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## Mayor Ballantyne testifies in support of Housing Affordable Homes Act



Mayor Ballantyne offered her views on The Affordable Homes Act during a public hearing of the state's Joint Committee on Housing.

Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne weighed in on Thursday, January 18, as the Joint Committee on Housing took testimony on H.4138, The Affordable Homes Act in the State House's Gardner Auditorium.

Ballantyne's testimony is as follows:

Dear Chairs Arciero and Edwards, and members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony representing both the City of Somerville as Mayor and as Co-Chair of the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition Regional Housing Taskforce, a coalition of 16 cities and towns in Greater Boston. First and foremost, I want to express my deep gratitude for the wide range of critical funding and policy initiatives which the Healey Administration included in the Affordable Homes Act (AHA). These initiatives,

*Continued on page 4*

## Five things to do this Valentine's Day in Somerville

By Joei Chan

Trying to figure out what to do this Valentine's Day with your significant other, friends, or even yourself? Here are a few things to keep on your radar when thinking of ideas for next week:

### Small Mart Valentine's Market at Crystal Ballroom

On February 10, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the Crystal Ballroom in Davis Square will hold the Small Mart Valentine's Market, where artisans, vintage, makers, and experiential vendors will showcase their craft. Brought to you by the High Energy Vintage & Existential Thread Co. and sponsored by The Goods Cannabis Co., the event is free and open to the public. There will also be a bar serving up specialty cocktails and mocktails, too.

*Continued on page 5*



There are plenty of romantic activities to take part in throughout the city this coming Valentine's Day.

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Red Line service will be suspended between Alewife and Harvard stations all day from start to end of service for 10 days from February 5-14. Beginning at approximately 8:45 p.m. through the end of service every day during the same period from February 5-14, this Red Line service suspension will be extended to Park Street (meaning evening service will be suspended between Alewife and Park Street). For more information, please visit mbta.com.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Somerville community joined a community meeting on Monday, January 29, to learn more about the updated commercial area plan for Davis Square. The presentation reviewed changes to the previous draft of the plan released in 2020 and offered the opportunity for feedback from attendees. To learn more and watch the meeting go to <https://www.youtube.com/user/SomervilleCityTV>.

\*\*\*\*\*








The Central Library children's room hosts board games for kids. Wednesdays, February 7 and 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.

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy birthday this week to the following: Happy birthday to Cheryle Snow. We wish Cheryle the very best on her birthday. Happy birthday to Bernard Gibbons. We wish him the very best on his birthday. We wish all of our Facebook *Continued on page 7*

## Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of January 31 – February 6 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 <b>Wednesday</b> February 7	Sunny	39°/25°	6%	3%	NE 10 mph
 <b>Thursday</b> February 8	Sunny	44°/31°	7%	5%	NE 7 mph
 <b>Friday</b> February 9	Partly Cloudy	48°/38°	7%	5%	S 9 mph
 <b>Saturday</b> February 10	Partly Cloudy	55°/40°	20%	14%	SW 10 mph
 <b>Sunday</b> February 11	Partly Cloudy	50°/34°	22%	16%	NW 10 mph
 <b>Monday</b> February 12	Rain	44°/31°	43%	37%	NW 9 mph
 <b>Tuesday</b> February 13	Rain	35°/29°	58%	43%	NNW 12 mph

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

## TheSomervilleTimes.com Comments of the Week

### Response to: *Lyrical Somerville – January 31*

Bridget Seley Galway says:

Lynne Zika's poetry often starts from the simple ways of nature to the depth of her being, where the beauty of all her observations remain crowned.

### Response to: *Simply the best*

Nicky Stiles says:

Al Collins was the route 20 (Davis sq) officer.

### Response to: *Have a great idea on how to teach math? These teachers do!*

Alex Pirie says:

Great work, Somerville Math Fund! Thanks for your strong support for math education and the young people of Somerville. Thanks also to the generous donors! The Somerville Mathematics Fund puts the "ville" in "it takes a village!"

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

## The Somerville Times

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Publisher – Somerset Valley Publishing Inc.

Editor – Jim Clark

Assignment Editor – Bobbie Toner

Advertising Director – Bobbie Toner

Arts Editor – Doug Holder

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Photographer: Claudia Ferro

The Somerville Times is published every Wednesday

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## Americans with Disabilities Act discussion

Join Somerville author Laura Beretsky in conversation with Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities members Harriotte Ranvig and Holly Simone. Book excerpt and discussion will focus on employment protections offered by the Americans with Disabilities Act for people with invisible and perceptible disabilities. Persons with disabilities can request accommodations to access the programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville by contacting Adrienne Pomeroy at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or [ADA@somervillema.gov](mailto:ADA@somervillema.gov) in advance of the event. Monday, February 12, 7:00 p.m., at the West Branch Library. Register online: [bit.ly/SCPD\\_Feb12](https://bit.ly/SCPD_Feb12).



Life in the

VILLE

by Jimmy Del Ponte

# I love that song!



This article first appeared in the October 8, 2014 edition of *The Somerville Times*.

Lots of songs remind us of growing up in Somerville. My dad graduated from Somerville High in 1938, and my mom in 1944. Somerville’s swinging teens back in ‘38 were boppin’ to songs like *Jeepers Creepers* (where’d you get those peepers). The top song in 1944 was Bing Crosby’s *Would You Like To Swing on a Star?* (carry moon beams home in a jar). It’s cool to imagine my young mom and dad strolling through Davis Square singing those two songs as they “saw the movie for a nickel and had a coke for 2 cents!” (after walking uphill, barefoot, in a snow-storm to school!!)

Fred and Gerry Del Ponte were married in 1951 at St Anthony’s Church on Somerville Ave. The band’s playlist at the wedding reception may have looked like this: *On top of Old Smokey*, *The Tennessee Waltz*, *Aba Daba Honey-moon*, *Mockin’ Bird Hill*, *Come-On-A-My-House*, *Because of You*, *Jezebel*, and *Be My Love* (Mario Lanza of course!). My mother used to sing *Mockin’ Bird Hill* to me as a kid, and I’m sure she had fond memories of her wedding. I sang *Smoke On The Water* to my kids!

When I graduated Somerville High School in 1971, some of the top songs were *Maggie Mae*, *Won’t Get Fooled Again*, *I Feel the Earth Move*, *Here Comes That Rainy Day Feeling Again*, *Theme From Shaft* (they say this cat Shaft is a bad ... well I’m talkin’ about Shaft!)

When I finally graduated, I played the Rare Earth hit *I Just Want to Celebrate* until the needle on my phonograph wore out the 45! Some other songs from 1971 were *Proud Mary*, *Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves*, (aka, my friends at the time!) and *You’ve Got A Friend*. For the rest of my life, any time I hear any of these songs, I am automatically magically transported back in time. That’s what music does to us all. When we hear an old song, we are young

again. We hear a certain tune and we are hanging on the street corner with our friends, with long hair, wearing bell-bottoms, and Members Only jackets. (Fill in the fad for your particular era.)

In my latest survey I asked: What song, past or present reminds you of Somerville when you were growing up? Ready? Strike up the band! (this is by no means a complete list ... there were so many!) *Dirty Water*, *Dream On*, *Don’t Sit Under The Apple Tree*, *Goodnight Irene*, *Dream On*, *Itchycoo Park*, *Cherry Hill Park* (sung to Powder House Park) *Smokin’ the Boys Room*, *Sugar Sugar*, *Hotel California*, *Heart Of My Heart*, and *Paradise By The Dashboard Lights*.

*Electric Avenue*’s lyrics were changed by a wise guy pal of mine to “We’re gonna rock down to, Mystic Avenue, and then we’ll steal your tires.” Of course, they never really did that because we were all little angels back in the day.

Lincoln Park kids used to gather together and sing Beatles songs at night. Some more faves of Somerville kids growing up were, *Magic Bus*, *Purple Haze*, and of course the classic *Stairway To Heaven*, or *Stairway to Prospect (Hill)*, *Pinball Wizard*, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*, *The Night Has A Thousand Eyes*, *Baba O’Reilly* (aka Teenage Wasteland), *American Pie*, and *Save The Last Dance For Me* were also mentioned.

Let’s not forget the classic Somerville High School fight song, *Somerville Leads The Way*, and the less classic KISS 108 tune from the ‘90’s, *Somerville* (Let’s go down to Davis Square, see the girls with great big hair) by yours truly.

So there you have it. Just the tip of the musical iceberg featuring some blasts from the past, oldies but goodies, and music of our lives here in the city of the Seven Hills. In closing, I will tell you about one of my favorite songs growing up in Somerville, and that is *(I Love You) More Today Than Yesterday* by the Spiral Staircase. I played it in every band I was in, all over The Ville. It really never meant that much to me but *Then Came You*, *Michele*, *Because*, *I Honestly Love You*.



**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*
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**INFORMATIONAL VIDEO:** Visit [somervillema.gov/inclusionaryhousing](https://www.somervillema.gov/inclusionaryhousing)  
**APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE:** Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 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](mailto:inclusionary@somervillema.gov) to request a hard copy

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

**OPEN HOUSES:**  
Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>  
6pm-8pm Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup> 11am-1pm

**LOTTERY:** Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 11am | View the lottery here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82251560949?pwd=WTBJKzZWNHd3Y2FHSnlaY1BzSlc3UT09>

**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](mailto:apomeroy@somervillema.gov).



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# Zion Rodman, Rob Laurens, Sam Bayer at Somerville Armory Cafe

Somerville Songwriter Sessions at the Armory Cafe presents an evening of music on Saturday, March 2, with songwriter/songwriters Zion Rodman, Rob Laurens and Sam Bayer. The concert features a set by each artist, followed by a round robin song swap.

The show begins at 7:00 p.m. with a short open mic and the

features begin at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$15 at the door. The Armory Cafe is at 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville, just a few blocks from the new Magoun Square Green Line T station. For more information call 617-718-2191 or visit [artsatthearmory.org](http://artsatthearmory.org) or [www.facebook.com/SomervilleSongwriterSessions](http://www.facebook.com/SomervilleSongwriterSessions). To sign up for the open mic email

[SomervilleSongwriterSessions@gmail.com](mailto:SomervilleSongwriterSessions@gmail.com).

Somerville Songwriter Sessions at the Armory Cafe presents contemporary folk singer/songwriters in concert on the first Saturday of each month. The Armory Cafe features live music in an intimate setting, a menu featuring sandwiches, soups, desserts and coffees, *Continued on page 12*



## Mayor Ballantyne testifies in support of Housing Affordable Homes Act

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including critical new funding for public and supportive housing and expanding allowable uses of simple majority votes to clear the path to new housing development, give municipalities hope that sustained stability is on the horizon for our residents. I am grateful to the Governor and her team for taking the time to put together this impactful, thoughtful, and robust bill that, once passed, will have resounding impacts on the entire Commonwealth.

### Transfer Fee

I am thrilled to see the inclusion of a local option transfer fee in H.4138, The Affordable Homes Act (Sections 19-20). As you know, the City of Somerville and other municipalities around the state face tremendous barriers in regard to the development and preservation of affordable housing given increasing construction and land costs and high interest rates. The City of Somerville and cities and towns throughout the state have recognized that a real estate transfer fee is our greatest hope for a new local revenue tool to fund affordable housing. Over the past several years the amount of local funds that cities and towns need to contribute to affordable housing development projects, even where projects receive state and federal funds, has dramatically increased. We are rapidly depleting funds available in our affordable housing trust fund and without new revenue we will be stalled in our ability to move forward critical affordable

housing projects and programs.

