also helping to make the commonwealth more competitive with other states.”

The measure also includes two provisions which the opponents said will result in tax hikes. One would require Massachusetts married couples who file income tax returns jointly at the federal level to do the same at the state level. The other changes are the system under Chapter 62F that requires that annual tax revenue above a certain amount collected by the state go back to the taxpayers. Under current law, the money is returned to taxpayers based on what he or she earned and paid in taxes. The new tax package changed that and provided that each taxpayer will receive a flat rate refund, unrelated to what they earned or paid in taxes.

“The High Tech Council appreciates the effort Gov. Healey and the Legislature put into this first step towards addressing the state’s tax outlier status,” said High Tech Council President Chris Anderson. “Unfortunately, the final tax ‘relief’ legislation falls short of delivering the meaningful change needed, as it includes both an expansion of the voter-approved income surtax and an unconstitutional redistribution of income through changes to the voter-approved Chapter 62F rebate formula.”

Anderson concluded, “The High Tech Council looks forward to collaborating with Gov. Healey, her cabinet and legislators across the commonwealth who are committed to defending and strengthening our business climate and the associated high quality of life it brings to Massachusetts residents.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the tax relief package. A “No” vote is against it.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

FILE TAXES JOINTLY (S 2387)

Senate 33-5, approved an amendment that would require Massachusetts couples who file income tax returns jointly at the federal level do the same at the state level.

Supporters said this amendment will close a loophole that allows some married couples to file individually – an action that could be used to minimize or avoid the person’s state tax obligations under the recent 4 percent surtax which is in addition to the current flat 5 percent one, on taxpayers’ earnings of more than \$1 million annually.

Opponents said if filers are forced to file jointly at the state

level, the 4 percent surtax will apply to many more filers, which is not what the voters approved on the November 2022 ballot question imposing the 4 percent surtax.

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment requiring joint filing. A “No” vote is against the amendment.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

REDUCE SHORT TERM CAPITAL GAINS TAX (S 2397)

Senate 5-32, rejected an amendment that would reduce the short-term capital gains tax from 12 percent to 5 percent.

Amendment supporters said that there are 26 states that currently tax short-term capital gains at a rate of 5 percent or lower, including all of the Bay State’s surrounding states. They asked why the capital gains tax or any tax imposed should be charged at a higher rate than earned income.

Amendment opponents said the state cannot afford the \$117 million loss in revenue that this tax cut would cost this year. They argued the cut would do nothing to help the costs of housing and living.

(A “Yes” vote is for the reduction to 5 percent. A “No” vote is against the reduction.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen No

INCREASE ESTATE/DEATH TAX EXEMPTION (S 2397)

Senate 5-33, rejected an amendment that would increase from \$1 million to \$5 million the amount of money that is tax exempt from the value of a person’s estate when calculating the state’s estate/death tax that a person is required to pay following their death before distribution to any beneficiary. The increase to \$5 million would be implemented over ten years.

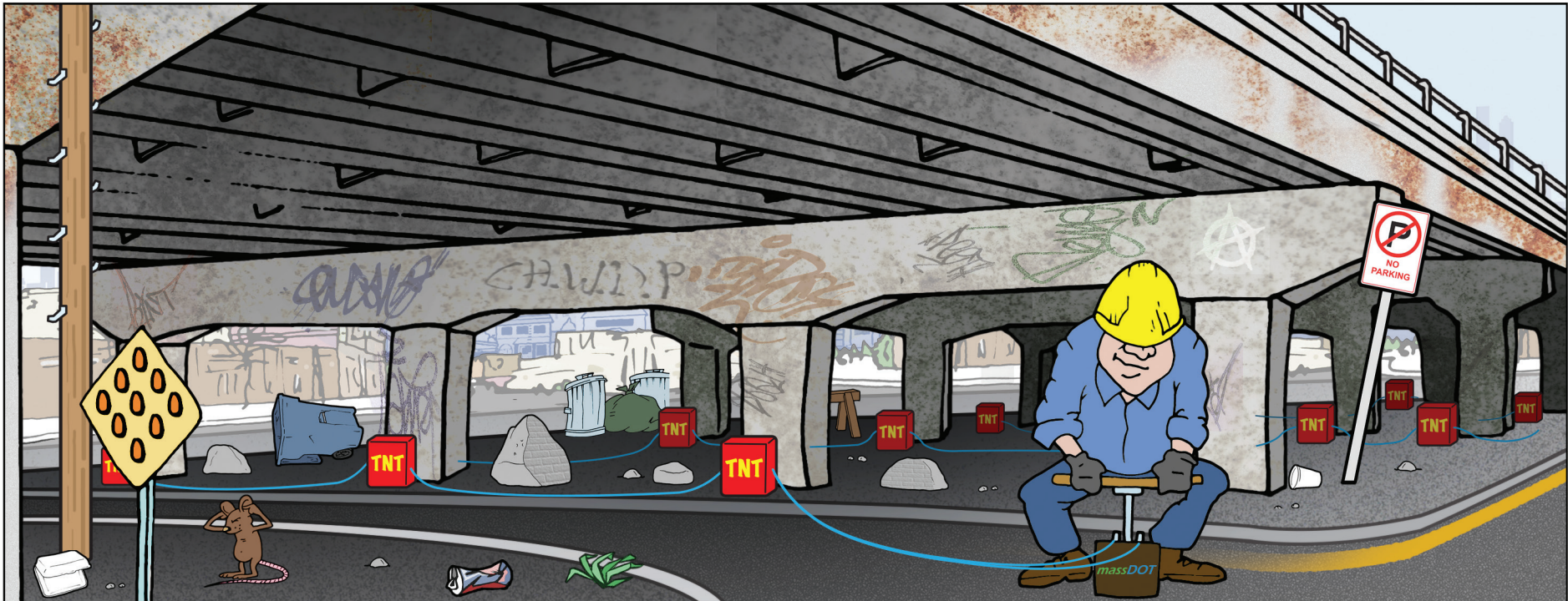
Most Republicans are against any such tax and coined the name “death tax” to imply that the government taxes you even after you die. Most Democrats support the tax and call it an “estate tax” to imply that this tax is mostly paid by the wealthy.

Amendment supporters said that Massachusetts is one of only 12 states that have an estate/death tax and that the Bay State’s is the most aggressive of the 12. They said that in light of the high value of houses, with the average home price more than \$500,000, the \$1 million threshold of this “unfair and regressive” tax is too low and noted the federal tax exempts the first \$12 million. *Continued on page 13*

COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Coming down at last.

Our View Of The Times



After so many years of discussion, argument, and finally tentative agreement, plans for the demolition of the much-maligned McCarthy Overpass and the subsequent reconstruction of that particular stretch of McGrath Highway are now fully under development thanks to funding secured by MassDOT.

The plans call for extensive renovation of the roadway, inclusion of bike lanes and

lots of greenery to help beautify the area.

Long considered a terrible eyesore and a serious hazard to the community, the overpass will be completely removed to make way for the new roadway and its immediate environs.

Those eager to see these changes should not hold their breath while the program unfolds. It has been announced that actual demolition of the overpass and the

beginning of construction is not expected to commence for another four years while project planners shore up the details and come to a final plan of action.

Even though the consensus of opinion would seem to support the current proposal, questions remain regarding timelines, costs, and the optimal configuration of the new roadway. It is certain that much discussion, including input from those af-

fected in and around the community, will be forthcoming.

How will the reconstruction process affect the surrounding community? Will there be intolerable noise pollution? How will vehicular traffic be affected? These and other questions will need to be answered as the process moves along.

Still, on the whole it looks like good things are coming to McGrath.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Happy birthday this week to the following: Happy birthday to **City Councilor Kristen Strezo**. We wish her a very happy birthday and hope she enjoys her day. Happy birthday to **Sean Fitzgerald**, who is celebrating this week. We wish Sean a great day. Happy birthday to **Christine Resmini**. We hope she has a great day as well. Happy birthday to great guy, **Eamon Fee**, who celebrates this week. We hope he has a great year. Happy birthday to **Elio LoRusso**, we hope he has a great birthday and enjoys one of wife's beautiful cakes. Happy Birthday to **Rod Kreimeyer**. We hope Rod has a great day. We wish all of our Facebook friends,

such as **Sheila Borges-Foley, Sammy Alves, Jason Rabin, Elio LoRusso, Celia Taylor, David Tiger Williams, Lauren Daddio, Las Carolinas, Wayne A Fournier, Ann Bourque, David Mangan and Lu Alves** a very happy birthday. To all those that are also celebrating this week, we wish a happy birthday.

Join the **Somerville Public Library** and co-founder of **Yego Coffee, Francois Tuyishime**, for a presentation on and sampling of **Rwandan coffee. Saturday, February 24**, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. **East Branch Library, 115 Broadway**. Yego Coffee is a family-owned com-

pany based in Somerville. Coffee business has been part of Tuyishime's family for over four decades. Registration required. To register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/yegocoffee>.

Visit the **Somerville Museum, Saturday, February 24**, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for **Museo Inmigrante: Pintar Melatas Workshop** with **Laidy Saenz**. Explore the immigrant experience by packing your suitcase. A suitcase becomes a new vehicle for carrying memories of home. What to pack? What is essential to establishing a new life? It may contain clothing, photographs, and other mementos of family

and homes left behind. Join artist Laidy Saenz for a participatory workshop about the immigration experience as part of the exhibition, **Museo Inmigrante: Stories of Resilience from Somerville's Padres Latinos**. Pack and decorate a suitcase and fill it with items to take to a new place. These suitcases will become part of the exhibition and then can be kept by each participant once the exhibition ends. Visit www.somervillemuseum.org for more information.

