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City Councilors pass access to justice resolution



The Somerville City Council recently passed a resolution in support of state legislation aimed at ensuring fair access to court proceedings. — Photo by Bobbie Toner

By Harry Kane

The Somerville City Council approved a resolution supporting legislation at the Massachusetts State House, which aims to protect and ensure free and equal access to the court system and preserve the integrity of judicial proceedings.

State Sen. Lydia Edwards and State Rep. Christine Barber, D-Somerville, testified at the Somerville City Council meeting on March 12 to petition support for Senate Bill 2975 that would protect access to justice and prevent arrests made by federal immigration agents at courthouses unless a judicial warrant is obtained.

“What’s happening in this country is we are undermining the right of due process,” said Ward 1 City Councilor Matthew
Continued on page 4

The Nave Gallery presents 'We Create Diamonds'

Pressure creates diamonds...

Threats to democracy are rising. Free speech is in jeopardy, and the arts are being censored. The call to act has never been louder. The *We Create Diamonds* group exhibit is a response to spreading events sweeping the nation. With each day, we seem to be facing a new hardship — as well as pre-existing ones — that push us as a society to the limit of what we as a people can endure.

But despite these setbacks, people have put pressure on advocating for change. This glimmer of resistance has become a beacon of hope, reminding us of what is important and allowing us to shine through even brighter than before. How do we create diamonds? Our common unity, a deep and searing passion for a better and brighter future, is our strength not to simply endure, but
Continued on page 4



The “We Create Diamonds” exhibit runs from March 21 to April 18 at The Nave Gallery.

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

Street Sweeping to resume on April 1. Regular street sweeping schedules resume on **Wednesday, April 1**, and will continue **through December 31**. This essential public works program not only keeps our city cleaner but also reduces the risk of flooding and icing due to clogged storm drains. Community members should check street signs to know when parking is prohibited due to sweeping. A recurring pattern was chosen to allow residents to plan ahead. On designated street sweeping days, vehicles must be moved from the side of the street being swept, as noted on signs posted on each street. Vehicles that do not move may be ticketed and towed. For more information on street sweeping, visit somer villema.gov/sweeping or call 311 (617-666-3311).

Somerville's **2026 high school graduates** are invited to apply for **City of Somerville Municipal Scholarships** designed to help students launch their next steps, be that professional training, college, or a job in the trades. Selected applicants will receive \$2,000 to help with post-secondary education expenses, including tuition, professional programs and certifications, and union fees. To qualify for consideration, students must be in high school, a resident of the City of Somerville at the time the financial aid is awarded, and be accepted to an accredited post-secondary institution. Awards are granted both on the basis of merit and need. To apply, students must complete the online application at bit.ly/municipalschol26 by **Friday, March 27**, at midnight. For more *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of March 18 – March 24 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
Wednesday March 18	Partly Cloudy	37°/26°	2%	1%	W 8 mph
Thursday March 19	Partly Cloudy	42°/33°	3%	2%	SSE 11 mph
Friday March 20	Partly Cloudy	50°/35°	11%	7%	WSE 8 mph
Saturday March 21	Rain	49°/39°	31%	22%	SW 12 mph
Sunday March 22	Rain	49°/32°	42%	34%	W 14 mph
Monday March 23	Rain	40°/27°	12%	8%	NW 13 mph
Tuesday March 24	Sunny	42°/31°	4%	2%	W 12 mph