As you consider the Governor's proposal, I urge you to include local option transfer fees in all subsequent versions of the bill, with particular attention to the inclusion of the following components:

### Provision/Reason for Inclusion

Local Option/Transfer fees must remain local options so communities that don't want or need them can simply choose not to opt in.

Appropriate Threshold for Statewide Use/Allowing communities to set a threshold higher than the statewide threshold will allow them to tailor local transfer fees to local needs and market conditions.

Threshold Flexibility/Allowing communities to set a threshold higher than the statewide threshold will allow them to tailor local transfer fees to local needs and market conditions.

Reg'l Affordable Housing Commissions/Allowing collaboration between multiple municipalities through regional affordable housing commissions is critical to making the tool available for rural communities across the Commonwealth.

Fee Bearer Flexibility/Allowing communities flexibility to determine whether buyers or sellers of a property bear fees will enable them to tailor their local transfer fee to local needs and market conditions.

Further Local Exemptions/Allowing municipalities to cre-

ate further local exemptions to transfer fees through ordinance will enable them to protect vulnerable populations in their communities. Vulnerable populations differ by community, and thus further local exemptions are also necessary in some cases to prevent vulnerable communities.

Applying Fees to Full Transaction/Allowing municipalities to apply fees to the full amount of transactions, rather than only the amount in excess of the threshold, will allow communities with higher needs and sales prices closer to the \$1,000,000 threshold to generate significantly more revenue, which is desperately needed to fund the increasing costs of affordable housing development

### Eviction Sealing

Another policy I am thrilled to see included in this bill is eviction sealing. Our Office of Housing Stability works with approximately 1400 households per year, many of which need new housing to avoid homelessness. Eviction records are too often a barrier to obtaining new housing even where eviction cases were dismissed, tenants prevailed, or cases were brought for no fault reasons such as building sales. I strongly support inclusion of this critical policy tool in the final housing bond bill. I also support modifications to the language in the AHA as it relates to eviction record sealing which includes the ability to have the automatic sealing of eviction cases where cases

were dismissed, tenants prevailed, or cases were brought for no fault reasons.

### Momentum Fund ("Social Housing")

I am very excited to see that the AHA has included \$50 million dollars for development of a Social Housing pilot. We need to continue to innovate and incorporate new strategies into our response to the Housing crisis. Social Housing seems to be a promising part of the state's affordable housing production agenda. We need to keep funding for this type of innovation in the AHA.

### Neighborhood Stabilization

In addition, I am extremely pleased to see \$50 million in the AHA for neighborhood stabilization. Given Somerville's status as one of the densest cities in the nation, it is critical to have tools in our tool chest to allow for the acquisition of existing buildings as there are limited places we can develop new construction. Somerville administers a program called the 100 Homes program which does just this. Neighborhood Stabilization funds may be a lifeline for cities such as ours needing to purchase and rehab buildings to prevent displacement of long time Somerville residents.

Last, I want to note two critical tools that I strongly urge be included in the final version of the AHA.

### Right to Counsel

I strongly urge inclusion of

\$7,000,000 in funding for a right to counsel initiative since legal representation is a critical component of any successful Anti-Displacement strategy. Currently there is a huge disparity in the percentage of landlords and tenants with representation in court. In addition, attorneys working with tenants can often find win-win solutions to keep their clients housed or enable them to relocate in a way that is acceptable to both the landlord and the tenant.

### Tenant Opportunity to Purchase (TOPA)

Lastly, I strongly urge inclusion of language to provide tenants and their agents the right to notice that their buildings are being sold and a right of first purchase – often known as "TOPA". Market sales are huge drivers of displacement throughout the Commonwealth. Over 50% of our three family homes were sold by investors according to the recent MAPC Homes for Profit study. Tenants and non-profits simply cannot compete with investors looking to maximize profit. We do not have much open space for new affordable housing to be built in Somerville – the opportunity to purchase existing buildings at fair market prices and to keep tenants in their homes is critical to our Anti-Displacement efforts. Somerville has a pending HRP on this and I strongly urge its inclusion in H.4138.

Thank you.



# Five things to do this Valentine’s Day in Somerville

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## Valentine’s Day Flower Arranging Workshop

For those who love being a little creative, swing by the Aeronaut Brewing Company on February 14 at 7:00 p.m. for a Valentine’s Day Flower Arranging Workshop. Led by floral designer Rebecca Allamey from Moosh Floral, the night will show you the insider’s scoop on arranging your flowers to create a one-of-a-kind masterpiece. Enjoy the night with some brews by the Aeronaut Brewing Company, too.

Tickets are \$85 each, which includes the flowers and plants, a ceramic vessel, transportation

materials, and floral clippers. This event is for 21+.

For more information, check out [aeronautbrewing.com](http://aeronautbrewing.com).

## Valentine’s Day at the Somerville Museum

Support the local Somerville Museum by checking out its latest exhibit, “Museo Inmigrante: Stories of Resilience from Somerville’s Padres Latinos”. Curated by Ivan Abarca, Marta Fuertes, and members of the Padres Latinos Group, this exhibition will explore stories from Somerville’s Padres Latinos, a mutual-aid group of Spanish and Portuguese-speak-

ing families within the Somerville Public Schools. The photos, photographed by both Somerville-based, award-winning photographer Iaritz Menjivar and Mario Quiroz revolve around themes such as memory, family, immigration, and community. Enjoy a photoshoot on February 14 with Iaritz Menjivar. They will provide the props, background, and expertise. This Valentine’s Day do something a little different, support your local museum, and share the love with professional photos.

Tickets are \$16 per person and \$12 for active Somerville Muse-

## um members. Embracing Pleasure: A Queer Self Love Workshop

Pleasure Pie, an activist program based in Boston that focuses on combating sexual shame and promoting consent education, will be hosting a workshop in Wild Child on February 16. For \$25 per person, this event will help individuals practice accepting themselves, and how they can then use this to practice self-care and loving their pleasure.

For more information, visit [pleasurepie.org](http://pleasurepie.org).

**A Love Affair: Winkler, The Croaks, Willa Davila, Chris**

**Normann**

Valentine’s Day may be over after February 14, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t continue celebrating. On February 15, 9:00 p.m., doors at The Rockwell will open for you, your friends, and/or significant other to listen, groove, and dance the night away to live bands, featuring The Croaks, Will Davila, Winkler, and Chris Normann.

Tickets are now available in advance for \$15, and day of tickets will be sold for \$17. This event is 18+.

For more information, visit [therockwell.org](http://therockwell.org).

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Beacon Hill Roll Call



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

**THE HOUSE AND SENATE:** *Beacon Hill Roll Call* records local senators’ votes on roll calls from the week of January 29-February 2. There were no roll call in the House last week.

**APPROVE FIREARMS BILL (S 2572)**

Senate 37-3, approved a bill that would change some of the state’s gun laws. The House has already approved a different version of the measure and a House-Senate conference committee will try to hammer out a compromise version.

Provisions in the Senate bill include cracking down on the spread of ghost guns -- unserialized and untraceable firearms; codifying the state’s existing prohibition on assault weapons; making it illegal to possess devices that convert semi-automatic firearms into fully automatic machine guns; giving firearm licensing authorities access to some of a gun permit applicant’s mental health hospitalization history; prohibiting the carrying of firearms in government administrative buildings, with exceptions for law enforcement officers and municipalities that choose to opt out; allowing health care professionals to petition courts to remove firearms and licenses from patients who pose a risk to themselves or others; and creating a commission to analyze the allocation of state violence prevention funding and recommend changes to reduce gun violence in disproportionately impacted communities.

“Concern for public safety, a commitment to equity, respect for the Second Amendment, and a focus on the root causes of gun crime and gun accidents—these principles underlie each of the policies included in the bill the Senate passed today,” said Sen. Cindy Creem (D-Newton), the chief sponsor of the measure. “I’m proud of the collaborative effort that went into the [the bill] and I look forward to seeing these policies signed into law by the end of [the 2024] session.”

“Today the Senate came together and acted on gun violence—rising above the divisiveness of this critical issue in the name of protecting our residents from gun crime, modernizing our laws and supporting communities who have been torn apart by unnecessary violence,” said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). “I’m proud to lead a body that is committed to building on our commonwealth’s record as a national leader on gun safety.”

“Despite not having a public hearing on the gun bill which means the public didn’t have the opportunity to weigh in on it and despite having one of the lowest gun crime rates in the country, the Massachusetts Senate voted in favor of more restrictive laws for gun owners in the commonwealth,” said Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton). “The bill went too far infringing upon lawful gun owners rights

while not going far enough to attack illegal firearm trafficking and unlawful possession ... I was disappointed we didn’t do more to penalize career criminals perpetrating the vast majority of gun crime in the commonwealth. We need to spend our time and effort on addressing security issues at the border that will prevent guns and substances from entering the country at rates as high as they are now.”

“I voted against this bill because I have deep concerns with a number of provisions that I feel lead us into a constitutional gray area and risk opening up our great gun laws to legal challenge in front of the Supreme Court,” said Sen. Patrick O’Connor (R-Weymouth). “In a fairly unprecedented move, this bill also did not have a public hearing, which is arguably the most important part of our legislative process.”

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

Sen. Patricia Jehlen      Yes

**SEND BILL BACK TO COMMITTEE FOR A PUBLIC HEARING (S 2572)**

Senate 9-31, rejected a motion to send the firearms bill to the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security in order to have a public hearing on it.

“Sending this bill to the Joint Committee on Public Safety [and Homeland Security] will allow for it to have a public hearing where industry experts and people from all walks of life can weigh in and share their perspectives,” said Sen. Patrick O’Connor (R-Weymouth). “Public hearings are one of our greatest assets as legislators, and forgoing the opportunity to hold one on this bill is a disservice to ourselves as legislators and our constituents.”

Sen. Cindy Creem (D-Newton) said that in November, the Public Safety Committee held a public hearing on 57 firearm-related bills, many of which provide the foundation of the current bill under consideration. “Given that the policies in the bill have been vetted both at the public hearing and through months of conversations with senators, gun safety advocates, gun owners’ groups, gun industry groups, police chiefs, district attorneys and health care professionals, the [bill is] ready for consideration on the Senate floor.”

(A “Yes” vote is for sending the bill back to the committee. A “No” vote is against sending it to committee.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen      No

**SUBSTITUTE NEW VERSION OF BILL (S 2572)**

Senate 6-33, rejected an amendment to substitute an alternative version of the firearms bill in place of the

current one.

“This amendment was filed so that I could go on the record in support of commonsense gun control measures,” said sponsor Sen. Patrick O’Connor (R-Weymouth). “The provisions in this amendment maintain focus on gun violence reduction and prevention while respecting the rights afforded in the Second Amendment.”