The **Somerville Homeless Coalition's Amazon Wish Lists** are updated monthly with the most

Continued on page 19

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#911

1. What does DTI stand for what in real-estate dealings?

2. What day is known as Star Wars Day?

3. What animal did Britney Spears carry on her shoulders during a performance?

4. Which athlete won the Tour de France every year from 1999 to 2005?

5. How old are the horses that run in the Kentucky Derby?

6. What is the considered the most poisonous frog in the world?
7. What are male honeybees called?

8. What is considered to be the oldest vegetable?

9. What Olympic gymnast voluntarily dropped out of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics?

10. Which is the world's most earthquake-prone country?

11. Africa is home to how many deserts?

12. What is the shape of the human DNA called?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. You are 13.8 percent more likely to die on your birthday.
2. Mosquitoes are attracted to people who just ate bananas.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD
THE OSCARS

- ACROSS
1. Anti-seniors sentiment

6. ____ Pérignon, Champagne

9. Big Bang's original matter

13. Prefix for earliest

14. Call to Maria

15. Bob and ____

16. "Peter, Peter Pumpkin ____"

17. "Le ____ des cygnes"

18. Like yesteryear

19. Greta Gerwig's Oscar nominated movie

21. He's nominated for playing Leonard Bernstein

23. Nothing

24. White ____ shopping event

25. Federal food safety agency, acr.

28. It ran away with the spoon

30. ROTC happenings

35. Figure skating jump

37. Grad

39. Arrogant one

40. Archaic preposition

41. Passé

43. Scrubbed

44. Sugarcoating

46. Money in Mexico City

47. What DJs do

48. Trickery

50. Swerves

52. Sigma Alpha Epsilon

53. Typical number of nominations in one Oscar category

55. Emergency responder, acr.

57. "Nyad" nominee

60. What kind of moon?

63. "Finnegan's Wake" author

64. Mother load offering

66. Java cotton tree

68. Artemis' companion

69. Fat of olives

70. What actors do

71. Spinner's product

72. Wisecrack

73. Like Phoenix

- DOWN
1. Cornelius of the movies

2. Snap up

3. 'I' in Greek alphabet

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
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68						69				70				
71						72				73				

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

4. Howard of radio fame

5. Death-related

6. One of the Earnhardts

7. Spermatozoa counterparts

8. Muhammad's birthplace

9. Review service, with .com

10. Use a ladle

11. At any time

12. "No Country for Old ____" multi Oscar winner

15. Suitors

20. Trojan War story

22. "Just an ____-fashioned love song"

24. Slumber

25. Fl., as in fl. oz.

26. "A Confederacy of ____," sing.

27. Place above a ceiling

29. Dueler's strike

31. Overnight lodgings

32. Shoelace bunny ears
33. Divine saying

34. Producer and star of "Poor Things"

36. "The ____ of Interest"

38. Table hill

42. Wooden pin

45. Like nominated ones

49. Love-love, e.g.

51. Meat-cooking contraption

54. Roaring of an engine

56. Hindu religious teacher

57. Forum, pl.

58. Deed hearing

59. Medical diagnostic test

60. Abe Lincoln's hat material

61. #20 Down, e.g.

62. Traditional learning method

63. Da'Vine ____ Randolph

65. Orinoco or Grande

67. Ryan Gosling's character
- Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Catching up time

This weekend while attending a Providence Bruins game, former Somerville Alderman Bob McWatters caught up with Assistant Coach for the Hartford Wolfpack, Paul Mara. McWatters coached Mara when he played for the Boston Junior Bruins, 30 years ago. Mara went on to have a terrific career in the NHL, playing 12 seasons with 6 different teams. They both enjoyed catching up and McWatters is thrilled to see a young man he coached have such a distinguished career.



The Somerville Times Historical Fact of the Week



Eagle feathers #298

Poor Richard

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

E Pluribus Unum, the Latin phrase meaning “Out of many, one” is on the Great Seal of the United States and was proposed to and accepted by the Continental Congress in August, 1776. The motto meant that one indivisible nation, the United States of America, was being formed from thirteen separate colonies. One of the three men assigned with creating the seal of this emerging country was Benjamin Franklin.



Who was he?

- ✦ He was born in Boston about three miles from Somerville on January 17, 1706 and was the youngest of fifteen children. He left school after the second grade and became a printer’s apprentice to his older brother James.
- ✦ He traveled to many places and settled in Philadelphia where he never stopped learning.

What did he do?

- ✦ Historically, he signed the Declaration of Independence and was one of the five-members of the committee which drafted it. He was a scientist, author, statesman and prolific inventor.
- ✦ In 1732, Ben Franklin under the pseudonym Richard Saunders published the first issue of Poor Richard’s Almanac.
- ✦ For over 25 years, close to every farmer had a copy



Continued on page 20

LEGAL NOTICES

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Fire Alarm Systems and related Equipment Inspection, Testing, Maintenance and Replacement

The **Somerville Housing Authority** invites sealed bids for the Fire Alarm Systems and related Equipment Inspection, Testing, Maintenance and Replacement for various State and Federally Funded housing developments in Somerville, Massachusetts. **SHA Job No. P-FA- 32024**, in accordance with the specifications prepared by the SHA Purchasing Department.

The work consists of a (3) Three year "full service" for Inspections, preventative maintenance, repairing or replacing Fire Alarm Systems and Equipment. Contractor must be able to provide twenty-four (24) hour service 7 days a week.

The work is estimated to cost **\$285,000.00**.

Bids are subject to provisions of M.G.L. c.30B, and to the minimum wage rates required by M.G.L. c. 149§26-27H inclusive.

General bidders must be certified by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) in the category of Alarm Systems Installation

General Bids will be received until **11:00 A.M., March 6, 2024**, and publicly opened forthwith, at the Offices of the Somerville Housing Authority, Modernization Bldg., 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, MA 01245.

The RFB Documents will be available for download on Somerville Housing Authority's web site www.sha-web.org under Bids/RFP's - Bid opportunities tab after **11:00 a.m. February 21, 2024**. There will be no charge for these documents. If you are making a bid, you must register with Anthony Crespo by email at tonyc@sha-web.org and leave contact information. Identify the email in the subject line as Fire Alarm Systems and related Equipment Inspection, Testing, Maintenance and Replacement Bid # P-FA- 32024. You will receive a reply that your email has been received. Bidders\Contractors are responsible for insuring that their email and bids are received. Addendums will be posted on the website and will become part of the contract documents; the bidder shall be responsible to download and include with bid.

Proposals can be mailed, or dropped off to Somerville Housing Authority, Administrative Offices Attn. Anthony Crespo, Fire Alarm Systems and related Equipment Inspection, Testing, Maintenance and Replacement Bid # P-FA- 32024 Bid. 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, MA 01245 and must be received by **11:00 a.m. March 6, 2024**. Faxed or emailed bids will not be accepted.

General Bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit or bid bond that is not less than 5% of the greatest possible bid amount (considering any alternates) and made payable to the Somerville Housing Authority in the form of a bid bond; cash; or a check certified by, or a treasurer's or cashier's check issued by, a responsible bank or trust company, payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Any bid bond shall be (a) in a form satisfactory to the Awarding Authority, (b) with a surety company qualified to do business in the Commonwealth and (c) conditioned upon the faithful performance by the principal of the agreements contained in the Bid.

A site visit is scheduled for **February 27, 2024, 10:00 a.m.** You are not required to attend. Attendees are required to provide notification that they will attend. Please notify Anthony Crespo by email at tonyc@sha-web.org if you are attending. All interested parties will meet in front of Somerville Housing Authority, Modernization Building, 30R Memorial Road, Somerville, MA 02145.

2/21/24 The Somerville Times

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LEGAL NOTICE - Vehicle Sale 03/02/2024

Pro Tech Towing notice to owner. The following abandoned motor vehicle will be privately sold unless claimed:

Car information	VIN#	Last registered owner	Address
2018 Jeep Wrangler	1C4HJXFG1JW106906	Xuanrui Xu	31 Patricia Way # 3, Littleton, MA 01460

Date of Sale **03/02/2024**. A 5-day notice to the Waltham Police Department Chief will be provided before sale.
Location: Pro Tech Towing, 205 Willow St. Waltham, MA, Phone: 781-894-5058

2/7/24, 2/14/24, 2/21/24 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
RFP 24-47

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

Tree Inventory Update

The RFP package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024**. Sealed proposals will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **Wednesday, March 13th, 2024 at 2:30pm**.

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

Please email tcchukhatsang@somervillema.gov for more information.

Thupten Chukhatsang
Senior Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3400

2/21/24 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
RFP 24-49

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

Integration of 311's QAlert Platform with the TreeKeeper Platform

The RFP package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024**. Sealed proposals will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **Wednesday, March 13th, 2024 at 3:00pm**.

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

Please email tcchukhatsang@somervillema.gov for more information.

Thupten Chukhatsang
Senior Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3400

2/21/24 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB #24-50

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department, Invites Sealed Bids For:

Somerville Young Tree Training

A bid package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **10am, Wednesday, March 6th, 2024**. 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 email Sonia Castro scastro@somervillema.gov for more information.

Sonia Castro
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

2/21/24 The Somerville Times

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www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court

MIDDLESEX Division Docket No. MI24P0591EA

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

Estate of: Dorothy M Collins
First Name Middle Name Last Name

Also Known As: _____

Date of Death: 09/28/2023

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

[x] a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

[x] Andrea M Collins of Pepperell MA
First Name M.I. Last Name (City/Town) (State)

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

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

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SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY
30 Memorial Road
Somerville, Massachusetts 02145
Telephone (617) 625-1152

Web: www.sha-web.org

The **Somerville Housing Authority** is requesting quotes from qualified Electrical Contractors to perform electrical work including installations and repairs on an as needed basis. Proposals should include an hourly rate for electrical services.

Term: 6 – 12 months

Not to exceed \$50,000.00

Quotes are subject to M.G.L c.149 sec.44A (2)(A) and to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L c.149 §§26 to 27H inclusive.

Scope of work: The Contractor shall provide all labor and tools to provide the necessary work as directed for the completion of the electrical services at the SHA's various developments. The Contractor shall apply for and obtain permits and regulatory approvals as may be required. The SHA shall reimburse the contractor the amount paid. The cost shall be identified and included in the monthly invoice.

The Contractor shall be required on site within one week as scheduled by SHA.

Stock and Materials: The Contractor shall use SHA furnished fixtures and finishes unless otherwise authorized. Items purchased by the Contractor at the SHA's request shall be billed at no more than cost plus 15%. The Contractor will be required to present the original itemized invoice to the SHA. The cost shall be identified and included in the monthly invoice.

Payment Invoicing: Contractor's invoicing must be itemized to reflect contract pricing for each item.

Contractors who intend on bidding shall email Ryan Cummiskey at RyanC@sha-web.org after **11:00AM on Wednesday, February 14th, 2024**, to request a bid package.

Proposals must be received by **2:00PM on Thursday, February 29th**. Proposals can be emailed to RyanC@sha-web.org. Please contact Ryan Cummiskey at RyanC@sha-web.org with any questions.

2/14//24, 2/21/24 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB #24-46

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department, Invites Sealed Bids For:

HVAC Preventative Maintenance and Repairs
for Municipal Buildings and Schools

A bid package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2:00 pm, Thursday, March 7th, 2024**. 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 email Sonia Castro scastro@somervillema.gov for more information.