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

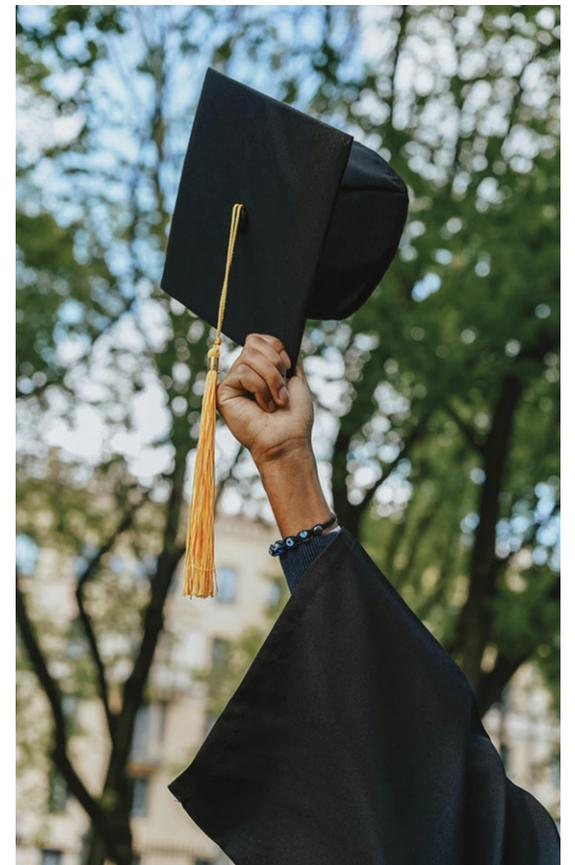
Municipal scholarships available for Somerville Class of 2026

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To qualify for consideration, students must be in high school, a resident of the City of Somerville at the time the financial aid is awarded and be accepted to an accredited post-secondary institution. Awards are granted both on the basis of merit and need.

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For more information, visit somer villema.gov/scholarship or contact 311 (617-666-3311).



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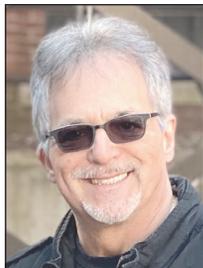
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Life in the **VILLE** by Jimmy Del Ponte

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

Seasons Changed and So Did I



“When I was a kid,” used to be the beginning of statements made by our parents, but I hear it coming out of my own mouth more and more lately.

I can’t believe that I now qualify to talk about “the good old days.” When did that happen?

A recent reckoning came to me thanks to Facebook – I got a chance to see old photos up close as I posted them to the popular, time-consuming online site. I look at these photos and say to myself, “What the Hell happened to the last 30 years?” Well, it went by in a flash. As David Bowie said: “Turn and face the strange, ch-ch-changes!” I’m turning and facing, and boy, are they strange.

I am in an okay place, despite watching every cent for the first time in my life, but I am remi-niscing a lot more lately for some reason. I know I am not mellowing out, because I am still a hot-headed big mouth blow hard (sometimes). I am just doing a lot of looking back lately, and here’s what

I see – I am almost 56 years old, and I am basically a kid stuck in an aging body. I think that goes for a lot of my Somerville friends as well. We are still kids at heart.

Growing up in Somerville was a blast, and we will always carry that sense of youthful humor. We laugh over the same silly things that have been amusing us for decades. We gather every so often and talk about our high school days, the cool cars we drove, and tell the same funny stories that we now have down to an art. We drive our kids to kung fu, hockey, basketball, and the mall.

Sometimes our kids roll their eyes when we start talking about the old days, but I notice they also enjoy some of the crazy tales. We limit the time they spend on the computer, but increase our own surfing time. We see our bills going up and our cash flow going down. And finally, we have officially become our parents. And if I have become my father, I have the right to voice my opinion, just like he did.

I now make silly comments to the cashiers at Johnnie’s and Shaw’s about the amount my food purchase comes to. I



say dumb stuff like “Jeez, these kids have to eat EVERY day?” The cost of eating is eating my heart out. They look at me like I am a deranged old coot, which may not be too far-fetched! If you’ve seen me lately, you will agree that I am definitely not starving, so I am finding a way to continue

eating my share at least. I constantly have to watch my ch-ch-changing ... waistline. I wish that when I shop, I could get back more ch-ch-change!

I may have to call up the “boys” and see if anyone wants to put the old band back together and go out and *Continued on page 11*

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Money Map Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

Q: Should I file a tax return even if my income is low?