“The proposed amendment would have removed several components of the Senate bill that will make Massachusetts a safer place, including its codification of our existing assault weapons law, its provisions ensuring that firearm licensing authorities are aware of an applicant’s history of involuntary mental health hospitalizations and its provisions empowering Massachusetts residents to hold the gun industry accountable if they are harmed due to reckless industry practices,” said Sen. Cindy Creem (D-Newton). “The Senate bill does more to prevent gun violence, gun crime and gun accidents than the amendment’s proposed alternative.”

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

Sen. Patricia Jehlen      No

**MARKETING GUNS TO PEOPLE UNDER 18 (S 2572)**

Senate 37-2, approved an amendment that would allow firearm companies to “design, advertise, market, import or sell at wholesale or retail a firearm industry product in a manner that recommends or encourages persons under the age of 18 to participate lawfully in hunting or shooting sports.”

Under Massachusetts law, applicants for a Firearms Identification Card (FID) must be 18 years or older – or can be 14–17 years of age with parental consent. While applicants 14 years old may apply, a card will not be issued until they reach age 15.

“Sponsoring this amendment enables us as a Legislature, to implement laws that respects the constitutional right to bear arms and instill the importance of firearm safety to our youth when they engage in lawful activities such as hunting and competitive shooting sports,” said sponsor Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield). “This approach balances the interests of a variety of stakeholders and sets a precedent for responsible participation.”

“I have consistently opposed the advertising or marketing to minors of dangerous products, whether they be vaping, alcohol, marijuana, sports betting or guns,” said Sen. John Keenan (D-Quincy) who opposed the

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COMMENTARY

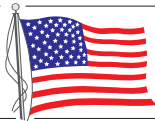
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Love lives in Somerville.

Our View Of The Times



Valentine's Day is coming around once next week, an occasion that many hold dear and cherish. For some, in fact, it is one of their favorite days of the year.

Sure, many people think it's a corny tradition. Just another gimmick to ramp up sales of candies, cards, wine and what-not. For others, it's a special time that provides an opportunity to express their deepest affections to the one – or many – who mean

so much to them.

Whatever one's personal view, it's difficult to disagree with the idea that we could all use a soft touch and a few gentle words in these times of contentious bickering and extreme divisiveness. It doesn't take a box of chocolates or a 32-stanza love poem to show a little appreciation for one's friends and family, or that one special someone.

Remember when we were kids, and part of the day was spent passing out those store-bought or handmade "Be My Valentine" cards at school? Some did so, while others didn't. Still, it was a nice ritual that brought us all a little closer and exposed us to some rudimentary social skills, so important for a developing child.

What would it be like as adults to swap such tokens of sentiment with our

co-workers, colleagues, etc.? Embarrassing? Endearing? Who can say? You'll never really know unless you try it.

If nothing else, take a moment or two on this day to smile at a stranger as you pass them by. Open a door for another. Find ways to show that you have love within you. This can be far more satisfying than giving or getting a mere box of chocolates.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

friends, such Alan Carvalho, Carolyn Dacey Corbett, Amy Ferreira, Jill Koerber, Joan Marshall, Laurie Herra-Bulterwell, JoAnn Bocca-Rivieccio, Rhannon Riley and Anne Belcher a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

\*\*\*\*\*

On February 7, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., the Somerville Arts Council will be hosting a Volunteer Craft Night, a themed activity where people can design handmade cards which will be sent to the seniors at the Visiting Nurses Assoc. in Somerville, have a few refreshments, and create art. Craft supplies will be available. While you are not required to make a card, they encourage people use their artistic prowess to make something wonderful for those in need, or just simply stop in to say hello. Since space is limited, please RSVP via the Eventbrite link: <http://tinyurl.com/3wf4xnsk>. MudFlat Pottery School, 81 Broadway.

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Green New Deal for Somerville Public Schools campaign is hosting a Community Meeting on Monday, February 12, at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Library. During the meeting, community members can learn about how the city can decarbonize its school buildings and share what they'd like to see in a Green New Deal for Somerville Public Schools. All are welcome, especially teachers, parents, and students.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 [somer villema.gov/inclusionary](http://somer villema.gov/inclusionary).

\*\*\*\*\*

On Sunday, February 11, from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m., The Dojo at

Continued on page 18



FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's  
*Olio*  
#909

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

1. What was the first rap act to win a Grammy Award?

2. Who holds The record for the most Grammy Awards won in a lifetime?

3. In what year were the first Air Jordan sneakers released?

4. What are the three components in the fancy dessert, baked Alaska?

5. Who had a 1966 hit with *Good Vibrations*?

6. Pottery should be given on which wedding anniversary?
7. What NFL player holds the record for the most passing touchdowns?

8. When is National Make a Friend Day?

9. A turtle candy is made out of which three ingredients?

10. The first sport invented was what?

11. The song *Food, Glorious Food* was featured in what musical?

12. Magnum PI wore a baseball cap displaying what team's name?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. New Jersey grows two-thirds of the world's eggplants.
2. Ravens know when someone is spying on them.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD  
LOVE

- ACROSS
1. Zagreb native

6. Not St. or Blvd.

9. Tucked in

13. Whatchamacallit

14. Robert Redford's Sundance \_\_\_\_

15. In a cold manner

16. Tiny island

17. Mad King George's number

18. Hearing, e.g.

19. Love's late Nirvana husband

21. Star-\_\_\_\_

23. Air Supply's "Making Love Out of Nothing at \_\_\_\_"

24. Elementary particle

25. Tire meas.

28. Land of Israel

30. Joe Cocker and Jennifer Warnes: "Love lifts us up where we \_\_\_\_"

35. Ladder crosspiece

37. Frenzied

39. London's Thames, e.g.

40. \_\_\_\_-European language

41. Call it quits

43. Very bright star

44. What procedural and epidural have in common

46. Crosby's and Still's partner

47. Mountain valley

48. Final words

50. Future J.D.'s hurdle

52. Food scrap

53. Tax

55. Pen point

57. "All You Need Is Love" band, with The

61. Letters to Juliet destination

64. Habituate

65. NHL surface

67. Ancient marketplace

69. Like many bathroom floors?

70. Blunderbuss, e.g.

71. Entrenched (2 words)

72. Whirlpool

73. Volleyball court center

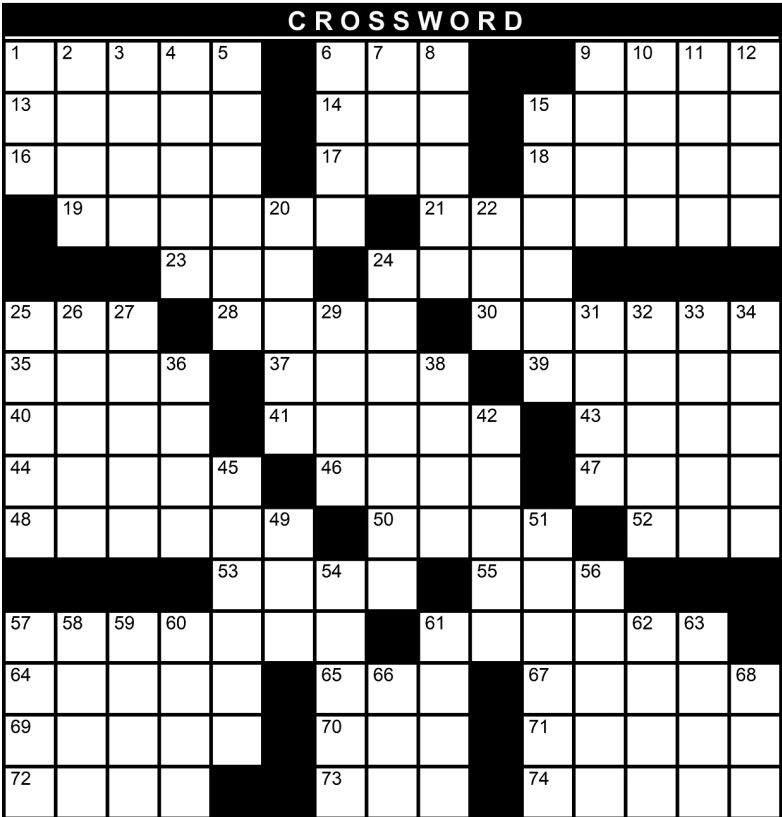
74. English homework assignment

- DOWN
1. Computer-related imaging acronym

2. CISC alternative

3. Capital of Norway

4. Single-cell protozoan



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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:



5. Bottom lines

6. Similar

7. One of the Tudors

8. Authoritative proclamation

9. Single pip cards

10. The Container Store purchase, pl.

11. "What \_\_\_\_ can I say?"

12. T-shirt, after tied

15. Chemical cousin

20. Homer's epic

22. Actor Lowe

24. Deviation from the norm

25. U2's "In the Name of Love" song

26. First light of day

27. Lemur from Madagascar

29. Damien's prediction

31. Ding-a-\_\_\_\_

32. Convex molding

33. "Love means \_\_\_\_ having to say you're sorry"
34. "Love Actually" star

36. Hockey score

38. True Love's \_\_\_\_

42. Feudal lord

45. Loafed

49. "Holy moly!"

51. Rant

54. "Peace" with fingers (2 words)

56. Phony

57. Teeth mark

58. Children's writer Blyton

59. Old, in Scottish

60. Three pointer

61. Heater outlet

62. Wooden pegs

63. Rigoletto's "La donna mobile," e.g.

66. Pool tool

68. One or some
- Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.



# Ring in Lunar New Year at LEGO® Discovery Center



What better year to find your inner dragon power than 2024, the year of the dragon? Kicking off this Saturday, February 10 at 10:00 a.m., LEGO Discovery Center Boston will preview its NINJAGO: Dragon's Rising Event.

This kickoff event will feature traditional Lion Dances from Yee's Southern Lions in Quincy as well as demonstrations of sword, bo and nunchucks from Xtreme Ninja in Medford. These ninja masters will also be teaching basic punches and kicks blocks to all guests in attendance. In addition to enjoying these special guests and performances, this event will be the first chance for families to experience the LEGO NINJAGO: Dragon's Rising event. The event will continue through March 31.

The event is based on NINJAGO®: Dragons Rising which is a new show that launched in 2023 which details the saga of NINJAGO: Masters of Spinjitzu. With teamwork and a spark of dragon power, families will need to find missing Ninjas, learn Spinjitzu, build giant LEGO® dragons and even enjoy an epic dance party to find their true dragon power.

“The journey to Ninja mastery continues, and we are excited to bring the NINJAGO: Dragon’s Rising event to LEGO Discovery Center Boston said General Manager Rachel Meissner. We can’t wait to open the doors to our ninjas in training during the year of the dragon and inspire kids and families to experience the values that LEGO NINJAGO represents while creating some fun memories at the same time.”

- Event experiences and activities include:
- Build the baby dragon Riyu in the Workshop and see what baby Riyu sparks in you
  - Kids and adults experience a new Ninja training to discover the legendary art of Spinjitzu
  - Help build a giant LEGO Dragon
  - Collect limited edition dragon power pop badges and touch a plasma ball to spark your dragon energy
  - The Ninjas have been separated from each other in MINIWORLD® – search for them to bring them back together
  - Join an epic dance party at the Crossroads Carnival

The new NINJAGO Dragon's Rising kickoff event will be included in the fee of admission along with everything that LEGO® Discovery Center Boston has to offer. Entry is available from \$29.99 per person when you book ahead at: Visit LEGO Boston | LEGO Discovery Center Boston, 598 Assembly Row, Somerville, MA 02145.