Sonia Castro
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

2/21/24 The Somerville Times

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and speak to the Assignment Editor

Boston Bruins, Bosch Power Tools
collaborate with Somerville High
School in new partnership

Last week, Bosch Power Tools and the Boston Bruins formally announced a new partnership that will directly benefit students in Somerville High School's Center for Career and Technical Education. Through the partnership, which solidifies Bosch's position as the Official Power Tools, Power Tool Accessories and Measuring Tools Partner of the Boston Bruins, Bosch Power Tools will donate tools and directly enhance career readiness opportunities for students in the SHS Carpentry Program. On Wednesday, February 6, representatives from Bosch Power Tools visited the Carpentry Program to formally launch the partnership at SHS.

Bosch Power Tools and the Bruins are joining forces to help empower careers in the skilled trades, and selected Somerville High School as a partner for the program. Through the partnership, Bosch Power Tools will donate tools for students in the school's Carpentry Program. With support from Bosch Power Tools, students will repurpose broken hockey sticks from the Boston Bruins, developing original builds using creativity, know-how and the right tools for the job. Once reimaged, The Boston Bruins Foundation will auction the creations online, raising funds to benefit the school and empower careers in the trades.

"Our carpentry students and fac-



Bob Sweeney, President of the Boston Bruins Foundation (center) and representatives from Bosch Power Tools meet with students and staff from the Somerville High School Center for Career and Technical Education's Carpentry Program to celebrate a new partnership.
— Photos courtesy of Boston Bruins.

ulty are excited to partner with these titans in the sports and tool trade worlds. We look forward to further enriching the classroom experience with the help of the Bosch Power Tools and Bruins teams, creating a unique opportunity to support students' growth," said James Hachey, Assistant Principal and Director of Career and Technical Education at Somerville High School.

"We're honored to partner with the Boston Bruins and Somerville High School to connect with hard workers in the community and empower the skilled workforce of tomorrow," said Teresa Sabatino, Director of Brand Marketing Power Tools North America. "Our team is eager to join forces with both organizations to make an impact in the community and cheer alongside the hard workers in Boston."

Somerville High School is a comprehensive high school, offering 14 Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs as part of its curriculum and programs serving grades 9-12. The CTE programs provide students with a rigorous and well-rounded curriculum that connects them to the community through co-ops, internships, careers, and industry-recognized credentials. All SHS CTE programs are Chap-

ter 74 certified, in collaboration with an Advisory Committee of over 150 members who represent industry partners for every program offered and who help ensure programs' alignment with in-demand industry credentials, standards, and trends. CTE programs combine traditional technical programs like automotive technology and carpentry with emerging career fields such as dental assisting technology, advanced manufacturing and engineering, architectural design and pre-engineering, and culinary arts. There are 798 students enrolled in CTE programs for 2023-24.

For more information about the Somerville Public Schools, Somerville High School and the Center for Career and Technical Education, visit: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/schools.

For more details on:

Boston Bruins' local initiatives, visit Boston Bruins in the Community: <https://www.nhl.com/b Bruins/community/>

Somerville High School, visit Center for Career and Technical Education: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/schools/somerville-high-school/departments-academics/center-career-and-technical-education>

Bosch Power Tools' products, visit Bosch Press Room: <https://press-room.boschtools.com/press-releases>



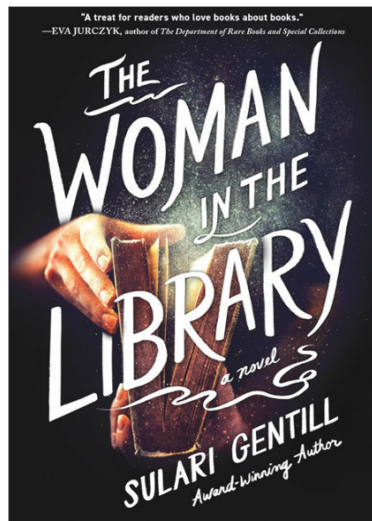
Boston Bruins team mascot, "Blades," and Somerville High School Carpentry Program students review donated tools from Bosch Power Tools, and used hockey sticks from the Boston Bruins.

Be sure to visit us online at www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

Book review: 'The Woman in the Library' by Sulari Gentill

By Dennis Fischman

Mystery novels have thrived in the cold ground of Greater Boston. For example, I think of Linda Barnes and her taxi-driving detective Carlotta Carlyle; Robert B. Parker and the *Spenser* series



"The Woman in the Library" by Sulari Gentill, Poisoned Pen Press, 2022, 265 pages.

(turned into the popular *Spenser for Hire* TV series in the 1980's); Dennis Lehane; Tess Gerritsen; and even Matthew Pearl and his surprise hit *The Dante Club*.

But if you're interested in reading a recently published mystery where the key characters were all born after 1990, then Sulari Gentill has one for you, and it's a real puzzle.

Imagine sitting in the Boston Public Library, sharing a table with three other strangers, when a scream echoes through the building. There's been a murder. But you are an author yourself, writing a murder mystery, when you hear the scream. Or ... is that author a fictional character in a third story? And do the letters from a Boston-based reader to an author writing remotely, during the Covid lockdowns, serve as an amusing distraction and a com-

mentary on writing – or are they the key to the multiple mysteries?

On Goodreads, I only gave this book three stars out of five. Honestly, though, I'd have to tell you I enjoyed this book more than my rating reflects.

Part of my enjoyment was just listening to these twenty-somethings trying to figure out who they are and who they really live, in a Boston setting (I think Marigold was my tenant at some point!). And all the characters spend time in Somerville and Cambridge, to the point that you could probably organize a walking tour to see the sites and eat at the restaurants mentioned in this book.

Another part of what kept me going was the increasingly creepy frame story. Whenever I grew tired of millennials with First World problems, the correspondence between Leo in Boston and

Hannah in Australia piqued my interest again. I had to find out what that was all about.

What diminishes my appreciation for the book is first, the feeling that the writer (Sulari Gentill, not her character Hannah Tigone) is too clever by half; second, my disbelief at the actual solution to the whodunnit; and third, my lack of understanding about what the last page is supposed to mean. You can see the storytelling must have been enchanting because, despite these faults, I didn't want the book to end!

Are you a smarter reader than me? Can you figure out what I couldn't? Please consider reading this book and then discussing it at the February meeting of the Somerville Public Library Mystery Book Club. The club meets on the last Wednesday of each month (in this case, February 28,

2024), via Zoom, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. All are welcome.

For more information, please contact Kerry O'Donnell at keodonnell@somervillema.gov or 617-623-5000 x2966. Happy reading, and hope to see you online!



Dennis Fischman is a member of the Somerville Public Library's Mystery Book Club and an inveterate reader.

Gear Up for the 2024 Garden Season

By Melinda Myers

It's never too early to prepare for the garden season ahead. Having the right tool for the job saves time, reduces the frustration of trying to make the wrong tool work, and allows you to garden longer with less muscle fatigue.

Take an inventory of all your tools. Be sure to check the shed, garage, or tool caddy. Make a list of those that need to be replaced or need an update. This is also a good time to clean and sharpen those tools you plan to use in the coming growing season.

As you update your tools, you may want to purchase a few hand tools with comfortable wooden handles and carbon steel heads. The wood adds a natural aesthetic that goes hand in hand with gardening.

Make sure you have the right shovels for those frequent digging tasks. Perhaps it is time to invest in a long-handled shovel with a narrow head that allows you to dig in small spaces. Coro-

na's DigMaster Nursery Shovel has a hardened steel blade and a handle for durability and long life. The ComfortGel grip allows you to keep working longer.

Like digging with the right-sized shovel, deadheading flowers with the right tool makes it easier and you're more likely to get the job done. For those with a lot of deadheading, select one with an ergonomic design, a finger loop for better control, and an easy-release lock like Corona's Ergo Dead Header Snips.

Late winter and early spring are also the time to do a bit of trimming and pruning on indoor plants. Pruners and snips with specially shaped blades, like the Corona BP14623 Houseplant Pruner, make trimming individual leaves and stems easier, ensuring you make the cut where planned.

A scoop comes in handy when placing potting mix or fertilizer in containers. The more you use it, the more uses you will discover for scoops like Corona's Multi-Scoop with a stainless-steel scoop

and ComfortGel grip.

If you struggle to haul soil, mulch, and plants to the garden bed, it may be time to invest in a garden cart. Wheelbarrows are a traditional favorite but how about a 4-wheeled cart with pneumatic tires to make moving the load over rough ground easier? Consider one with sides that fold down for easier loading and unloading. Or perhaps one with a dumping mechanism, like Corona's CR1000 Poly Dump Cart, that makes it easy to empty loads of mulch and soil where it is needed.

And don't forget about the young gardeners in your life. Having their own set of properly sized hand tools, long-handled tools, and of course, a wheelbarrow will make working with you in the garden even more special. Kids, like adults, benefit from spending time in the garden. Give them their own garden patch or row to dig, plant, and tend. You'll all have more fun.

When upgrading your garden



tools, consider donating those that are still in good working order to a nearby community garden, school garden, or master gardener group. They can always use extra tools to help them grow gardeners of all ages. And those that have reached the end of life can be turned into garden art. It's a great way to save memories of gardens' past.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, includ-

ing the recently released *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses* "How to Grow Anything" instant video series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by Corona Tools for her expertise in writing this article. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 6

They noted that Massachusetts is losing many residents, who move to Florida and other states where this tax does not even exist.

Amendment opponents said the proposed bill already raises the exemption from \$1 million to \$2 million and noted that will cost \$185 million. They said a hike to \$5 million is excessive and unaffordable and will cost hundreds of millions of dollars more. They noted that lowering the estate tax is not the only way to help seniors and their families and noted there are many other initiatives in the bill that help seniors.

(A “Yes” vote is for increasing the exemption to \$5 million. A “No” vote is against increasing it.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen

No

TAX REVENUE FROM MILLIONAIRE’S TAX (S 3)
Senate 5-34, rejected an amendment that would remove a section in the budget that exempts tax revenue generated from the recently voter-approved Millionaire Tax from counting toward the allowable state tax revenue limitations, under Chapter 62F, which provides that whenever revenue collections in a fiscal year exceed an annual cap tied to wage and salary growth, the excess is returned to taxpayers.

Last year, \$3 billion in refunds were returned to taxpayers when the law was triggered for just the second time since its passage in 1986. The revenue from the Millionaire Tax is deposited into the new Education and Transportation Stabilization Fund.

“It’s refreshing to see some lawmakers put the interests of the taxpayers at the forefront,” said Paul Craney, a spokesperson for the Mass Fiscal Alliance which supported the amendment to remove the section. “Senate Republicans came to today’s debate well prepared. They passionately spoke out in favor of their ideas to protect the taxpayers and preserve the very popular taxpayer protection voter approved law known as 62F. Senate Democrats want to break the will of the voters by excluding the new millionaire’s tax revenue from the total calculation for rebates back to the taxpayers from 62F. That goes against the will of the voters as the law is written and today’s debate by Senate Republicans made that point very clearly.”