A: Yes — in many cases, filing a tax return can put money back in your pocket, even if your income is relatively low!

Many people assume that if they didn't earn much income, filing taxes isn't worth the effort. But filing often unlocks refunds and tax benefits that you can't receive unless you submit a return.

Here are several reasons why filing can still be valuable:

♦ **You may qualify for a refund of taxes already withheld.** If taxes were withheld from your paycheck during the year, filing a return allows you to recover any overpaid tax.

♦ **You may qualify for valuable tax credits.** Credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or the Child Tax Credit can generate refunds even if you owe little or no tax.

♦ **Losses may benefit you in future years.** In some cases — such as with business activity — a loss reported on a tax return may create a net operating loss that can help offset taxable income in future years.

♦ **You may still be able to claim refunds from prior years.** If you believe you overpaid taxes in earlier years, you can generally amend returns going back three years. For example, refunds related to the 2022 tax year typically must be claimed by April 15, 2026, and may include interest from the IRS.

Bottom Line:

In many cases, taxpayers are not required to file if their income is below the standard deduction for their filing status. However, filing a return can still unlock refunds, tax credits, and future tax benefits. In other words, even when filing isn't required, it may still be the easiest way to claim money that's already yours.

Any questions? I'm Vincent Hicks, a CPA based in the Cambridge–Somerville area. Reach out at vincent@hickscpasolutions.com or (859) 553-0788.

Disclaimer: This column provides general financial information and should not be considered legal, investment, or tax advice. Individual situations vary. Always consult a qualified professional for personalized guidance.



City Councilors pass access to justice resolution

CONT. FROM PG 1

McLaughlin, lead sponsor of the resolution.

Senate Bill 2975, which is known as “An Act protecting access to justice,” will prevent the disruption of judicial proceedings.

“This is really common sense to me,” said McLaughlin. “And I hope it's common sense to the Commonwealth.”

Somerville's resolution in support of the Senate bill states in the preamble that “access to the courts is a fundamental component of a fair and functioning justice system, and individuals must be able to attend court proceedings without fear of civil arrest that may deter participation in the judicial process.”

Edwards thanked the Somerville City Council for being active in the “collective fight for justice.”

Hundreds of individuals were arrested at courthouses last year, explained Edwards, and consequently, there's a level of fear associated with attending court. This emergency law will preserve public peace and safety, aiming to restore the integrity

of judicial proceedings.

“Communities like Somerville benefit when residents feel confident that they can engage with the justice system without intimidation or barriers that prevent access to legal remedies,” according to Somerville's resolution.

“They are arresting them on a civil matter,” said Edwards. “They are interrupting criminal trials, taking the witness off the stand, taking the defendant in the middle of the trial...they are preventing victims of domestic violence, children, people from coming forward. It's disgusting.”

The Senate bill requires a judicial warrant or judicial order issued by a magistrate to make a civil arrest at a Massachusetts courthouse, an improvement in protection over the administrative warrant. But there are some exceptions, like if the individual has been convicted of murder in the first degree.

Additionally, the bill would ensure that victims, witnesses, litigants, or family

members are allowed to safely travel to and from court, she explained.

“Our courts are our business,” Edwards said. “And how people have access to them will be determined by our constitution and our understanding of due process and human dignity.”

Masks or face coverings would not be allowed by local, state or federal law enforcement personnel, unless required for medical, chemical or biological emergencies, according to the senate bill.

“It's moments like this that we reach out to our municipal partners and say, ‘please stand up and stand with us,’” said Edwards.

Barber, a co-sponsor of the Senate bill, thanked Edwards for her leadership and spoke to the “trauma” felt across the country and in the Somerville community.

There were some 600 ICE arrests at Massachusetts courthouses in 2025, which is a threefold increase, according to Barber.

“Access to courts is not a privilege; it is the cornerstone of our democracy,” said

Barber, who testified after Edwards at the Somerville City Council meeting.