## The Somerville Times Historical Fact of the Week



Eagle feathers #297

### Somerville’s Liquid Measure

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

“Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink,” is a line from, Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s famous poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It proposes that regardless of being enveloped by something, you cannot benefit from it. Like a sailor on a ship in idle waters, he is surrounded by salt water that he cannot drink.



Somerville, when she was part of early Charlestown, knew this well. In 1629, eleven families settled in Charlestown including Thomas Walford’s Dane Street palisade. These forefathers discovered that there was a lack of good fresh water from their only spring. In 1630, because of its brackish or salty water, most left Charlestown and settled in Boston. This move may have cost them becoming our capital city.



Liquids take the shape of their containers. Some Somerville liquids have been historic.

- The ocean’s liquid covers more than 70% of the earth’s surface, contains more than 97% of its water and delivered John Winthrop, our first Governor, to our shore.
- Somerville’s liquid perimeter made

Continued on page 23



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

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LEGAL NOTICE - HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC)

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a public meeting and public hearings on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024** at 6:45pm on the following applications, in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

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

TO USE A COMPUTER

Registration URL:  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_XAyhMw1YQ7ukqyWT7z6zxA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XAyhMw1YQ7ukqyWT7z6zxA)  
Webinar ID: 868 4883 5598

TO CALL IN

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

ALL OF THE CASES ADVERTISED BELOW HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING COMPONENT

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

**HP23-000064 - 326 Lowell Street**  
Applicant: Alfa Excavation Inc  
Owner: 326-328 Lowell Street, LLC  
The Applicant seeks to demolish a building that is at least 75 years of age.

Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties

**HP23-000051 - 57 Columbus Ave**  
Applicant: David Bell & Monique Cole  
Owner: Same as Applicant  
The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter the exterior of an LHD property through the removal of existing exterior features and the installation of new exterior features.

**HP23-000083 - 30 Bow Street**  
Applicant: Modern Love, LLC  
Owner: 30 Bow St LLC  
The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter an LHD property by installing a mechanical platform lift, and adding an accessible path.

Case documents reviewed by the HPC are available on the City website at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases>. Cases may be continued to a later date; please check the agenda (posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting) on the City website or email [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertised. **Note:** Written comments due to [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) **NO LATER THAN NOON** one week prior to the meeting date. Email [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) with inquiries.

1/31/24, 2/7/24 The Somerville Times

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 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
KATJANA BALLANTYNE  
MAYOR

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Somerville City Council's Land Use Committee and the Somerville Planning Board will hold a joint public hearing on **Thursday, February 15, 2024** at 6:30 pm. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this hearing will be conducted via remote participation.

REGISTER ONLINE

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_biW4TJz1REGz9LF4zqRGkg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_biW4TJz1REGz9LF4zqRGkg)

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

- 15 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend the Zoning Ordinances to add Section 8.4.19, Climate & Equity Innovation Sub-Area Overlay District
- 13 registered voters requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 8 Park Street, 10 Park Street, 504 Somerville Avenue, and 7-9 Properzi Way from Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) to Climate & Equity Innovation Sub-Area Overlay District, and 15-27 Properzi Way, 29 Properzi Way, 26-32 Park Street, 8-14 Tyler Street, 40 Park Street, 15 Dane Street, 7-9 Tyler Street, 460 Somerville Avenue, 444 Somerville Avenue, 440 Somerville Avenue, 30 Dane Street, and 24-28 Dane Street from Fabrication (FAB) to Climate & Equity Innovation Sub-Area Overlay District.
- 234 Pearl Street Realty Trust and Goodpitch, LLC requesting a zoning map amendment to change the zoning district of 234 and 236 Pearl Street from Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) to Mid-Rise 6 (MR6).
- Mayor Ballantyne requesting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinances to amend Article 9: Use Provisions, and the Permitted Uses tables of all zoning districts, to establish a Recreational Camp for Children use within the Recreational Services use category.
- Gregg Donovan requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 321 Washington Street from Fabrication (FAB) to Commercial Industry (CI).

Zoning amendments may be viewed online by searching the Somerville City Council's [online meeting calendar](#) for the address or item number.

Final language of the above amendments may be modified by the City Council during the legislative process. Public comments may be provided by email to the Planning Board at [planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov) and the City Council at [publiccomments@somervillema.gov](mailto:publiccomments@somervillema.gov), prior to the written comment period deadline set by the Chairs at the hearing.

1/31/24, 2/7/24 The Somerville Times



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION –  
HIGHWAY DIVISION  
**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING**  
Project File No. 607981

A Live Virtual Public Informational Meeting will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Roadway Reconstruction project on McGrath Hwy in **Somerville, MA**.

WHEN: **Tuesday, February 13th, 2024 – 6:30pm**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this meeting is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed roadway reconstruction project. All views and comments submitted in response to the meeting will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of reconstruction of McGrath Hwy (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 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.

This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email ([MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us)). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the meeting.

This meeting will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>

JONATHAN GULLIVER  
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR  
CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.  
CHIEF ENGINEER  
1/31/24, 2/7/24 The Somerville Times

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
LICENSING COMMISSION

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of an All Forms Alcohol License, Common Victualer and Sunday Hours License to Kongdog Somerville Inc d/b/a Kong Dog Somerville at 236 Elm Street.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9p4uIWEoQ6CVzZkTjiWMw> You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
3. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may send written comments by US mail to the Executive Secretary at 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143, or by email to [licensing@somervillema.gov](mailto:licensing@somervillema.gov). Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Commission.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.

ANDREA R. TORRES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
[LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV](mailto:licensing@somervillema.gov)

2/7/24 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
LICENSING COMMISSION

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of Entertainment by Performers Indoors for Flatbread Somerville Inc d/b/a Flatbread at 45 Day Street.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
LICENSING COMMISSION

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of Entertainment by Devices Indoors for Yuksel-Berti Inc d/b/a Istanbul'lu at 237 Holland Street.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
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CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
LICENSING COMMISSION

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of Alteration of Premises, Outdoor Private Patio Seating for Lehrhaus LLC d/b/a Lehrhaus at 425 Washington Street.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9p4uIWEoQ6CVzZkTjiWMw> You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
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2/7/24 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
LICENSING COMMISSION

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of an All Forms Alcohol License, Common Victualer, Entertainment by Devices & Performers Indoors, and a Sunday Hours License for Na Perleras LLC d/b/a El Jalisco Mexican Grill & Bar at 145 Broadway.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

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2/7/24 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
LICENSING COMMISSION

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s): Application of Change of Hours Indoors& Outdoors on Private Patio and Change of Entertainment by Devices Indoors for New England Neapolitan Assembly Row LLC d/b/a Salt and Stone at 463 Assembly Row.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9p4uIWEoQ6CVzZkTjiWMw> You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
3. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may send written comments by US mail to the Executive Secretary at 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143, or by email to [licensing@somervillema.gov](mailto:licensing@somervillema.gov). Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Commission.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.

ANDREA R. TORRES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
[LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV](mailto:licensing@somervillema.gov)

2/7/24 The Somerville Times



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PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
INVITATION FOR BIDS  
Re-bid IFB #24-13**

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

**Traffic Signal Maintenance and Repair**

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 7th, 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, 22nd, 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.

5% Bid deposit required. Massachusetts Prevailing Wages apply.

Please email Sonia Castro [scastro@somervillema.gov](mailto:scastro@somervillema.gov) for more information.

**Sonia Castro**  
Procurement Manager  
617-625-6600 x3400

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
INVITATION FOR BIDS  
IFB #24-41**

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Please email Sonia Castro [scastro@somervillema.gov](mailto:scastro@somervillema.gov) for more information.

**Sonia Castro**  
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# Book review: 'Escape Artist' by Ed Ifkovic

By Dennis Fischman

There's a trend in the murder mystery genre: take a historical figure, perhaps a writer herself, and make her the detective in your own book. Stephanie Barron did it with her Jane Austen mysteries. Nicola Upson is still writing her series starring Josephine Tey, a Golden Age of Mystery author herself. There have been Oscar Wilde murder mysteries (by Gyles Brandreth) and even an Agatha Christie-as-detective series (by Andrew Wilson).

Edna Ferber was famous a century ago but is now nearly forgotten. That's a great loss for us. Her 1924 novel *So Big* won the Pulitzer Prize, and I do recommend it. Most of us will be more familiar with her books that she turned into movie screenplays, like *Showboat*, *Cimarron*, and *Giant* (starring Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, and James Dean).

Ferber herself led a fascinating life, and it makes for an engrossing mystery series. In *Escape Artist*, Edna is only 19, a "girl reporter" one year out of high school, and still living with her family in her hometown. A German immigrant girl, Frana Lempke, whom Edna knew slightly has been murdered, in a puzzling way. How did she simply disappear from a crowded and well monitored school? And then, who killed her, and why?

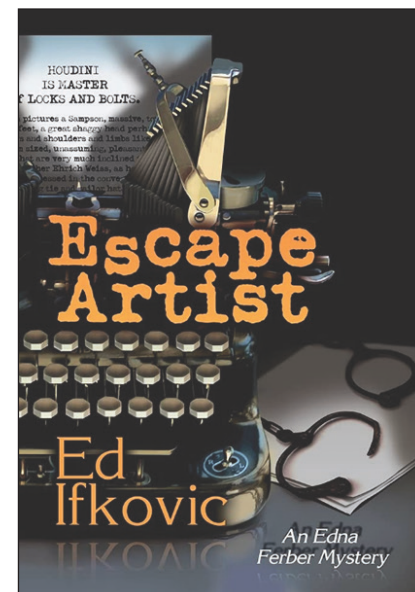
As for the whodunnit, it hangs to-

gether, and I liked the double twist at the denouement, but it is exceptionally sad. It's remarkable that a male writer could get not only young Edna Ferber but other female characters so right, and the book neither exaggerates the difficulties of being a woman in 1904 nor underplays them, at all.

I wrote about the first book in this series that it left me unsatisfied because it did not really tell me who Ferber was. This book more than makes up for that omission, and it makes me want to see who she becomes (and read some of the novels she wrote, herself).

I would fault *Escape Artist* only for having too many characters. If the series were going to spend more time in Appleton, Wisconsin, it would make sense for so many of her neighbors to be introduced. They could play a role in future mysteries. It's clear at the end of this book, however, that she is headed out. The title not only refers to Erich Weiss aka Harry Houdini, another Jew who leaves Appleton to achieve fame – he has an important role in solving the locked room part of the mystery – but to Ferber herself. So, enjoy the cast of characters and the setting for its own sake.

I would recommend starting the series here, with book #2, and only then reading the entries set in her flashier adult life in Hollywood and on Broadway.



*Escape Artist: An Edna Ferber Mystery*  
Poisoned Pen Press, 254 pages.