Amendment opponents said the amendment will put the new revenue in jeopardy and argued this new revenue is earmarked for education and transportation and must be protected and treated differently than other tax revenue.

(Please note what a “Yes” and “No” vote mean. The amendment was on striking the section that exempts tax revenue generated from the recently voter-approved Millionaire Tax from counting toward the allowable state tax revenue limitations. Therefore, a “Yes” vote is for the amendment that favors tax revenue generated from the recently vot-

er-approved Millionaire Tax counting toward the allowable state tax revenue limitations. A “No” vote is against the amendment and supports exempting the revenue from the allowable state tax revenue limitations.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen

No

SEND 90 PERCENT OF CAPITAL GAINS TAX REVENUE ABOVE \$1 BILLION TO THE RAINY DAY FUND (S 3)
Senate 3-36, rejected an amendment that would maintain the current 90/5/5 law under which 90 percent of the capital gains tax collections exceeding \$1 billion goes to the Rainy Day Fund, 5 percent to the State Retiree Benefits Trust Fund and 5 percent to the State Pension Liability Fund. The amendment would replace a pending 60/20/20 proposal that would send, in fiscal 2024 only, 60 percent of the \$1 billion excess to the Rainy Day Fund while sending 20 percent to the State Retiree Benefits Trust Fund and 20 percent to the State Pension Liability Fund.

Amendment supporters said it is essential to provide 90 percent to the Rainy Day Fund which helps bail out the state during slow economic times when tax revenues shrink.

Amendment opponents said the Rainy Day Fund is flush with \$7 billion and argued these retiree and pension funds are currently underfunded and need some additional money for just one year.

(A “Yes” vote is for maintaining the current 90/5/5 formula. A “No” vote is for the 60/20/20 formula.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen

No

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

ONLINE CAR SALES (H 351) – The House gave initial approval to a bill that makes online sales of cars subject to the same law as if the sales were executed at the dealership’s physical place of business.

Supporters said the bill aims to modernize the law regarding online car buying by not forcing dealers to provide a three-day return policy for online auto purchases. The measure would make it so the businesses selling these cars would have the choice to make all purchases final as long as that fact is clearly disclosed to the customer, instead of making the dealer pay for the sometimes significant transportation costs associated with a customer changing their mind. They noted that people shopping for a car online have the benefit of a lot of information to make this important decision, as well as the luxury to shop for many cars at once located over a great distance.

“Due to the increasing reliance on online automotive purchases and the changing landscape of the modern economy, this legislation would modernize the motor

vehicle purchase process by bringing online automotive purchases into the 21st century,” said co-sponsor Rep. Jack Lewis (D-Framingham). “This legislation does not have any impact on current consumer protections such as inspections or lemon laws.”

“I’m proud to join auto dealers in Framingham and across the commonwealth in keeping up with how car buying takes place in 2024,” said co-sponsor Rep. Priscila Sousa (D-Framingham). “I believe if shoppers are given the proper information to make an informed decision, auto dealers should not be forced to adhere to antiquated policies that ultimately hurt our businesses. The passing of this bill would make the benefits of online car buying more evenly shared between the dealer and customer while still protecting both.”

FORTUNE TELLERS (H 3893) – The House gave initial approval to legislation that would eliminate the current state law requiring that all fortune telling applicants must have lived in the city or town in which they are seeking their license to practice for at least one continuous year prior to filing their application.

“This law was brought to my attention by one of my municipalities as they were doing research on entertainment,” said sponsor Rep. Susannah Whipps (U-Athol). “The bill [was] filed on their behalf and in the interest of removing old laws that have become antiquated.”

BAN ALL PRODUCTS MADE IN RUSSIA (H 343) – A bill before the Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee would ban the purchase and/or consumption by all Massachusetts consumers and entities of any product made in Russia.

The bill’s co-sponsors, Reps. Patrick Kearney (D-Scituate) and Michelle DuBois (D-Brockton) did not respond to repeated requests by *Beacon Hill Roll Call* asking why they filed the bill and why it would be good for the Bay State.

Mark Marget from Needham Massachusetts, a student who attends Bentley College, was the only person who has testified on the measure. He told the committee there are many moral, ethical, strategic, practical and safety reasons to pass an imports ban. “Russian products simply are not safe because of the current regime,” said Marget who describes himself as a “well-informed historian and geopolitician who has conducted academic research on the war in Ukraine.”

“Authoritarian dictatorships fundamentally have no legal accountability to their own citizens and as such a regime like Putin’s would have no reason to make his people accountable towards international laws,” continued Marget. “And unlike China, Russia is not swayed by economic consequences for political gain. In fact, part of Putin’s own regime security policy involves depoliticizing the masses through cheap and easy access

Continued on page 17

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Ms. Cam's

Olio

Answers

1. Debt to Income

2. May 4th

3. A snake

4. Lance Armstrong

5. Three years old

6. Golden poison frog

7. Drones

8. Pea

9. Simone Biles

10. Japan

11. Nine

12. Double helix

The winners of The Somerville Times Reader's Choice results for

THE BEST OF SOMERVILLE 2023

Congratulations to the winners! Please support their businesses and let them know you saw them in The Somerville Times

Readers choices for 2023

Best Idea in 2023: 
Somerville Community Path Extension

Worst Idea in 2023: 
Removing parking spaces in front of local businesses

- Best Somerville Food & Restaurants: 
- Best Breakfast: Neighborhood Restaurant, 25 Bow St.
Best Breakfast Sandwiches: Mike & Patty's, 1 Bow Market Way
Best Combination Breakfast & Lunch: Ball Sq. Cafe, 708 Broadway
Best Coffee Shop: Diesel Café, 257 Elm St.
Best Diner: Kelly's Diner, 674 Broadway
Best Italian Food: Vinny's at Night, 76 Broadway
Best Italian Specialty Store: Capone Foods, 14 Bow St.
Best Portuguese Food: J and J Restaurant, 157 Washington St.
Best Greek Food: Daddy Jones, 525 Medford St.
Best Brazilian Food: Gauchao Brazilian Cuisine, 102 Broadway
Best Chinese Food: Dumpling Garden on Broadway, 273 Broadway
Best Korean Food: Reliable Market, 45 Union Sq.
Best Thai Food: Siam Ginger, 22 Bow St.
Best Mexican Food: Rincon Mexicano, 99 Broadway
Best Mediterranean Food: Sarma, 249 Pearl St.
Best Variety and All-Around Restaurant: Mount Vernon Restaurant, 14 Broadway
Best New Restaurant: Field & Vine, 9 Sanborn Court
Best Seafood Restaurant: Out of the Blue, 215 Elm St.
Best Waiter/Waitress: Mount Vernon Waitstaff, 14 Broadway
Best Chef: Cassie Piuma, Sarma, 249 Pearl St.
Best Hamburger: R.F. O'Sullivan's & Son, 282 Beacon St.
Best Roast Beef Sandwich: HOTBOX, 1 Bow Market Way
Best Vegan Tacos: Taco Party, 711 Broadway
Best Taco: La Posada, 505 Medford St.
Best Bar Food: Highland Kitchen, 150 Highland Ave.
Best Vegetarian Pizza: Veggie Crust, 445 Somerville Ave.
Best Pizza: Mortadella Head
Best Pan Pizza: Leone's, 292 Broadway
Best Detroit Style Pizza: Avenue Kitchen and Bar, 158 Boston Ave.
Best BBQ: Redbones, 55 Chester St.
Best Soul Food: FoodDy's Kitchen, 235 Holland St.
Best Sub Shop: Vinal General Store, 220 Somerville Ave.
Best Sandwiches: Dave's Fresh Pasta, 81 Holland St.
Best Homemade Pasta: Deano's Pasta, 15 Garfield Ave.
Best Chocolate: Taza Chocolate, 561 Windsor St.
Best Donuts: Union Square Donuts, 20 Bow St.
Best Donut Holes: Mass Hole Donuts, 1157 Broadway
Best French Bakery: Michette, 164 Broadway
Best Muffins: Vinal Bakery, 222 Somerville Ave.
Best Cakes: Juscelia's Cakes (Facebook)
Best Cannoli: Mike's Pastry, 445 Revolution Dr.
Best Half Moons: Lyndell's Bakery, 720 Broadway
Best Pies: Petsi Pies, 285 Beacon St.
Best Cheesecake: 7ATE9 Bakery, 199C Highland Ave.
Best Ice Cream: Gracie's Ice Cream, 22 Union Sq.
Best Liquor Store: Ball Square Fine Wines, 716 Broadway
Best Farmers Market: Somerville's Winter Farmer's Market, 191 Highland Ave.

Best Convenience Store: Tapia's Convenience, 244 Broadway

- Best of Somerville Services: 
- Best Optometrists: Eye Associates of Somerville, 174 Broadway
Best Medical Services: Davis Square Family Practice, 255 Elm St. Ste 30
Best Wellness Clinic: KenkoDo, 735 Broadway
Best Dentist Office: Dental Arts Davis Square, 396 Highland Ave.
Best Orthodontist: Mouhab Rizkallah DDS MSD PC, The Braces Place
Best Electricians: Bent Electrical Contractors, 59A Inner Belt Rd.
Best Plumbers: T.J. Sillari, Inc., 99 Albion St.
Best Law Firm: Rumery & Smith, 403 Highland Ave.
Best Bank: Winter Hill Bank, winterhillbank.com
Best Bank President: Sandra L. McGoldrick, Winter Hill Bank
Best Realtor: Steve Bremis, 1167 Broadway
Best Real Estate Rental Agent: Bill Murphy, Colony Real Estate, 1242 Broadway
Best Florist: Rococo Florist, 1 Bow Market Way
Best Barbershop: Alibrandi's Barber Shop, 194 Holland St.
Best Barber: Danny McWeeny at Razors
Best Hair Salon: Clementine, 358a, Somerville Ave.
Best Hair Stylist: Lori Pino, Amal Niccoli, 731 Broadway
Best Contractor: Josue Velney, Velney Development, 30 Woodbine St.
Best Exercise Program: Parkour Generations
Best Pest Exterminator: Best Pest Control Services, 63 Elm St.
Best Nature Space: Somerville Community Growing Center
Best Garden Center: Ricky's Flower Market, 238 Washington St.
Best Dry Cleaners: Highland Dry Cleaning & Tailoring, 237 Highland Ave.
Best Hotel: Cambria Hotel, 515 Somerville Ave.
Best School Program: Somerville High School CTE
Best Teacher: David Aronofsky, New Wave and Full Circle
Best Politician: Willie Burnley, Jr., City Councilor-At-Large
Best Volunteer Executive Director: Evelyn Battinelli, Somerville Museum
Best Police Officer: Officer Thomas Lambert
Best Firefighter: John Gullage