Recently, Barber engaged in conversation with a domestic violence organization about survivors who aren't seeking protective orders because they fear going to court.

“This is real, and it is happening in our community,” she said. “Witnesses are afraid to testify.”

The bill is “focused” and “enforceable,” explained Barber. “No civil arrest can happen at a courthouse without a judicial warrant. And law enforcement must identify themselves and state their purpose.”

Co-sponsor of the resolution, Ward 4 City Councilor Jesse Clingan, said that the legislation is in line with the values of Somerville's Welcoming City ordinance.

“We need to act now as a state to address this,” said Clingan. “I'm proud, as was mentioned, to be the first city who is supporting this, locally here, for this particular Senate bill.”

The Nave Gallery presents ‘We Create Diamonds’

CONT. FROM PG 1

to stand our ground and outlast all that is stacked against us. With the ever-growing pressure and uncertainty of what the future holds, we know one thing is for certain — the harder they push back, the brighter we shine.

At this moment, art is more important than ever. It connects and unites. *We Create Diamonds* celebrates those experiences, cultures, and identities that shape the many facets of our nation, because together we can make something beautiful.

Participating Artists

Floberlee Antoine, Missy Arellano, Paula Avila, Resa Blatman, Pamela Bower-Basso, Nancy Hall Brooks, Dominique Butori, Liv Cappello, Gordon D Chase, Deyaniera “DeyCloud” Claudio, Jonathan Donahue, Nile Drochak, Rachael Dubinsky, Jasmine Eastman, Sam Forsythe, Najjah Garrett, Dina Gjertsen, Julio Guity, Chandra Hellweg-Gillespie, Janet Homans, Marky Kauffmann, Addison Kielpinski, Ivan Korn, Monica Kwok,

Teymura Landsverk, Sherwin Long, Monique McNally, Iaritz Menjivar, Iku Os-eki, Katya Popova, Rajiv Raman, Anne Randolph, Rowan Raskin, Lizzie Rutberg, Erika Schwarz, Karl Stephan, Vanessa R Thompson, Sri Thumati, Erika Uno and Gray Winburne.

Opening Reception: March 21, 6 – 8 p.m.

Closing Reception: April 18, 6 – 8 p.m.

Throughout the exhibit, the Nave will host workshops related to the theme. Visit the Nave website for details.

Resistance Through Community and Music at the Nave

Friday, April 10, 7 – 9 p.m.

A celebration of freedom and protest with Boston songwriters Danielle Miraglia, Jen Kearney, and Grace Gervitz – a benefit for the Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network (BIJAN).

The Nave Gallery, 155 Powder House Blvd, Somerville.

For exhibit details and gallery hours, go to: navegallery.org.

Recognizing March 2026 as National Social Work Month

By The Times Staff

At the latest meeting of the Somerville City Council, City Councilor Jesse Clingan spoke about the importance of social workers in society and praised them for the work they perform in an often unseen and quiet manner. He sponsored Marianne Walles and Coquina Fuller.

This year's theme, set by the National Association of Social Workers, is Social Workers: Uplift. Defend. Transform.

"I can't think of three words that better capture the moment we are at right now," said Councilor Clingan. "Social workers uplift people every day, helping families navigate schools, mental health systems, housing challenges, and the many complexities of modern life."

Social workers defend the dignity and well-being of some of the most vulnerable members of the community, and they work to transform systems so that people

are treated with fairness, compassion, and humanity.

"That work is especially important right now as many immigrant families across the country are facing deep uncertainty around immigration enforcement," said Councilor Clingan.

In response, social workers in Somerville have stepped up in powerful ways. They have been working alongside immigrant advocates to ensure that families understand the importance of family safety plans.

"This work is quiet, often unseen, but profoundly important," said Councilor Clingan. "In the moments of national tension and uncertainty, social workers are often the steady hands helping communities hold together."