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

## Zion Rodman, Rob Laurens, Sam Bayer at Somerville Armory Cafe

CONT. FROM PG 4

and plenty of free parking. Our performers:

Zion Rodman is a multi-instrumental singer-songwriter. He grew up in Cape Cod and has been performing his original work since the age of 15. After a 5-year stint in Chicago, Zion is back in the Boston music scene for good. Zion's debut album *You're Invited* (2017) was recorded and released in Boston to positive reviews, and his follow up EP *Did Not Wake Up Today* was highlighted by AFROPUNK prior to its release: "Rodman turns up the volume of his melodic indie pop, with his stunning voice just barely

masking his anger beneath the hook." His most recent album *Whatever Happens* was recorded in Chicago and released in 2020.

These days, Zion is dedicating his time to playing with his band around the Boston area, organizing events with EBASS to support local musicians, securing a monthly residency at The Ford in Medford, and freelance sound engineering. He's shared the stage with nationally touring musicians such as Ellis Paul (Club Passim) and The Ries Brothers (Tafeta). Zion currently lives in Jamaica Plain with his fiancé and two cats. More at [zionrodmanmusic.com](http://zionrodmanmusic.com).

"Rob Laurens culls his naturalistic ballads from the fertile soil of American folk tradition, but his intimate, incisive lyrics embody the best instincts of the contemporary songwriter movement." – Scott Alarik, *The Boston Globe*. Rob Laurens is a songwriter's songwriter. With a keen eye for subtle, understated detail, Rob creates songs whose lyrics resonate like the words of a writer; his songs tell stories, often expressing the kind of ideas and complexity of emotions more typically tackled in the work of a poet or novelist. Steeped in the knowledge of many kinds of American *Continued on page 23*



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.

Diversity and Inclusion is on the March 5th Ballot



By Justin Klekota

On March 5, Massachusetts Democrats will have the opportunity to renominate President Joe Biden and elect local Democratic State, Ward, and Town Committee members. I'm Justin Klekota, your Democratic State Committeeman, and it's been an honor representing the Second Middlesex District including Somerville, Medford, Cambridge & Winchester. I am the first member of the LGBTQIA+ community to win this seat. Together, we organized dozens of phonebanks drawing hundreds of volunteers for Biden/Harris and Senate Democrats, knocked thousands of doors, and advocated successfully for climate

and mail-in voting legislation that is now law.

This year, the stakes are higher: my opponent Rand Wilson is running on a divisive and discriminatory platform to eliminate half of the State Democratic Party by targeting "Black, Hispanic, LGBTQ+, disabled, labor, senior, veteran, French and Portuguese speaking, and youth" members elected to the Democratic State Committee to increase diversity, including many serving over 20 years!

After months of attacks by Rand Wilson, most recently in his 2023 State Democratic Convention resolution near-unanimously rejected in subcommittee, I feel compelled to defend my DSC colleagues and make it clear the Democratic Party must remain the "big tent" embracing diversity if we are to defeat MAGA Republicans.

Contrary to the claims in Mr. Wilson's failed resolution

and platform published on Medium, every member of the Democratic State Committee is democratically elected by the presidential primary ballot, at a caucus, or by the DSC itself: no members are "appointed". Mr. Wilson's claims that Diversity "add-on State Committee members are not elected from or held accountable to the constituency groups they purport to represent" and that "they are not nominated by the Afro-American, disabled, or LGBTQ+ or other constituencies that they are purported to represent" reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of diversity in our Party.

People of color, LGBTQ+, and disabled members are elected as equal partners to represent the entire Party: not elected to represent only their race, orientation, or disability as Rand Wilson suggests. Mr. Wilson suggesting that African-American, LGBTQ+, or disabled persons only be elected

by members of their race, orientation, or disability is discriminatory: segregating voters by race, disability, and orientation is undemocratic and contrary to our values as Democrats.

"One person, one vote" is our core mission as Democrats: only allowing people to vote for their race, disability, or orientation diminishes everyone and fractures the Democratic coalition that made history by uniting to elect Deval Patrick, Maura Healey, Barack Obama, Biden/Harris, and many others.

Why would anyone choose this divisive platform? Mr. Wilson believes his platform appeals to "young adults and a growing number of working-class voters being seduced by the far right". Our Democratic Party deserves better.

On March 5, if you believe in Party strength through diversity and oppose discrimination and segregation, I ask for your vote. Being a member of the

LGBTQIA+ community, I understand the importance of diversity and inclusion: it's about fairness and it's our path to victory in 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Justin Klekota  
Democratic State Committeeman

Link to Rand Wilson op-ed:  
<https://rand-wilson.medium.com/why-our-revolution-is-fighting-to-make-the-mass-democratic-party-more-democratic-8bf863d86a7f>

Link to the cited resolution:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/11XWqVtio-JhrLBUT3Ni1X81-fOX-KQRzqxduLTWk6IoU/edit?link\\_id=6&can\\_id=fb45f38b1a968936a6dc81dee1e997c4&source=email-organizing-notes-20-2&email\\_referer=email\\_2126283&email\\_subject=organizing-notes-20](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11XWqVtio-JhrLBUT3Ni1X81-fOX-KQRzqxduLTWk6IoU/edit?link_id=6&can_id=fb45f38b1a968936a6dc81dee1e997c4&source=email-organizing-notes-20-2&email_referer=email_2126283&email_subject=organizing-notes-20)

Songwriters in the Round awarded Local Cultural Council grant

The popular series Songwriters in the Round series was awarded a 2024 Local Cultural Council grant from the Somerville Arts Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. David Thorne Scott, founder of the series, expressed his gratitude. "Now we can guarantee the songwriters a small minimum fee, so they can be sure to at least afford dinner and an Uber ride home," said David Thorne Scott, host and presenter of the series.

The series is held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Arts at the Armory café. The scene is a warm, welcoming place where people can enjoy food and drink as well as chance meetings and conversation. However, this lively banter becomes still as soon as the four songwriters take the stage. Then the music starts. They take turns playing original songs – occasionally joining with each other on harmony vocals or guitar licks – and discussing their process. "I was inspired by the 'guitar pulls' of the Bluebird Café in Nashville," Scott said, "but with a wider variety. There is folk and country, but also rock, R&B, soul, jazz, and musical theater."

"Each time there are new performers who take your breath away," said Katie Brillantes, frequent attendee. "I bring friends visiting from out of town, or sometimes my teenage daughter."

Songwriters in the Round – First and Third Wednesdays from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
ROOTED Armory Café, 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA  
The event is free but you may want to donate \$10-\$20 for the performers

Supporting the Series

Building and shaping this series has been a community process. The efforts of many have demonstrated their dedication:

- Our organizational host, The Center for Arts at the Armory, where Café performances are presented at no charge to the artists, provided that the events are free and open to all and the Café earns revenue from food and beverage sales
- The generosity of our performers, presenters, and sound engineers, who have been working pro bono, or for well below their market value, in the spirit of building a new, vibrant music scene
- And our wonderful audiences – the music-lovers, who express their generosity and gratitude via donations and tips. Now, with the added support from this grant, the series can guarantee the songwriters a small stipend as well as have the quality sound and lighting it needs to maintain its mission of musical excellence.





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Ms. Cam's

From page 8

Olio

Answers

1. DJ Jazzy Jeff and The Fresh Prince

2. Beyoncé

3. 1985

4. Sponge cake, meringue, and ice cream

5. The Beach Boys

6. The ninth

7. Tom Brady, 649

8. February 11

9. Caramel, chocolate, and pecans

10. Wrestling

11. Oliver

12. Detroit Tigers



Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 6

amendment.

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

Sen. Patricia Jehlen      Yes

**"LEGACY" GUNS (S 2572)**  
Senate 39-0, approved an amendment to clarify that certain guns legally bought prior to 2016 are "legacy" weapons, and can still be legally held, though this new Senate bill would make new purchases of such weapons illegal.

“The Senate’s intention, in codifying our existing assault weapons ban was to enshrine the current law without changing the status of any firearms that are currently legally owned in the commonwealth,” said sponsor Sen. Cindy Creem (D-Newton). “This ... amendment removes any ambiguity on that point, making absolutely clear that a firearm that is legally owned in Massachusetts today will still be legally owned when [this bill] becomes law.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen      Yes

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

**BAN EMPLOYERS FROM ASKING FOR CREDIT REPORTS (H 2372)** - The House gave initial approval to a proposal that would prohibit employers from obtaining the credit reports of existing or potential employees except in certain circumstances including hiring for a position that requires national security clearance; a position for which a person is required by federal or state law to obtain a consumer report; and some executive or managerial positions at a financial institution.

“Massachusetts has moved one step closer to ending employment credit check discrimination,” said former Rep. Josh Cutler (D-Duxbury), chair of the Committee on Workforce Development, who resigned from the House to become Gov. Maura Healey’s Undersecretary of Apprenticeship, Work-based Learning and Policy in the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. “I’m proud of the progress we’ve made towards eliminating needless barriers to employment for otherwise qualified employees and am confident my colleagues will see this bill through to the finish line.”

“Credit reports should not be a part of the hiring process,” said Chi Chi Wu, senior attorney at the National Consumer Law Center. “They don’t predict job performance they are riddled with errors, and the scores blatantly reflect racial inequities and injustices.”

**ILLEGAL FIREWORKS (H 3634)** – The Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee held a hearing on a bill that would amend current law which imposes a fine between \$10 and \$100 on anyone convicted of illegal pos-

session or use of fireworks. The bill would increase the penalty, in areas with a population density of 1,000 or more persons per square mile, to a fine of between \$200 and \$500 and/or a prison sentence or up to six months.

“The misuse of fireworks poses a significant threat to public safety, property and the well-being of our communities,” said sponsor Rep. Rodney Elliott (D-Lowell). “The current fine is less than a parking ticket. By increasing fines for illegal fireworks usage, we not only deter irresponsible behavior but also send a clear message that the safety of our citizens is eminent.”

Elliott continued, “Fireworks, when used improperly, can cause devastating fires, severe injuries and significant distress to individuals, pets etc. There have been 979 fires and explosions involving illegal fireworks in Massachusetts in the past ten years. By escalating penalties, we enforce accountability and discourage reckless behavior that endangers lives and property. Protecting our communities and upholding the values of safety and consideration for all is key to having sustainable neighborhoods.”

**REGULATE RIDES ON MOBILE AMUSEMENT CARNIVALS (H 3896)** – Another measure heard by the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee would require that mobile carnival rides which use enclosed pods, cabins, compartments or other enclosed passenger areas as part of a ride have a safety restraint system that includes seat belts. Violators would be subject to up to a \$1,000 fine and/or 1-year prison sentence.

“The goal of this bill is to protect children and families who use these amusement park rides at fairs and carnivals,” said sponsor Rep. Jim Arciero (D-Westford).

“Several years ago, a young girl in my district was severely injured on such a ride which resulted in temporary paralysis and months of physical therapy and recovery following her passing out on such a ride which did not have a restraint,” continued Arciero. “She was thrown about for several minutes as the ride continued in an unconscious state. While improvements have been made in regulations regarding amusement rides over the years, I believe a simple change in state law will ensure that this dangerous and unfortunate situation is never repeated again.”

**TOXIC CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN’S TOYS (S 2564)** – The Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee has recommended passage of a bill that would direct the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in consultation with the Toxics Use Reduction Institute, to create and publish a list of toxic chemicals in children’s products; a list of high priority chemicals in children’s toys and other products; and a list of safer alternative chemicals that can replace chemicals on the high priority chemical list.