- Best of Somerville Arts/Entertainment: 
- Best Bowling: Sacco's Bowl Haven, 45 Day St.
Best Movie Theatre: Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square
Best Local Bar: Trina's Starlite Lounge, 3 Beacon St.
Best Bar for Bands: Sally O'Brien's
Best Restaurant/Entertainment: Premiere on Broadway, 517 Broadway
Best Irish Pub: The Burren, 247 Elm St.
Best Brewery: Aeronaut Brewing, 14 Tyler St.
Best Cocktails: Vera's, 70 Union Sq.
Best Somerville Writer: Randall Munroe
Best Somerville Poet: Doug Holder
Best Photographer: Claudia Ferro
Best Food Columnist: Dorothy DiMarzo, Dorothy's Corner
Best Somerville Stories: Jimmy Del Ponte
Best Photos of Somerville Neighborhoods: Denise Provost
Best Somerville Celebrity: Eugene Mirman
Best Somerville Historian: Bob "Monty" Doherty
Best Somerville Non-Profit Agency: Food for Free, 59 Inner Belt Rd.
Best Somerville Charity: Somerville Homeless Coalition, 1 Davis Sq.
Best Neighborhood Charity: Mutual Aid Medford and Somerville, mutualaidmamas.com

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.

Rent Stabilization for Somerville?



By State Senator Pat Jehlen

Somerville has submitted a home rule petition, S2545, to allow the city to regulate rents in buildings of 3 or more units not occupied by the owner. This newsletter is the first of two based on my testimony in favor of the bill.

I lived in Somerville during rent control (1971-78). Our family lived in a rent-controlled apartment in Somerville. Fortunately for us, we were able to buy a home in Somerville when a landlord sold two houses because recent large rent increases were rolled back. Some information about the effects of rent control in Somerville in the next newsletter is from documents from that time.

This is an emergency

Right now, in Somerville and other communities, **families are being displaced and neighborhoods disrupted by large rent increases coupled with stagnant and inadequate pay** for many essential workers.

We often see exorbitant rent increases of \$500-\$1000 a month. These usually follow a property being sold for cash to a large multi-state corporation, and are equivalent to an informal eviction. A recent report by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), *Homes for Profit, Speculation and Investment in Greater Boston*, shows



how prevalent this is. My last newsletter [1] summarizes that report. MAPC found that potential homebuyers are frequently out-bid by investors, who can pay cash with no

conditions. These investors then raise rents dramatically, up to 100%, effectively evicting long-term tenants. Or, unless there is a lease in place, they simply evict them without cause. Data shows that since August 2022, eviction rates in Massachusetts have been higher than pre-pandemic, with non-payment evictions up 58%.

The problem is worst in East Somerville, as in similar neighborhoods with high-density, lower-priced, and high shares of renters and immigrants). **In East Somerville, over half the triple-deckers and almost 2/3 of 2-families were sold to investors.**

Triple-deckers were traditionally a path to homeownership for working-class families. Now they – and singles and 2-families – are each transformed into 3 luxury condos for well over \$1 million each, which would require an annual income of more than \$225k [2].

These homes are permanently changed into homes far beyond the means of middle-class families.

Last time I asked, there were 67 unhoused children in Somerville Public Schools; 20 in shelter and the rest doubled up, often one family per bedroom. **The main cause of homelessness was rent increases.** Many other families have left Somerville, often losing school connections and the ability to get to work.

Not all communities need rent stabilization

People in Massachusetts have less local control over decisions that affect their lives than in most states. They have to ask the legislature for permission to change their taxes, their form of government, the number of liquor licenses, and much more, including the

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Rent Stabilization for Somerville?

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ability to regulate rent increases.

Yet, communities’ needs are very different. Not every community needs or wants rent stabilization, but we should give those that need it the opportunity for local decision making.

When rent control authorization was repealed by a 1994 ballot question, 51-49, the communities that had it all voted to keep it but were outvoted by residents of other communities.

Building more housing is necessary but not sufficient

Building new units, especially affordable ones, is crucial, but it will be many years before increased housing production actually reduces rent burdens enough to make it possible for workers to live here. So far, while we are doing everything possible in Somerville to increase new housing units, both affordable and market rate, increased production has not lowered rents or stopped unaffordable increases.

Somerville, the most densely populated city in New England, has 20% inclusionary zoning, no single-family zoning, and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as of right. You can see Somerville’s **increases in density** at Assembly Row, with over 1400 new condos and apartments in several buildings of 20 or more stories. Union Square has two new buildings, 25 and 6 stories, which will have 450 units, 87 of them affordable. Another 450 apartments in 24-story buildings are going up in Boynton Yards. The Clarendon Hill development will add 375 units as well as rebuilding a public housing project.

Despite that, in the past 5 years, average rent increased [3] by 34-58%, or up to 3 times inflation [4]. And from 2021 to 2022, the median sale price went up 44% [5]. (p. 105)

Rent Stabilization in Somerville is insufficient but necessary

It will take a long time and a lot of money to build the 200,000 units we believe Massachusetts needs. Gov. Healey’s proposed Affordable Homes Act [6] will cost \$4 billion and expects to produce 40,000 homes over the next five years.

In the meantime, **as prices rise far faster than incomes, families lose homes, children lose familiar schools, workers lose jobs when they have to move, and neighborhoods lose the social capital of connections.**

Rent stabilization and other tools to slow the expansion of the speculative market are not a total cure for the housing crisis, but we need them now to stop the damage to many people and communities like ours.

Coming up next: Does rent stabilization stop new construction? Does it affect homeownership? What other ways can we keep people stably housed?

Links:

[1] <https://mailchi.mp/electpatjehlen/whos-buying-homes?e=a9aef11e61>

[2] <https://www.rate.com/resources/how-can-i-afford-a-million-dollar-house#:~:text=Income%20is%20one%20of%20the,based%20on%20several%20other%20factors>

[3] <https://www.renthop.com/average-rent-in/somerville-ma>

[4] <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>



[5] chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.tbf.org/-/media/tbf/reports-and-covers/2022/october/gbhrc2022_interactive_web.pdf

[6] <https://www.mass.gov/news/healey-driscoll-administration-unveils-4-billion-affordable-homes-act-to-increase-production-and-lower-costs>

Beacon Hill Roll Call

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to alcohol. Therefore, there is nothing deterring the Russian State from striking our own citizens with harmful consumer goods and as such, an imports ban needs to be considered for the safety of the commonwealth.”

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“Massachusetts has the opportunity to be a global leader in Applied AI – but it’s going to take us bringing together the brightest minds in tech, business, education, health care and government. That’s exactly what this task force will do. Members of the task force will collaborate on strategies that keep us ahead of the curve by leveraging AI and GenAI technology, which will bring significant benefit [to] our economy and communities across the state.” — Gov. Maura Healey upon signing an Executive Order establishing the Artificial Intelligence Strategic Task Force to study AI and Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) technology and its impact on the state, private businesses, higher education institutions and constituents.

“This latest report proves that Massachusetts is not immune from 21st century anti-abortion attacks—this data privacy crisis is right here in our backyard. If these extremists are able to use our location data to target abortion seekers with digital advertising, they can also use it to harass, threaten or litigate against patients and providers in our state. Massachusetts has a responsibility to protect our location data and ensure that this personal information cannot be sold to hostile, out-of-state actors.” — Rebecca Hart Holder, president of Reproductive Equity Now, on reports that a data broker company allegedly tracked people’s visits to nearly 600 Planned Parenthood locations across 48 states, including Massachusetts, and provided that data to inform one of the nation’s largest anti-abortion ad campaigns.

“These programs will put Massachusetts further on the path to greater food security and economic prosperity and achieving our climate goals. The more food grown here, the less reliance we will have on importing from other parts of the country and world, ultimately decreasing our carbon footprint.” — Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper announcing \$8.2 million to support greater food access to residents in underserved Massachusetts communities in order to help strengthen the local food system and address food insecurity.

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 12-16, the House met for a total of 28 minutes and the Senate met for a total of 23 minutes.	
Mon. Feb. 12	House 11:01 a.m. to 11:17 a.m. Senate 11:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
Tues.Feb. 14	No House session No Senate session
Wed.Feb. 15	No House session No Senate session
Thurs. Feb. 16	House 11:01 a.m. to 11:13 a.m. Senate 11:29 a.m. to 11:37 a.m.
Fri.Feb. 9	No House session No Senate session
Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com	

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

Upcoming events:

Medical Equipment Program – Through the generosity of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and from the direction of Mayor Bal-lantyne, the Council on Aging is now able to provide Durable Medical Equipment at no cost to Somerville residents. Residents with a documented need for medical equipment must be over the age of 60, or have a permanent disability, and must be otherwise unable to afford or access needed medical equipment. We currently have available: Commodes, Bath Chairs, Bath Benches, Rollator Walkers, Incontinence Supplies and Transport Wheelchairs (wheelchairs are intended for transport and are not self-propelling or self-breaking.) For additional information, or for an application, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Shifting Gear: A presentation on driving from the Registry of Motor Vehicles – Friday, March 8th starting at 11:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Have you considered giving up your license or are you having concerns about a loved one's ability to drive? The Registry of Motor Vehicles presents information about how different aspects of aging can affect your ability to drive and what to consider when thinking about stopping driving. To RSVP, please contact Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317.

Intergenerational Poetry – Monday, March 25th, April 1st & April 8th from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. The Somerville Council on Aging, in collaboration with Harvard University's Poetry without Borders course, is hosting intergenerational sessions to learn about and celebrate poetry. Over three sessions, we will be discussing and writing works of poetry. No experience with poetry is required and creative writing will be optional. To sign up please contact Natasha Naim by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov.

Multicultural Meals Program – Congratulations to Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES) who was the recent recipient of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding from the City of Somerville. SCES will use this funding to provide free, hot, lunches to Somerville's older adults at both the Holland Street Center and the Ralph and Jenny Senior Centers through June of 2024. Multicultural lunches will be catered by Somerville businesses and will be served at noon, following BINGO or Special Programming.

Thursday, February 22nd - Holland Street Center – Portuguese – J&J Restaurant.

Tuesday, February 27th - Ralph & Jenny Center – Chinese - Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center.