In Somerville and across the region, social workers continue to uplift families, defend humanity and dignity, and work every day to transform our systems



DCF social workers Marianne Walles and Coquina Fuller, addressing the Somerville City Council.

for the better.

Marianne Walles and Coquina Fuller work at two different Department of Children and Families (DCF) offices to help

thousands of children and families.

"During these times, people are so traumatized," said Walles. "We appreciate the recognition and the support."

Somerville Service Award launches to recognize the work of city staff

As Cher almost said: "Can I hear a little commotion for the staff?" Mayor Jake Wilson is introducing the Somerville Service Award, a monthly spotlight to recognize the exceptional work of city staff who keep Somerville running. Whether it was getting a problem solved, listening and acting on your feedback, connecting you to a service, launching a whole new initiative, or just a helpful conversation over pizza at your ward's Slice of the City, community members are invited to nominate city staff who they feel deserve recognition.

How it Works

Nominate staff through the online form at somervillema.gov/serviceaward. Community members will be asked to provide the name and department of the staffer and a brief description of why they feel they deserve the award. Submissions will be reviewed each month, and recipients will be announced via the City's social media channels. City staff are also able to nominate colleagues.

To celebrate the launch, the Mayor's Office has presented awards to Director of Economic Development, Rachel Nadkarani, and Deputy Director Dana Whiteside

for their critical work in bringing the global headquarters for organ transplant technology giant TransMedics Inc. to Somerville. The move will bring an estimated \$75 million in new tax revenue over 10 years, 900 jobs to the area – including 600 new positions by 2032 – and significant community investments in education and public safety. Read more about the TransMedics move in our news feed at somervillema.gov/news (look for the announcement from January 13).

For more about the Somerville Service Award and to nominate city staff, visit somervillema.gov/mayor.



Citizen Self Service

View real estate tax, personal property tax, and utility (water/sewer) bills 24/7 on the Somerville website at 'Services' dropdown

The City of Somerville's Treasury and Collection Department provides a web-based lookup directly from official city records that enables access to bill information without the need to contact the treasury department. Citizen Self Service (CSS) is the same official city records database that treasury staff members use to answer your questions. View real estate tax bills, water/sewer (utility) bills, and personal property tax bills online, in real time, 24/7. There is even a "payoff date calculation" option; simply change the date to a future one of your choice. Because CSS is in real time and live, when a payment posts in the office, it shows on CSS immediately. Note that payments made on City Hall Systems, the city's online payment vendor, will appear on CSS the next business day after the payment file is loaded. CSS also links to City Hall Systems, enabling easy payment access that is safe, secure, and free of charge if a checking account is used as the payment method.

Visit www.somervillema.gov "Services" dropdown menu for 24/7 Citizen Self Service look-up access. CSS is also available on the treasury webpage, www.somervillema.gov/treasury. To pay a bill, use the "Payments" dropdown. Contact treasury@somervillema.gov or (617) 625-6600 x-3500 with questions, or for assistance.

Annual Rás na hEireann Irish Road Race 2026

On Sunday, March 15, the annual Race of Ireland road race was held in and around the Davis, Teele, and Ball square areas. Rás na hEireann is the most genuine Irish race this side of the Atlantic. It is a celebration of traditions dating back centuries and simply a celebration of spring in Somerville. This race was born in Ireland and named in honor of its famous sister race, the Ras na hEireann International Cross Country held in Termonfechin, County Louth, Republic of Ireland. By our print deadline, the results have not been posted. You can find them here when they do: <https://www.theraceofireland.com/>.
— Photos by Bobbie Toner



COMMENTARY

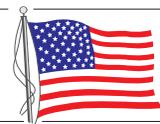
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Spring is about to spring in Somerville.

Our View Of The Times



After the long, chilly days of winter, it's nice to know that springtime is finally arriving. We anxiously await the balmy days ahead.

One of the finer benefits of New England living is standing witness to the massive explosion of nature's rebirth and renewal, seemingly amplified here. Grass, trees, wildlife, and flowers all seem to go forth and multiply at an astounding rate,

as if on cue to the call for "Action!"