Manufacturers who make children’s consumer products that are for sale in the state would be required to report detailed information to DEP about the inclusion of toxic

chemicals in their products. The information would then be made public on DEP’s website. DEP would be required every three years to report and make recommendations on additional ways to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals in children’s products. The bill would also ban PFAS in children’s products, subject to rules and regulations promulgated by the department.

“We know that these forever chemicals are in our everyday products and the harm that they pose to our health--especially the health of our children,” said sponsor Sen. Cindy Friedman (D-Arlington) who said she hopes to see it move to the floor for a vote soon.”

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“For years, Publicis Health’s marketing schemes helped fuel the nationwide opioid crisis, which has shattered some of our most vulnerable communities, while creating significant financial strain on our state systems. I am proud of my team’s national leadership in securing this settlement, which will not only bolster accountability and transparency for this ongoing crisis but will also provide millions of dollars for much needed treatment and services to support individuals and families across Massachusetts.” — *Attorney General Andrea Campbell announcing a \$350 million national settlement with Publicis Health that would resolve the state’s litigation against the marketing and communications firm for its role in the opioid crisis, including its work for opioid manufacturer Purdue Pharma. Massachusetts will receive nearly \$8 million from the settlement to help address the opioid crisis.*

“You are not on your own, kid, when declaring what is rightfully yours. Be fearless and write your name in the blank space on our website at any time.” — *State Treasurer Deb Goldberg urging everyone to check the list of unclaimed money held by the state at findmassmoney.gov or call 888-344-MASS (6277).*

“We made universal free school meals permanent in Massachusetts, helping students and families access the food they need without a hassle or stigma. We’re grateful for the organizations that have stepped up already as sponsors, and we encourage more to join us as we work with the Biden-Harris Administration to advance access to meals and food security for students and families during the summer when school isn’t in session.” — *Gov. Maura Healey on the upcoming June launch of “Summer Eats” – a U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded initiative that provides free, nutritious meals to children when school is not in session.*

“This legislation’s core purpose is to protect survivors of abuse. It is unconscionable to me that a survivor of spousal abuse, who had the courage to get away from an abusive partner, should have to be reminded of that abuse and continue to pay for it once the marriage is over.” — Sen. Jake Oliveira (d-Ludlow) on his newly-filed bill requiring courts to decline alimony payments by the victim to a spouse convicted of abuse.

Continued on page 23



## 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.

## SomerNo



By Chris Dwan

The zoning proposal [1] currently on the table from Rafi Properties [2] is a non-starter. They should withdraw it and propose incremental adjustments to the current zoning [3] instead. If they choose not to withdraw, the City Council should swiftly and unanimously vote it down – after the legally required public hearing, of course.

There are better and worse reasons to reject this proposal. Among the best is that, as written, it's not serious. This version was never intended to pass. It has no chance without significant modification and everybody knows it. This version is a negotiating move by Rafi, intended to set expectations and get us thinking down from some imagined version of Somerville rather than up from the reality on the ground.

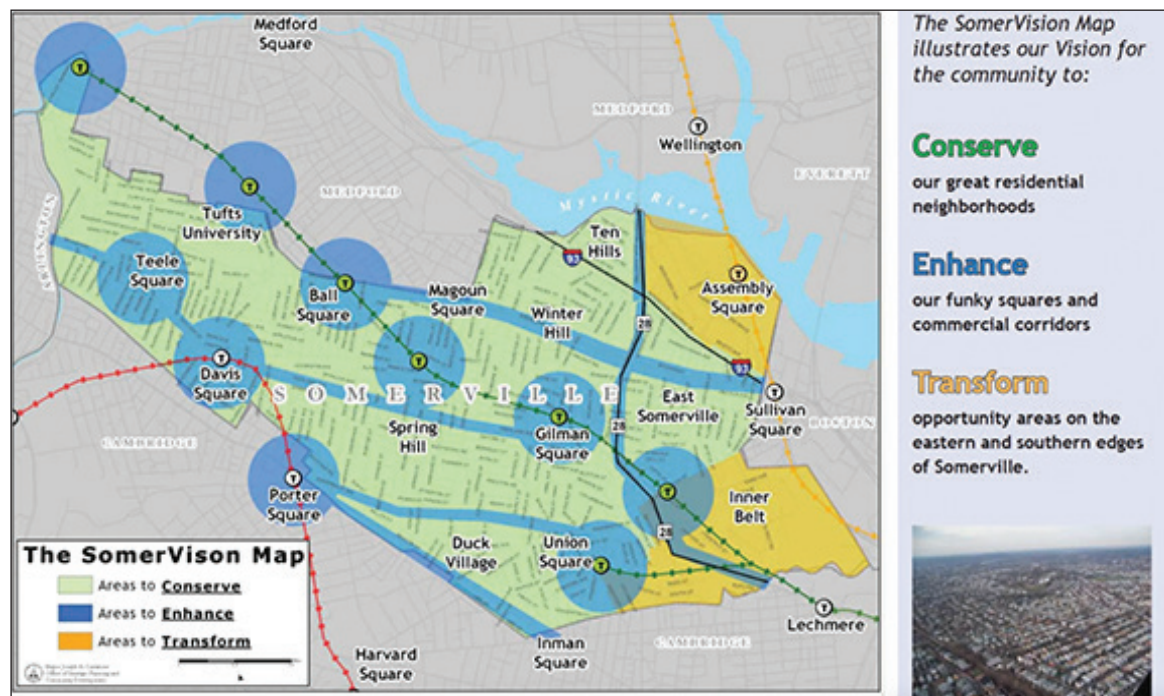
The Rafi team keeps asking “if not this, then what?” as if the city is somehow obligated to

help them find a huge project to do. We are under no obligation to take everything a wealthy developer says seriously. Using this proposal as a baseline instead of working from our existing zoning and the city's master plan would make a mockery of 15 years of thoughtful planning and community engagement.

## SomerVision

Somerville has a master plan, quaintly named “SomerVision.” [4] It was created in a three-year effort that began in 2009, with a substantial update in 2019. The first process (SomerVision2030) was, by most reports, robust and inclusive. The ten-year update (SomerVision2040) had a whiff of manufactured consent about it, but was also generally good and collaborative. These plans are the result of hundreds of hours of citywide conversations – years of effort to create a shared vision for the city.

As plans go, SomerVision is frustratingly squishy. Whatever you're trying to argue – from bike lanes to translation services – there's probably a screenshot-ready graphic and a call-out quote in there just for you. People invoke SomerVision when proposing, honestly, just about anything. Rafi's proposal does this awkwardly, quoting a couple



The map on page 17 of SomerVision2030 puts heavy development to the Southern and Eastern sides of the city.

of out-of-context sentences from the section on climate change.

The “SomerVision Map” is an exception to the say-anything, people-pleasing bulk of the plan. It divides the city into three types of districts: Conserve, Enhance, and Transform. The transformation districts are on the East side of the city – adjacent to highways and transit lines and mostly shielded from residential neighborhoods.

This map, and the process that created it, were part of how former Mayor Curtatone built the political will to bulldoze and

redevelop more than 360 acres – nearly 15% of Somerville's 4.5 square mile surface area. This map made the high-rises at Assembly Row, Inner Belt, Brickbottom, and Union Square possible. It allowed us to compete for corporate headquarters like Puma and Mass General Brigham, which brought jobs and tax revenue to the city. It also helped to justify increased by-right housing density close to MBTA stations and along main roads, more than a decade before the state mandate to do the same.

There is no possible way to use SomerVision to justify Rafi's proposal. Not because it's necessarily a bad plan – it's just in the wrong place. The map from SomerVision2030 marks the entirety of Duck Village as “conserve.” SomerVision2040 confirms that judgement on Rafi's properties, parcel by parcel. The Rafi team certainly knows this because Colin Yip, the sole owner and general manager, served on the 2019 SomerVision committee.

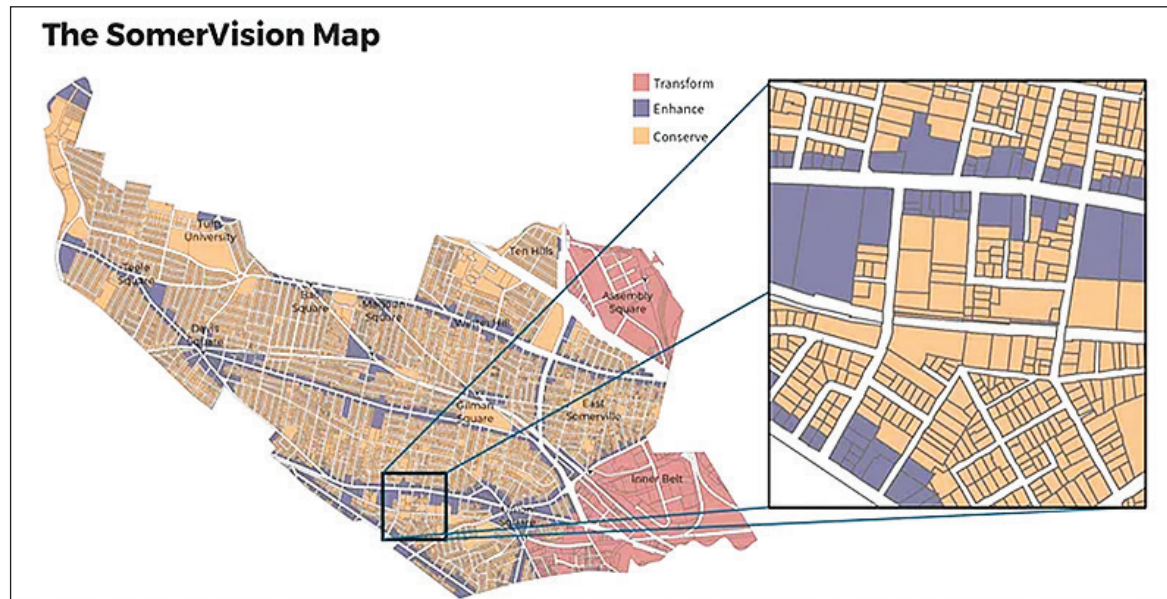
## Why Though

Rafi has spent the last couple of years asking local groups what they want. Faced with a free-form question, people said that

they wanted trees, open spaces, pollinator corridors, north-south shuttles, the sewers to be fixed, space for artists, the sun, the moon, and all the stars besides. Rafi uses that aspirational set of desires to justify the massive scale of their proposal. They claim to have added up the cost of providing everything anybody had ever mentioned, and said “goodness! We'll have to rewrite the zoning entirely to give you all of that in just our 7.5 acres!”

There is a much more straightforward reason for an owner to go after a zoning change at this scale and it's the same reason that the owners of adjacent properties are supporting it: **They want to sell, not build.**

Fabrication (FAB) zoning [5] was created to shield a small amount of property, not more than 30 acres citywide, from the upward pressure created by uncontrolled market forces. That's the reasoning behind excluding housing and limiting height and floor plate size. The intent behind FAB was to make it possible – though by no means certain – that some small amount of relatively cheap space might remain in Somerville *Continued on page 17*



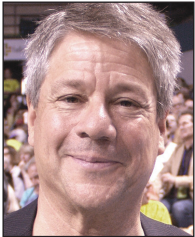
The updated SomerVision map from 2019 goes to the parcel level.