Thursday, February 29th -Holland Street Center- Italian – Alfredo's Italian Kitchen the Ralph & Jenny Center.

Coffee & Conversation – Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at our Ralph & Jenny Center. February 26th. Grab and Go lunch available. Join us as we discuss a range of topics. No books – no test – just friendly conversation and good coffee. Please contact Maureen Bastardi at mabstardi@Somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600, ext. 2335 to RSVP. Please note we are back at the Ralph & Jenny Center.

Brown Bag Supplemental Food Program – PICK UP Thursday, February 22nd, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at our Ralph & Jenny Center located at 9 New Washington Street. For an application contact Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov.

General Nutrition Classes – Virtual classes, on Monday, February 26th at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom and 12:30 p.m. in person at the Ralph & Jenny Center. Wednesdays, February 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th at 10:00 a.m. at the Holland Street Center. New and returning members are welcome! To RSVP, please call Mary Marshall at 617-625-6600, ext. 2316 or email her at headtofitness10@yahoo.com. Please note that on Mondays we are back at the Ralph & Jenny Center.

General Exercise / Holland Street Center – Monday, February 26th starting at 9:00am and 11:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Wednesdays, February 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th at 9:00 a.m. and Wednesdays, February 21st & 28th at 11:00am at our Holland Street Center. Join Michelle as she leads a general exercise program. All levels of participants are welcome to attend. RSVP to Michelle Deutsch at 617-625-6600, ext. 2315 or email Michelle at mdeutsch@somervillema.gov.

General Exercise / Ralph & Jenny Center – Mondays, February 26th starting at 3:00 p.m. at the Ralph & Jenny Center. Join Michelle as she leads a general exercise program. All levels of participants are welcome to attend. RSVP to Michelle Deutsch at 617-625-6600, ext. 2315 or email Michelle at mdeutsch@somervillema.gov.

Bowling – Wednesday, February 28th at Flatbread Company/Sacco Bowl Haven in Davis Square starting at 11:00 a.m. - Free - RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Virtual Exercise, Strength and Balance – Monday, February 26th with John at 1:00 p.m. Instructor, John Pecchia, will be leading a class geared towards gaining strength and stability through balance exercises. Email John Pecchia at jrpecchia@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Yoga – Tuesday, February 27th starting at 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. RSVP by calling Michelle Deutsch 617-625-6600, ext. 2315 or email Michelle at mdeutsch@somervillema.gov.

Virtual Yoga – Friday, February 23rd, March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th starting at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. Class will focus on modified, low-impact moves and easy to follow pacing for an active lifestyle. Please email Michelle Deutsch at mdeutsch@somervillema.gov for the Zoom link.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

If you would like to receive a virtual copy of our monthly newsletter, please contact Maureen Bastardi at 617-625-6600, ext. 2335 or email Maureen Bastardi at mbastardi@somervillema.gov. If you would like to become part of our Google Group, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

The Council on Aging's Senior Transportation Program

The COA is offering free taxi rides to Somerville residents over the age of 60. Rides are available to go to the grocery store, farmer's market, and pharmacy in Somerville and routine medical appointments in the surrounding communities. To best accommodate the needs of everyone in the city and to maximize the use of our funding, we will be capping the number of rides per week. To ensure the health and welfare of every resident of Somerville, exemptions will be made for chemotherapy and radiation appointments. To find out more information or to schedule your ride, please call Connie Lorenti at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319. All rides must be booked two business days in advance. This program is funded through ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funding.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

requested items from their food pantry to meet the needs of their clients experiencing food insecurity. If you would like to learn more and donate through our wish lists, please see the link here: <https://bit.ly/SHCLinks>.

The **Presidential Primary Election** is on **Tuesday, March 5**. Take steps to make sure you're prepared: Register to vote by **February 24**. Submit your **"Vote by Mail" application** by **February 27** at 5:00 p.m., Vote early at **City Hall** (93 Highland Ave.) **February 24 – March 1**. Learn more at somervillema.gov/elections.

Artists and members of the community are needed to help shape the vision of the **Somerville Armory** for years to come. Join the next meeting in-person, online, or asynchronously via our online forum. Think about what the Somerville Armory could look like in 100 years. If you could be around, what would you want it to look like, feel like? Share your thoughts, **February 27**, at 6:00 p.m. at **Connexion** (149 Broadway) – hybrid is available. Visit Somervoice to register: <https://voice.somervillema.gov/armory-master-plan>.

Join the **Growing Center** for the **Maple Boil Down** and experience the process of **boiling sap into maple syrup**. Taste fresh local syrup collected from sugar maple trees on the **Tufts Campus**, learn the process of sugar mapling, and connect with other folks in the community. T-shirts will be available for purchase, or you can order at bit.ly/fcgc-store. This event is free and open to all. **Saturday, March 2**, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Rain Date **Saturday, March 9**, The Growing Center, 22 Vinal Avenue, Somerville.

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., the **Somerville Bike Kitchen**, 15 Properzi Way (the **Dojo at Somernova**), a volunteer-run bicycle repair cooperative, hosts open-shop nights. Maintain your bike or learn more about cycling. Upcoming Bike Kitchen Dates: **Thursday, February 22**, and **Tuesday, February 27**.

Each month, The Dojo hosts **Gaming is Not a Crime** by **YouthStream**. Come build community through playing your favorite games. The event features cash prizes and pizza. The next event will be hosted on **Wednesday, February 28**, at 6:00 p.m. For more information visit <https://somervillebikekitchen.org/>.

The **Central Library children's room** hosts board games for kids. **Wednesday, February 28**, at 12:30 p.m. Stop by, have fun with checkers, chess, Mancala, Scrabble, and other board games on half-day Wednesdays. (This is not an instructional session.) This program is for children. No registration required.

Do you love the **Great American Songbook repertoire: Gershwin, Berlin, Ellington, Arlen, Porter?** Do you want to sing challenging music with a fun group of experienced singers? **The Halalisa Singers** welcome enthusiastic, experienced singers in all voice parts (especially basses) for their spring concert *I've Got The World on a String: Great American Songbook and Beyond* at the **First Parish** in Arlington on **Saturday, April 27**. For more information info@halalisa.org.

During the month of **February**, the **Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)** will be conducting water valve maintenance exercises in Somerville. This work may cause discolored water but is not expected to create any pressure losses. Residents and businesses that experience discolored water are asked to run their faucets until the water runs clear, which can take up to ten minutes.

Groundwork Somerville is hiring. Seeking diverse candidates who are passionate about urban agriculture and addressing food access and insecurity issues in Somerville. Are you an experienced urban agriculture advocate who is interested in growing culturally relevant crops and sharing the abundance with the community. Find the full job description on their website www.groundworksomerville.org.

Applications are now available for an **income-restricted homeownership opportunity** through the city's **Inclusionary Housing Program** at **7-11 Aldersey St.** near Union Square. The unit is a three-bedroom condominium available for purchase to households making at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Applications must be submitted by **Friday, March 1**, at noon. Learn more and apply at somervillema.gov/inclusionary.

The **Walk for Hunger, Project Bread's annual fundraising event** and the Commonwealth's largest and oldest day of community action against hunger, is seeking walkers for the celebration. The one-day event is set for **Sunday, May 5**, on the **Boston Common**, and will feature family-friendly activities along the 3-mile loop. Likeminded anti-hunger organizations can enroll in the non-profit's co-fundraising program, The Commonwealth, forming teams to raise money to support their own work, while also furthering Project Bread's statewide effort. To register for the event and create a personal or team fundraising page for the Walk for Hunger or to make a donation, visit projectbread.org/walk or email walk@projectbread.org.

The **City of Somerville** is hiring **polling place workers** for the upcoming **2024 Presidential Primary Election**. Poll workers must be available on **Election Day: Tuesday, March 5**. The workday starts at 6:30 a.m. and ends after the polls close at 8:00 p.m., with a two-hour break. Poll workers earn \$200 for the day. Interested? To learn more, please call the **Elections Office** at 617-625-6600 ext. 4200.

The **City of Somerville's Health and Human Services Office**, and **Housing Families Inc.**, opened an **overnight warming center** for the remainder of the winter 2024 season. The warming center will operate seven nights a week from 6:45 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., on the second floor of the **Armory** (191 Highland Ave). Guests

will have access to free hot and cold meals, water, bathrooms, yoga mats, and space to sleep. Learn more at somervillema.gov/warmingcenter.

Somerville Public Schools is looking for **substitute teachers**. Join an amazing team of educators, earn \$150/day, and play an important role in our schools. Learn more about job requirements and apply here: <https://somerville.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=1146>.

Call to artists: East Somerville Main Streets is gearing up for **Carnaval 2024** and they are looking for your talent to create the perfect poster that captures the essence of the festivities. Fill out the Google form to participate: <https://forms.gle/unApjMVwYagLHbRn6>

Parents of children ages 3 to 8 are invited to enroll in the virtual **Power of Parenting [TM] free workshops**. This popular program starts on **March 5** for **Spanish-speakers** and **March 6** for **English-speakers**. The program runs for 12 weeks. Register at the link: <http://tinyurl.com/SomervillePOP2024> Space is limited, so sign up now.

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

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.

Historical Fact CONT. FROM PG 9

of an almanac near his fireplace. In Franklin's lifetime, the almanac was one of the most popular forms of literature in America.

• As an inventor, he created things such as bifocals, the Franklin Stove, the odometer, the glass armonica and swimming fins. His invention of the lightning rod proved the link of lightning and electricity. One of his earliest lightning rods protected our Powder House.

• Closer to home, the first American or Grand Union Flag that flew over Prospect Hill was designed and delivered to General Washington by Franklin. The first Grand Union Flag flown at sea was on a vessel commanded by Captain John Paul Jones. Before the King of France gave this ship to Jones, he named it Bonhomme Richard in honor

of Franklin. Its translation is said to be Good Man Richard.

• During the American Revolution, he was Ambassador to France.

In 1790, the Town of Franklin, Massachusetts, the home of America's first public lending library, received its first books from a donation from Benjamin Franklin. Franklin or Poor Richard said "The doors of wisdom are never shut."

At one time, Franklin Hall in Union Square honored him with its lecture series.

During his lifetime, Franklin was one of the most talked about persons in the world and was by far the most widely known and most eminent of Americans. Today, his image graces our one-hundred-dollar bill.



Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Happy family...