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.

Why I'm running for the Democratic State Committee



By Rand Wilson

The Democratic Party needs new, progressive, and energetic leadership. Elected Democrats are now in control of all branches of our state government. Despite this, we can't pass some form of rent control or build enough affordable housing. Our minimum wage is well below a living wage.

Our public transportation is neither affordable nor well-functioning. Year after year the Democratic-controlled legislative leadership won't even allow a state single-payer insurance plan to come to a floor vote.

I believe that our Democratic Party should be leading the fight on all of these issues. We should elect state leadership that shares these goals and holds them accountable. That's why I am running for a seat on the Massachusetts Democratic State Committee (DSC).

The DSC is the governing group of the state party. Mem-

bers of the DSC are elected every four years. Eighty DSC members are elected on the presidential primary day. I am a candidate for the male seat in the Second Middlesex district which includes all of Somerville and Medford, about half of Winchester, and a part of north Cambridge.

I believe that a more progressive and energetic DSC could begin to change the political climate so that our state party pays more attention to what working people need, and less attention to what corporate lobbyists and millionaire donors want. If elected, I will work hard to make that change

happen.

I have worked for over 40 years as a labor organizer. I will bring the energy, values, and enthusiasm of the labor movement to my work on the DSC.

I supported Bernie Sanders in the 2016 and 2020 primaries, and then went on to work hard for Clinton in 2016 and Biden in 2020. I believe our party must be more focused on the issues that matter to working families if we are going to staunch the steady loss of working class voters who feel no candidate represents them. We can't afford to have them stay

home in November.

My candidacy has been endorsed by Rep. Mike Connolly, Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven, 13 city councilors in the district, six unions, and many other local leaders.

I urge everyone to vote in the March 5 primary. If you see my name on your ballot, please give me the chance to help create a state Democratic Party that fights harder, and wins more often, for all of us!

Sincerely,  
Rand Wilson  
Somerville

SomerNo CONT. FROM PG 16

for cool, funky, not terribly profitable things to happen.

I think that Rafi are trying to re-attach the space, which they purchased for \$88M in cash back in 2018, to the upward pressure of the real-estate market. Nothing in the proposal prevents them from turning around and selling at a massive markup before the ink is dry on the zoning variance. I suspect that's what is going on. It would certainly explain why Rafi are putting more effort into green- and teen- washing than into crafting a proposal that might pass on its own merits on the first try.

Yes, But Not Here

I am not pushing back on development in general and I am certainly not suggesting that we should to cling to this particular collection of crumbling 150-year-old brick buildings. The old Ames Factory campus needs work, and I wish that the owners, past and present, had kept up with the maintenance.

As I said at the beginning, I support expansion at this location, but thoughtfully. Rafi should start with a single building to minimize displacement, build trust, and build experience on the team. They should propose a bit more height while maintaining the core concepts of FAB, rather than jettisoning them.

Somerville has hundreds of acres available for "innovation campuses" – space enough for the sun, the moon, and all the stars – and it's less than a mile from Rafi's site. This project would be a slam dunk if it was a bit closer to the highways and transit stations, among our rapidly growing collection of towers and corporate headquarters. That would align with 15 years of thoughtful planning and, no coincidence, address most of the concerns, both short and long term, that have been raised by the community.

Heck, they wouldn't even need the awkwardly bolted on shuttle bus service anymore.

As a closing note: This is my fourth article about this proposal and my opinion has evolved. I didn't fully understand the point of FAB before writing SomerNova and Fabrication districts [5]. I wrote the SomerNova proposal [6], and keep no on the table [7], in as even-handed a way as I could, hoping to raise awareness and bring more people into the conversation.

I've had dozens of conversations with neighbors, elected and un-elected officials, and even the development team over the last few months. Today, I think we should just vote this thing down, and swiftly too. The city's attention is incredibly limited and we have more important things to work on, as a community.

Links:

- [1] <https://www.somernova.community/vision>
- [2] <https://rafiproperties.com/>
- [3] <https://www.somervillezoning.com/>

City staff owes a big thank you to the SomerVision Committee. We made a call to participate in SomerVision 2040 and the SVC went above and beyond participating in the Kickoff, SomerSuppers, and their respective working groups to create the topic chapters. Thank you!	Stephanie Galaitsi	Valerie Sizhe Li
	Kevin Gatlin	David Tisel
	David Gibbs	Julia Travaglini
	Andre Green	Jessica Turner
	Philip Groth	Lena Webb
	Holly Hatch	Collin Yip
	Emily Hedeman	Wig Zamore
	Councilor Stephanie Hirsch	Zac Zasloff
	Tim Houde	
	Enid Kumin	

Colin Yip's name appears as a committee member in the SomerVision2040 report.



Rafi wants to take the portion of the SomerNova campus on the East side of Dane Street up to sixteen stories, and unlimited height.

- [4] <https://www.somervision2040.com/>
- [5] <https://medium.com/@fdmts/somernova-and-fabrication-districts-1dccd94f1d7c>
- [6] <https://medium.com/@fdmts/somernova-647784739f4c>
- [7] <https://medium.com/@fdmts/keep-no-on-the-table-for-somernova-1da0779e1a47>



Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

Somernova is hosting a **Valentine's Day pop-up shop** featuring local vendors and artists. Then on **Wednesday, February 14**, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m./, The Dojo is hosting a **Black Excellence Brunch** in celebration of **Black History Month**. This event requires RSVP (via Somernova.com) and formal attire is required. Attendees are encouraged to dress up as their role model. The Dojo at Somernova (15 Properzi Way, Somerville) On the **second Wednesday of each month**, The Dojo hosts an **Open-Mic Teen Night**. The next open-mic is coming up on **Wednesday, February 14** from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and will feature fun games, food, and great music all night long.

**Kitty Connection**, an all-volunteer non-profit dedicated to rescuing and finding loving homes for local pets, will hold an **Online Auction from Friday, February 9 through Sunday, February 11**. Auction proceeds will go toward the cost of pre-adoption veterinary procedures. Visit <https://www.myminiauction.com/kittyconnection> for more information.

Join local author **Laura Beretsky** in conversation with **Somerville Disability Commission members Harriotte Ranvig and Holly Simone**. In addition to Laura sharing an excerpt from her book **Seizing Control**, the discussion will focus on employment protections offered by the ADA for people with invisible and perceptible disabilities. **Monday, February 12**, 6:30 p.m., **West Branch Community Room**. Registration required. Questions? Contact **Brigid** at [bblack@somervillema.gov](mailto:bblack@somervillema.gov).

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 **Somerville Community Growing Center's annual Seed Sale Fundraiser** is in full swing. Once again, **High Mowing Organic Seeds of Vermont** is supporting this sale by donating a portion of the profits to the Growing Center. Just go to [bit.ly/fcgstore](https://bit.ly/fcgstore) to place your order. Seeds will arrive for pick-up in early March.

With this program, you get great seed-to-grow veggies, herbs and flowers. Orders close **February 15**.

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](https://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>.

**Earthwise Aware (EwA)** and the **Somerville Community Growing Center (SCGC)** are hosting a **winter tree identification session** on **Sunday, February 11**, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the SCGC located at 22 Vinal Ave in Somerville. Join in experiencing the trees of the Growing Center during their quiescence. Learn how to identify native trees in the winter by observing physical characteristics, such as tree size and form, bark, bud shape, and leaf scars. Contact **Jennifer** at [jennifer.clifford@earthwiseaware.org](mailto:jennifer.clifford@earthwiseaware.org) to register. This event is free, open to all and capped at 10 registrants.

**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.google/unApjMVwYagLHbRn6>

The **Somerville Community Baptist Church** will be holding a free **Gospel Concert, Saturday, February 17**, 6:30 p.m. at Somerville Community Baptist Church, 31 College Avenue, Somerville (2 blocks from Davis Square). The concert will feature the **Community Gospel Choir** and **SCBC Gospel-Jazz Band**. With special guests **Ballet Africa Teranga**. For more information, see [www.ILoveSCBC.org](https://www.ILoveSCBC.org).

**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!

Through the generosity of the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**, and from the direction of **Mayor Ballantyne**, 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. They 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.

The **Somerville Homeless Coalition** announced the return of their annual **Spring Into Action event** to be held on **Thursday, March 28**, at the **Crystal Ballroom** in Davis Square. Join them for an evening packed with live music, local Somerville grub, and get the opportunity to meet the SHC team as they share impactful updates about our work and discuss our new transformative vision for the future. To learn more and buy tickets please see the link below. Tickets and Information: [bit.ly/SIA24](https://bit.ly/SIA24).

**CultureHouse** at 64 Union Square is now open, visit their newest pop-up and enjoy coffee and tea, games and comfy seating, and a line-up of exciting events happening. Working alongside the **Union Square Neighborhood Council**, CultureHouse has transformed a vacant storefront into a community-driven pop-up to test ideas for a future community center. This free-to-enter intergenerational pop-up will be a public space pilot, a living room for the community, a resource center, and an arts, culture, and business incubator. They will be there **until June 9**, Monday–Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday–Sunday: 1:00 – 8:00 p.m. For more information, visit: <https://culturehouse.cc/projects/union-square/>.

To keep community members informed on **planned work on and around Highland Ave.**, the city has shared important information regarding the current timeline for utility work, upcoming interim paving, and the streetscape redesign process. Learn more at: [www.somervillema.gov](https://www.somervillema.gov).

In preparation for the cold months ahead, the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** is in urgent need of **winter clothing and apparel** to keep their clients warm and safe. Donations of socks, hats, jackets, hand warmers, sweatpants, and more will go a long way towards keeping the most vulnerable clients protected against the unpredictable New England weather. All donations can be dropped off at their **Engagement Center** located at 1 Davis Square, Somerville between and Monday–Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., closed each day from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. for lunch. Help keep our neighbors safe this winter.

Help keep our waterways clean in your neighborhood by joining Somerville's **Adopt-a-Drain program**. A storm drain clear of leaves, trash or other debris allows water to flow into the catch basin sump and can prevent flooding. When you adopt a drain (or drains), you commit to caring for a local storm drain of your choice by checking on it before and after heavy rain, wind, or snow. Bonus perk: you can also give it a name. Claim your drain at [somerville.mysticdrains.org](https://somerville.mysticdrains.org).

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](https://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.



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



## Somerville community invited to help shape city's digital equity plan

The City of Somerville's Digital Bridge Initiative and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, are inviting community members to join a virtual meeting to share their voice and help shape the city's digital equity planning.



**Digital Equity Planning meeting:**

Date: Tuesday, February 20

Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Zoom Link: [tinyurl.com/somervilledep](https://tinyurl.com/somervilledep)

The Digital Equity Plan will help Somerville expand community access to the internet, devices, and digital literacy classes. Attendees will be encouraged to share their experiences related to internet access and digital skills.

During the meeting, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council will also share more about the Digital Equity Plan including its goals, initial findings, and current status.

## Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Swan's nest...

— Photo by Denise Provost



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### BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



What are the worst flowers to get your valentine?  
Cauliflowers.