— Photo by Denise Provost

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



Where do math teachers go on vacation?
Times Square

On This Day in History
February 21

- 1595 – The Jesuit poet Robert Southwell is hanged for "treason," being a Catholic.
- 1775 – As troubles with Great Britain increase, colonists in Massachusetts vote to buy military equipment for 15,000 men.
- 1828 – The first issue of the Cherokee Phoenix is printed, both in English and in the newly invented Cherokee alphabet.
- 1878 – The world's first telephone book is issued by the New Haven Connecticut Telephone Company containing the names of its 50 subscribers.
- 1940 – The Germans begin construction of a concentration camp at Auschwitz.
- 1956 – A grand jury in Montgomery, Alabama indicts 115 in a Negro bus boycott.
- 1960 – Havana places all Cuban industry under direct control of the government.
- 1972 – Richard Nixon arrives in Beijing, China, becoming the first U.S. president to visit a country not diplomatically recognized by the U.S.
- 1974 – A report claims that the use of defoliants by the U.S. has scarred Vietnam for a century.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21		Inauguration 2024		the Neighborhood Restaurant		Presentation	
6:30 AM	City of Somerville Inauguration 2024	2:30 AM	Somerville Museum: How the GI Bill Changed America	5:00 PM	Fit 4 Life Home Workout w/ Phelan #2	10:30 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol
8:30 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol			5:30 PM	City Council Meeting 2-8-24	11:00 AM	Phil Reavis: Highlander to Olympian & Beyond
9:00 AM	Talking Business: Night Life	7:00 AM	Yoga with Jenn Falk - Practice II	8:00 PM	Talking Business: Night Life		
9:30 AM	Three Kings Day Celebration	8:00 AM	Davis Sq. Commercial Area Plan Meeting	8:30 PM	Haiti: Resilience Rising	12:10 PM	City Council Meeting 2-22-24
10:00 AM	Museum of Bad Art Tour			10:30 PM	SomerViva an Kreyol	4:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton
11:00 AM	Davis Sq. Commercial Area Plan Meeting	10:05 AM	Talking Business: Night Life	11:00 PM	Museum of Bad Art Tour		
		10:30 AM	SomerViva - Kreyol	SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25			
1:05 PM	Museo Inmigrante: What Being an Immigrant Means to Me	11:00 AM	Haiti: Resilience Rising	12:00 AM	City Council Meeting 2-22-24	5:00 PM	SPS Capacity Study Community Presentation
3:00 PM	City Council Meeting 2-8-24	1:00 PM	School Committee Meeting 2-5-24	7:00 AM	Museo Inmigrante: What Being an Immigrant Means to Me	7:00 PM	School Committee Meeting - LIVE
5:10 PM	Somerville Museum: Access for All	3:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton			11:00 PM	Museum of Bad Art Tour
5:30 PM	SomerViva en Espanol: Casa de la Cultura	4:00 PM	Museo Inmigrante: What Being an Immigrant Means to Me	8:30 AM	SomerViva en Espanol: Casa de la Cultura	TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27	
6:00 PM	School Committee Meeting 2-5-24			9:00 AM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	12:00 AM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-20-24
8:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	5:30 PM	SomerViva en Espanol: Casa de la Cultura	9:30 AM	School Committee Meeting 2-5-24	2:30 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol
9:00 PM	Davis Sq. Commercial Area Plan Meeting	6:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-20-24	12:00 PM	Senior Circuit - Climate Change	6:30 AM	Chair Yoga w/ Janine Duffy
11:05 PM	Ayanna Pressley Press Conference of Clarendon Hill Housing	7:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	12:30 PM	Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner 2023	7:30 AM	Fit 4 Life Home Workout w/Phelan #2
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22		8:00 PM	SomerViva an Kreyol	1:40 PM	Somerville Museum: Access for All	8:00 AM	Davis Sq. Commercial Area Plan Meeting
12:00 AM	Haiti: Resilience Rising	8:30 PM	Haiti: Resilience Rising	2:00 PM	Davis Sq. Commercial Area Plan Meeting	10:05 AM	Talking Business: Night Life
2:00 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol	10:30 PM	Museo Inmigrante: What Being an Immigrant Means to Me			10:30 AM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton
7:00 AM	Fit 4 Life Home Workout w/Phelan #2	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24		4:05 PM	Fit 4 Life Home Workout w/ Phelan #1	11:00 AM	Museo Inmigrante: What Being an Immigrant Means to Me
7:30 AM	Chair Yoga w/ Janine Duffy	12:00 AM	SPS Capacity Study Community Presentation	4:30 PM	SomerViva an Kreyol	12:30 PM	Senior Circuit - Climate Change
8:00 AM	Ayanna Pressley Press Conference of Clarendon Hill Housing	1:30 AM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	5:00 PM	Ayanna Pressley Press Conference of Clarendon Hill Housing	1:00 PM	Haiti: Resilience Rising
9:00 AM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	2:00 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol	6:00 PM	SomerViva an Kreyol	3:00 PM	Ayanna Pressley Press Conference of Clarendon Hill Housing
9:30 AM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-20-24	7:00 AM	Haiti: Resilience Rising	6:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	4:00 PM	Phil Reavis: Highlander to Olympian & Beyond
10:30 AM	Davis Sq. Commercial Area Plan Meeting	9:00 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol	7:00 PM	Senior Circuit - Climate Change	5:30 PM	School Committee Update: Sarah Phillips
1:00 PM	City Council Meeting 2-8-24	9:30 AM	City Council Spotlight: Willie Burnley, Jr.	7:30 PM	Talking Business: Night Life	6:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-20-24
3:10 PM	Somerville Museum: Access for All	10:00 AM	City of Somerville Inauguration 2024	8:00 PM	City Council Meeting 2-22-24	8:30 PM	School Committee Meeting 2-26-24
3:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	12:00 PM	School Committee Meeting 2-5-24			11:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton
7:00 PM	City Council Meeting - LIVE	2:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	1:10 AM	SPD Ride Along	WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28	
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23		3:00 PM	SPS Capacity Study Community Presentation	1:30 AM	School Committee Meeting 2-5-24	12:00 AM	Three Kings Day Celebration
12:30 AM	City of Somerville	4:30 PM	Entrepreneur Spotlight at	7:00 AM	Yoga with Jenn Falk - Practice IV	12:30 AM	Somerville Museum: How the GI Bill Changed America
				8:00 AM	Ayanna Pressley Press Conference of Clarendon Hill Housing		
				9:00 AM	SPS Capacity Study Community		

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21		2:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs NE Metro	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24		12:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II
8:00 AM	Argenziano School 5th-8th gr Winter Concert	3:30 PM	School Committee Meeting 2-5-24	12:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs E Boston	1:30 AM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton
9:00 AM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	6:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Chelsea	1:30 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs NE Metro	2:00 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs NE Metro
9:30 AM	WHCIS Kindergarten Winter Concert	7:30 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Revere	8:00 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Chelsea	8:00 AM	AMSHS Spring Concert & Art Exhibition
10:00 AM	Argenziano School PreK-4th Winter Concert	9:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II	9:30 AM	Scrapheap Showdown 2022	10:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Cambridge
10:30 AM	Kennedy School 4-8 Winter Concert	10:30 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs E Boston	11:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II	11:30 AM	SHS Hockey vs Lexington
11:30 AM	SHS Hockey vs Medford	FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23		12:30 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs E Boston	1:00 PM	WHCIS 4-8 Winter Concert
1:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II	12:00 AM	Brown School Winter Concert	2:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs NE Metro	2:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs NE Metro
2:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Lexington	1:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Cambridge	3:30 PM	School Committee Meeting 2-5-24	3:30 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Reading
4:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs E Boston	8:00 AM	SHS Co-Ed Unified Basketball vs Everett	6:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Reading	4:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Minnechaug
6:00 PM	Argenziano School 5th-8th gr Winter Concert	9:00 AM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	7:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II	6:00 PM	PMSHS Spring Concert & Art Exhibition
7:00 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	9:30 AM	Scrapheap Showdown 2023	9:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Cambridge	8:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Cambridge
7:30 PM	WHCIS Kindergarten Winter Concert	10:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs Lexington	10:30 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs E Boston	9:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Lexington
8:00 PM	Argenziano School PreK-4th Winter Concert	11:30 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Revere	SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25		11:00 PM	WHCIS 4-8 Winter Concert
8:30 PM	Kennedy School 4-8 Winter Concert	1:00 PM	WHCIS 4-8 Winter Concert	12:00 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs NE Metro	TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27	
10:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Reading	2:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II	1:30 AM	AMSHS Girls Basketball vs Lynn Classical	12:00 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs NE Metro
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22		3:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	8:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Revere	1:30 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Reading
12:00 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Reading	7:00 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	9:30 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Everett	2:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs Minnechaug
2:00 AM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Cambridge	7:30 PM	Scrapheap Showdown 2023	11:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs Lexington	8:00 AM	AMSHS Girls Basketball vs Medford 1-14
8:00 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Chelsea	8:00 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Reading	1:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II	9:30 AM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
9:30 AM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II	9:30 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Cambridge	2:30 PM	School Committee Update: Leiran Biton	11:00 AM	School Committee Meeting 2-5-24
11:00 AM	SHS Evening of Song	11:00 PM	WHCIS 4-8 Winter Concert	3:00 PM	PMSHS Boys Basketball vs Lynn Classical	1:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Medford
12:30 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs E Boston			5:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Cambridge	3:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs John Paul II
				7:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Revere	4:30 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs Revere
				8:30 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Everett	6:00 PM	PMSHS Girls Basketball vs Medford 1-14
				10:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Lexington	7:30 PM	SHS Boys Basketball vs Medford
				MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26		9:00 PM	SHS Girls Basketball vs E Boston
						10:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Medford



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Somerville's Melissa Nilles:
Grooving in the Ruby Grove Band

Recently I caught up with musician, therapist, and poet Melissa Nilles. Her latest project is the Ruby Grove Band. Like many artists in our community she juggles a lot of things to make the daily nut, but her music is her passion, and she makes sure it stays a big part of her life.

Doug Holder: First off, how has it been for you as an artist to live in Somerville?

Melissa Nilles: I'm generally grateful to call Somerville home. It's the right fit for me and my (fellow artist) partner to live here as we feel generally supported by the city and its increased focus on creativity, well-being, social justice, and sustainability.

With defining events like Porchfest and other local festivals like Somerstreets that we've been grateful to be selected to play at by the Somerville Arts Council, I appreciate the music and arts opportunities and culture that exists here, and the ability to be seen and heard as a growing indie musician. As a bisexual woman I also love the distinctive queerness of the city and the relative perceived safety and security of living openly here as opposed to less supportive areas of the world.

My only real gripes are wishing for increased affordable housing, a city-funded monthly music rehearsal space, and the improved condition of Highland Ave. I'm also worried my partner and I will have to leave Somerville in the next few years due to rising housing costs (we found a rare deal from an elderly private landlord that many people don't have in the area, and when we want to expand our space to have children, we'll likely have to leave).