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

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

## On This Day in History

### February 7

- 0457 – A Thracian officer by the name of Leo is proclaimed as emperor of the East by the army general, Aspar, on the death of the Emperor Marcian.
- 1818 – The first successful U.S. educational magazine, *Academician*, begins its publication in New York City.
- 1882 – American pugilist John L. Sullivan becomes the last of the bare-knuckle world heavyweight champions with his defeat of Patty Ryan in Mississippi City.
- 1913 – The Turks lose 5,000 men in a battle with the Bulgarian army in Gallipoli.
- 1917 – The British steamer California is sunk off the coast of Ireland by a German U-boat.
- 1950 – The United States recognizes Vietnam under the leadership of Emperor Bao Dai, not Ho Chi Minh who is recognized by the Soviets.
- 1964 – The British band The Beatles are greeted by 25,000 fans upon their arrival in the United States at JFK Airport.
- 1983 – Iran opens an invasion in the southeast of Iraq.









## OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

'Fanling in October'  
by Pui Ying Wong

Recently, I had poet Pui Ying Wong read at the Newton Free Library Series, a series that I have curated for over 22 years. Her poems contain lyric beauty; and she is a master of metaphor. Pui Ying Wong's new poetry collection *Fanling in October* is from Barrow Street Press.

She has written three other full-length books of poetry: *The Feast*, *An Emigrant's Winter* and *Yellow Plum Season*, along with two chapbooks. She has received a Pushcart Prize. Her poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Plume Poetry*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *New Letters*, *Zone 3* and *The New York Times*, among many others. Born and raised in Hong Kong, she lives in Cambridge Massachusetts with her husband, the poet Tim Suermondt.

**Doug Holder:** Why did you choose the setting of Fanling, a section of Hong Kong, for your title and the focus of your poetry collection?

**Pui Ying Wong:** Fanling used to be a rural neighborhood until development in the 1980s brought in massive housing blocks. My father, who was estranged from the family, lived there after his retirement. The poem describes the period when he was ill. While it was about a personal experience, it was also about the changing times.

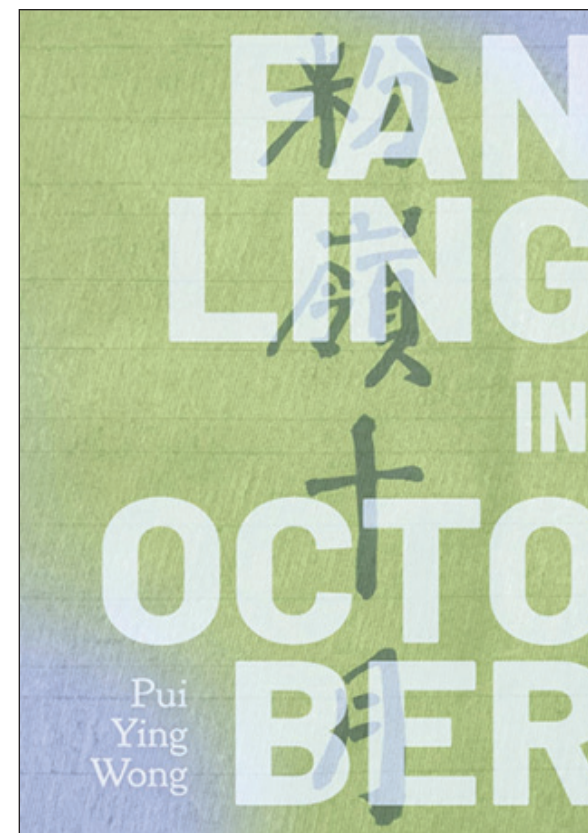
Hong Kong got into my poems, given that it was my birth city. When I put this collection together, Hong Kong was going through an unprecedented time in the 2019 democracy protests, my father had ultimately died from his illness. This particular moment when the personal and the public interacts is meaningful to me.

**DH:** You quote poet Eavan Boland in your introduction: Stars rise/Moths flutter/Apples sweeten in the dark. In your poems there is a sweetness in spite of the dark clouds around us.

**PYW:** Evan Boland is one of my favorite poets. She wrote about Irish history and challenges women like herself confronted in this history. Who got to write history in a society where bronze statues of male writers and orators lined main streets but no women? She had an intelligent understanding of her subject matters which were weighty ones, and yet she was not afraid to embrace moments of tenderness and wonder.

I think we can't not know about human tragedy in our time, it's there and has to be acknowledged. On the other hand, we shouldn't deny love, joy, beauty, the very things that make our lives worth living. In my own writing I try to be aware of these different forces.

**DH:** In your poem *Great Lawn, July* you recall a line "Sit long enough and something arrives." Your poems are deeply meditative. Is this something you do when approaching a poem?



**PYW:** For the most part that's true. I am interested in the inner life of the poem, how it becomes aware of itself and reacts. Let's say I want to write about a tree, the question to ask myself is what is the essence about this tree, about this city, about this summer day, and so on. Maybe this practice is a way for me to comprehend the world, to grasp something beyond the surface. Obviously, other poets have written poems out of contemplation, and they serve as a model for my own. I particularly like the advice from the Polish poet Adam Zagajewski who said about writing, to rely on the tangible reality as long as we can.

**DH:** Your poems are stripped down for the most part – each word seems curated – an essential part of the whole. How hard is it to say so much with a few words?

**PYW:** Some poems need to be expansive, others sparse, it all depends on the particular poem and the poet's intention. Yet most poets would agree that each word counts, whatever the style. On the other hand, I am mindful of the reader who comes with her own experience, imagination and intelligence. Poems I like give room for the reader to interact, excessive details snuff out curiosity and make the reading of it passive. In writing, what to leave in or leave out is part of the artistic process, and naturally reflects on the poet's point of view and temperament.

**DH:** Why should we read your book?

**PYW:** My book is one poet's take on the world she sees. It hopes to resonate with the readers who will ultimately decide its worth.

Continued on page 23

# Lyrical

## SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Larry Beckett's poetry ranges from brief lyrics and songs to blank sonnets and book-length narrative works. His work has appeared in *Zyzzyva*, *Salamander*, and *FIELD*. Three book-length poems have been published, *Paul Bunyan*, by Smokestack Books, *Wyatt Earp*, by Alternating Current Press, and *Amelia Earhart*, by Finishing Line Press, with strong reviews in *Zyzzyva*. This text, along with others, is part of an epic, *American Cycle*, published by Running Wild Press. *The Book of Merlin* is out from Livingston Press, and *Song to the Siren* is forthcoming from Halbaffe Press.



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On that cracked highway, old song, I was  
burning up in the white Chevy, eighty-four  
east, cutting through Cascades, up river,  
the way the salmon, eleven falls, no home,  
no milk and honey, doing seventy, into  
summer, the water washing, whitecaps,  
nothing, memory, on the bad faith radio,  
up trail, art of the sonnet, wavering, no,  
yes, the light and illusion failing, empty  
waste, empty farms, empty woods, over  
Blue Mountains, south to Baker, cloud  
cover, flagpole, tower, the white houses,  
the Western Motel, opening the book  
of absurdity: that artery, cross-country.

— Larry Beckett

To have your work considered for the Lyrical send it to:  
Doug Holder, 25 School St.; Somerville, MA 02143. [dougholder@post.harvard.edu](mailto:dougholder@post.harvard.edu)



Historical Fact

CONT. FROM PG 9

her a tidal-marsh island made up of the Mystic, Charles and Miller Rivers and the Tannery and Alewife Brooks.

• For years, root beer was one of the nation's most popular soft drinks. Hires, the nation's oldest, was co-invented by Somerville's Professor/Colonel Russell Conwell and his student Charles



Hires. The liquid was originally called herbal tea until they changed it to root beer. Conwell founded the Somerville Journal and Temple University.

• Another tasty liquid is Somerville's Tower Root Beer honoring Prospect Hill.

• Through the years, the favorite colonial spirit was rum. When it was diluted with water, they called it grog. Some say that Paul Revere's liquid fuel on his midnight ride might have been Medford Rum.

• Dairies in Somerville were once very numerous, and the Somerville Museum highlights them in its excellent milk-bottle

collection.

• Since 1846 Charlestown/Somerville was home to the business of H.P. Hood (Harvey Perley Hood) and his sons. The company continues to thrive today and its products can be seen in supermarkets across the country. Further reminders are its overhead blimp, the smoke stack at Charlestown's Hood Park, the giant Hood Bottle in front of the Boston Children's Museum and its memory of Milk Row and Milk Lane in Somerville. Today, as in 1846, this American dairy company giant still delivers our family's most important liquid ... milk.



Zion Rodman, Rob Laurens, Sam Bayer at Somerville Armory Cafe

CONT. FROM PG 4

traditional music – especially Appalachian ballads – Rob paints his stories in the simple language of the best folk songs.

Rob has lived and traveled throughout the United States, and has what has been described by Dave Palmater of

WUMB 91.9 FM Boston as "the rare ability to write songs that seem like they've always been there." Rob has won the New Folk Award for Songwriting at both the Kerrville Folk Festival (TX) and its sister festival, The Columbia River Fes-

tival (WA). He has returned to play the main stage at these and other festivals, including the Strawberry, High Sierra, and Napa Valley Festivals in California. He tours both east and west coasts, playing such clubs as The Freight & Salvage in

Berkeley, California, and Club Passim in Cambridge. More at [roblaurens.net](http://roblaurens.net).

Boston musician Sam Bayer is your literate, exuberant guide to an imaginary world where housewives win the Nobel Prize in physics, poker-play-

ing children gamble over their bedtimes, and metaphorical elephants pirouette in the den, four and a half minutes at a time. His latest studio CD, *The Great Indoors*, brings 11 gems from his universe to yours. More at [sambayer.com](http://sambayer.com).

Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 15

**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 irresponsi-

ble late-night sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding the end of an annual session.

During the week of January 29-February 2, the House met for a total of two hours and nine minutes and the Senate met for a total of 11 hours and 14 minutes

Mon. Jan. 29	House 11:03 a.m. to 1:12 p.m. Senate 11:07 a.m. to 1:16 p.m.
Tues. Jan. 30	No House session

	Wed. Jan. 31	No House session No Senate session
	Thurs. Feb. 1	House 11:00 a.m. to 11:21 a.m. Senate 11:05 a.m. to 8:10 p.m.
	Fri. Feb. 2	No House session No Senate session

*Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at [bob@beaconhillrollcall.com](mailto:bob@beaconhillrollcall.com)*

Off The Shelf

CONT. FROM PG 22

Great Lawn, July

We are on a bench, idling  
like the poets we love.  
A softball team goes home,  
a young father pushes a pram,  
two joggers compare numbers  
on their wristwatches.  
The air light like the instant  
we left a crammed cinema  
after seeing a heavy drama.

"Sit long enough, and  
something arrives," a line  
that is egoless,  
whose author we forgot.  
Dins of the day fade,  
the world restores to peace.  
Something comes back  
like first love,  
like hearing again the concert  
once played in the fullness  
of summer, altos

and altos—  
Half-nodding, half-listening,  
we sit like dinghies  
in a no-wake zone,  
finding what we lost,  
losing what we found,  
and neither one wants to leave  
'til towers of lights arrive,  
bright and owlsh.

— Pui Ying Wong



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