DH: You wear many hats. You are a therapist, poet, and a musician. Is there a cross current with all these disciplines? As a therapist, do you employ music as a therapeutic tool?

MN: Definitely. Everything informs everything else. All three disciplines require curiosity, artistic expression, and a willingness to dive deep into the core workings and insights of life. I first hatched these tendencies as a writer, poet, and pianist in middle school (and I guess I've been singing since I was very, very little).

I've always been an introspective and sensitive person which naturally led me to writing, getting really, really into playing piano (especially dramatic minor classical pieces as an angsty teen), and deeply reflecting on my own life and intensely supporting friends and others I care about (an experience that I find most therapists have).

This year I've done some deep reflection on my motivations to continue with music full steam ahead. During these moments, which included driving into the Joshua Tree desert expanse for several days to



walk alone and listen to the sound of nothing and scribble in my journal, I've realized that even as a musician I'm a writer at my core. I most deeply value writing lyrics and poems alone- that initial process of developing a seed for a song.

The luxury of taking a deep dive when I'm in an introspective place into a little solo writing hole while I'm traveling is my gold. At the minimum I get really focused at local cafes after work or on the weekends or over workweek morning breakfasts. It's like a little journey into my mind, my view of the current, past and future worlds, where I think I am, where I'm headed, who's around me, what I dream about, what might inspire me or move me forward in that moment in time. Then I re-emerge into the world and share my little jewels with the band and see if they work and vibe with everyone else.

This balance works great for me. It's always a little vulnerable but very fun developing the songs with a band, and that is my strong preference as opposed to solo musician work after working with bands for many years. As I got older, I also became a lot more social and extroverted, and I see the music world as more social, more fun, and more energetically uplifting, so it's where I like to live.

I really get a lot out of performing and sharing my energy with a crowd, and I also like being known in the scene and going to shows. I don't think I'd get quite as much fulfillment out of just being a writer, as it has a reputation for being more of a solitary career, and I guess I need/want both aspects of energy (I am a true ambivert I guess). Though someday I do hope to publish at least a book of poetry, if not more.

As for music and therapy, I think traditional therapy and music are just two different *Continued on page 23*

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Katie Mihalek is a writer living in Somerville, MA. She has earned a M.S. in Medical Sciences from Boston University and is an MFA Candidate at Emerson College in Creative Writing. She has received support from the Kenyon Review Writers Workshop and the Southampton Writers Conference, and is the current Editor-in-Chief for *Redivider*. Her work can be found in *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Spectrum*, *Mistake House Magazine*, *Beyond Words*, and others. Her chapbook, *Aurora Uteralis*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press in 2024.



Rules of Design

My fingers push into my belly.
My little pouch springs back,
flexible, and there, two jagged lines
like surgical cuts in my pliable flesh.
I am contorted on the floor, cold tile
pressed into cellulite, neck strained
in butterfly fold, my back screaming
with tension: What is this?
I never asked to be a map of red
lines, red skin, flushed face. Who
gave permission for cracks to twist
skin into curves, point and say, look
at this growth, this rise and
fall, these waves that ripple, squish,
balloon. But they break their rules:
these marks are straight up over my stomach,
harsh, burning, red, one, two, off center.
I look for a third, for a line of symmetry,
and am almost disappointed that I
don't burst at the seams.

— Katie Mihalek

To have your work considered for the Lyrical send it to:
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Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 22

types of healing. I'm an expressive arts therapist and mental health counselor, which means I have special training in traditional talk therapies and in utilizing music, poetry, art, dance, and drama in my therapeutic work. I regularly see how the arts can allow clients to express their emotions or release and contain overwhelming griefs or trauma, sometimes better than traditional talk therapy (and a little less energetically draining for the therapist).

My experience as a therapist also informs the music I do which is about healing myself, and helping others find uplifting melodies and their own personal growth journeys mirrored in my words. I do love this job sometimes but I think the expectation for how many people I should be seeing per week at mental health agencies is beyond my capacity as a highly sensitive person and am working on building a small therapy private practice that is focused exclusively on the types of therapy work I like to do with people with ADHD, anxiety, trauma, mood disorders, or with LGBTQ+ identified clients. I am cutting back slowly on my caseload for more balance while I ramp up other avenues of my creative careers (sometimes paid original music, paid music gigs, and paid film/tv/video game music work).

DH: Tell us about your indie bands, Miele and Ruby Grove. What is unique about your sound?

MN: You first mentioned Miele I'm sure because it's the one with more longevity and material out there- it was an indie alternative and art rock project in the Somerville and Cambridge area (2014-2020) that I was proud to make music with for six years with some very talented local musicians. Some of our best moments included playing to great crowds at venues like the Middle East, Great Scott, and Atwood's Tavern, releasing our full-length album *Transience* (check it out on Spotify), and bonding with other local musicians to try and save the EMF music rehearsal studio in Cambridge (we failed but made friends along the way).

But otherwise, for the record, Ruby Grove is my newest, current, active indie trip-hop meets indie rock/pop project, and all of my eggs lie in that basket now as the lead singer, keyboardist, band leader, social media updater, booker, de-facto indie band manager, etc. We've been growing recently and we're now a 5-piece band with keys/vocals, backup vocals/bass, lead guitar, rhythm guitar/saxophone, and drums. Since 2022, we have been inspired to write uplifting music that aims to help people cope with their deepest fears, explore their potential, and engage more fully with the world. Miele's bass player, Cedric Lamour, and I co-founded Ruby Grove knowing we also wanted to dive into exploring intersections between genres (something we also loved doing with Miele, though Ruby Grove's exploration is more well-blended).

Ruby Grove traverses the sonic landscape between jazz fusion, lofi hip-hop, trip-hop, soul, electro, indie rock, art rock, psych, and indie pop and hopefully lands the listener

in a slightly dazed, euphoric, and inspired place. I aim to keep creating and releasing our material in Somerville for the foreseeable future. We're currently in the process of recording our first EP at a Somerville-based recording studio we love called New Alliance Audio. We already have some singles online since it's that kind of time for musicians (now the joke is that a single is like an EP, and an EP is like an album, due to decreased attention spans and the expectation to be releasing less material more often).

Anyone who wants a good starting point can check out our latest single *Maybe It's Time* on Spotify or any of the other big music platforms or check out rubygrovemusic.com. And if you're curious to come see us, our next gigs are on 1/14 at the Square Root in Roslindale, as part of a musical event honoring MLK and his legacy, or 2/23 at The Jungle in Somerville with Battlemode and New Jersey phenoms The Foes of Fern.

DH: What drew you to be a keyboardist, instead of the flashier guitar, etc.

MN: I've been a keyboardist since the third grade so it was hard to imagine playing any other instrument for accompaniment with voice. I considered learning guitar to a more proficient level, but the reality is that I don't feel as fluid or expressive on other instruments (besides voice). I also started my first project in Boston playing with a guitarist (and then later two guitarists) so I was always able to find guitarists to work with I guess, and definitely more guitars were not needed!

I'm also happy I stuck with keyboards because synthesizer, organ, and piano sounds are a must for the jazz fusion, lofi hip-hop, electronic, soul, and trip-hop styles we're exploring. I'm currently knee deep in learning more about my synthesizer for these genres and I'm finally graduating from just using patches on the Nord to fall down the rabbit hole of custom synth programming and some wacky, weird sonic places. Maybe I'll be able to get closer to what FKJ does this year. I'm also excited to do some flashier stuff in 2024 on keytar as a frontwoman kind of like Lucius (keytars are back, it's officially the second coming of the 70s).

DH: I noticed on a Google search that you contribute to the Facebook page, "Musicians are people too." It concerns the hard-knock life of many musicians. Do you ever question yourself about the time you spend with music, as opposed to doing something more lucrative?

MN: Absolutely. Being a musician in 2024 can seem like a very financially strange decision for anyone, unless you're Billie Eilish. We love to joke and meme about it to decrease the tension. And yet I can't imagine myself doing anything else. It's what I'm meant to do, and what I'm supposed to do. Even if I take breaks, like I had to during one of the pandemic years, I know this impulse is just laying dormant waiting to re-emerge. If I didn't listen to that urge or engage at all with creativity it would eventually come out in destructive ways, I'm sure.

I know many people feel the same way and probably get

taken advantage of for just wanting to follow their dreams. I'm sure I've lost out on a fair amount of income just by not following a more traditional route working full-time as a therapist (I've often opted for more flexible therapy work so I can do the original music work I want to do too). I've also certainly done plenty of time playing low-paying gigs, doing less-than-fulfilling cover gigs, or doing things for exposure (common jokes/memes on the "Musicians are People Too" FB page).

If you get too jaded about it, it can start to feel like a lose-lose situation for many people and I'm sure that's why people think of achieving success as a musician as such as a black and white situation (either a rock star, or dead, broke, or homeless). But it's not all like this, and I've also had wonderful, beautiful experiences- going on a proper tour for the first time this last year with Ruby Grove, getting nominated for Rising Star of Massachusetts by the New England Music Awards, releasing an epic, dark album I was really proud of with Miele, making proper money gigging at local festivals with Ruby Grove or as a pianist at weddings, having people send me screenshots of how Ruby Grove's latest single *Maybe It's Time* was their top listened Spotify track of 2023, drawing bigger and better crowds at our shows in Boston, experiencing the sublime quality of remaking myself through the work, etc.

I'm trying to open myself up through the internet as well as through people in my own life to examples of people who have made a moderate amount of livable income through music because that feels like the actual real next step for me. I love listening to the podcast "Creative Pep Talk" for this reason because it has so many great examples of regular people just doing the work and finding ways to balance and sustain their creative careers. At this moment, I'm trying to take as many steps as possible to get out of my own way and also get out of the way of capitalism safely so I can survive, thrive, and also do what I'm supposed to do without as much interference as can happen.

Being a therapist is disgracefully underpaid as well (\$45k average for people with MA degrees) and I've made much less than that as well at the earlier stages of my career. Hopping into an even more notoriously unstable career after years of already low income is a hard move. But it's the only choice for me in my opinion as I've done deep work on my path over the last year. Fear is a strong motivator to maintain the status quo but I am trying to let my fear inform me rather than guide my choices.

Starting my private practice helps me get some solid income in the door at a higher base rate and opens up time for me to shift my focus on what I really want to focus on, which is music and writing. I have so many pathways and doors to explore in this area that I have been longing for so long and I am excited to move onto this next chapter of my life, even if I fail, or even if hilariously worse, my engineer dad judges me for being a broke but happy and fulfilled musician.

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