How nice it will be to stroll through a park and feed a few squirrels. To replant a garden plot and watch as life springs forth. Or to take the family on a weekend getaway to the beach or mountains.

The seasonal cycle brings its highs and lows. Its pleasures and its challenges. We evolved as creatures in sync with that cycle, so we know how to adapt and make

the most out of each day on the calendar. Still, most of us would surely confess to a few choice dates to name as our favorites, if pushed to 'fess up.

How about a family picnic, or a bit of sunbathing at the beach? There'll be camping, hiking, and bird watching opportunities galore. All it takes is a little gumption and a modicum of fore-planning, and off you go!

As much as so many of us love our winter scenery, sports, etc., there is so much to be said for being able to step out one's front door without danger of slipping and busting a hip. Not to mention the simple pleasure of soaking up some sun and taking in the fine fragrance of life anew.

We've really got it made, so let's get out there and start loving us some springtime weather. It won't last forever, so hop to it!

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

information, visit somervillema.gov/scholarship or contact 311 (617-666-3311).

Happy birthday this week to the following: Happy birthday to **Rachael Hart-Adams**. We wish her the very best of birthdays, celebrating with her great family. Happy birthday to **MaryLynn McWatters O'Malley**. We hope she has a great day. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Dottie Poudrier, Sally Colman, Maria Par-ziale Pacheco, Alexander Levering Kern, Shirley Benoit McMenimen, Michael Cirrone, Paul Carafotes, Roy Bertocchi, Rosalee**

Zammuto, Linda Sirignano, and Byron Mitchell Wilks, a very happy birthday. To all those who are also celebrating this week, we wish them a happy birthday.

Do you have fond memories of your time spent at **Somerville High School**? If so, subscribe to the newly launched **Somerville High School Alumni Newsletter** sponsored by the **Somerville High School Scholarship Foundation** and SHS. The SHS Alumni Newsletter provides a connection for SHS past and present. Share important updates, inspiring stories, and strengthen the bonds of community. Go to the SHS Alumni News-

letter online: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/15WyJcyHP1ugZk9n-mUP6ezO7VCWUCHFVzmpkEAG-ZFWo4/edit?tab=t.mnd3kvhaajlj>. As an SHS Alumni, submit a **Highlight** with two to three sentences on your recent achievement, accomplishment, or life highlight. Share the newsletter with other Alumni and be sure to check out the SHS Scholarship Foundation section for info on the \$10,000 raffle.

Join the **Somerville Museum** for a hands-on creative workshop where historic letters, newspapers, maps, and documents become the raw material for art. Using re-

produced archival texts, participants will craft found and blackout poetry, revealing hidden voices, emotions, and stories already embedded in the words of earlier generations. **Echoes in Ink: Found Poetry from the Collection, Friday, March 20, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.** Somerville Museum, One Westwood Road.

Time to apply for the **Somerville Math Fund Scholarship**. Are you a senior in high school? Do you live in Somerville, MA? Are you a good student in math and/or science? If your answer to those questions was yes, yes, and yes, then you are eligible to apply for *Continued on page 13*

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#1014

1. What is the first day of spring called?
2. Which flower is often considered the first to bloom in early spring?
3. What are the official birth flowers for March?
4. In which country do cherry blossom trees signify the beginning of spring?
5. What is the main spring allergy trigger?
6. What body part does a butterfly use to taste?
7. What does the term "spring chicken" mean?
8. What gas do plants absorb from the atmosphere?
9. Who was known as the "Iron Lady"?
10. Which instrument has keys, pedals, and strings?
11. What is the only U.S. state that can be typed using only one row of a QWERTY keyboard?
12. What is the most commonly littered item in the U.S.?

Answers on page 13

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. More than two-thirds of millennials sleep nude.
2. The only real person to be a Pez head was Betsy Ross.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

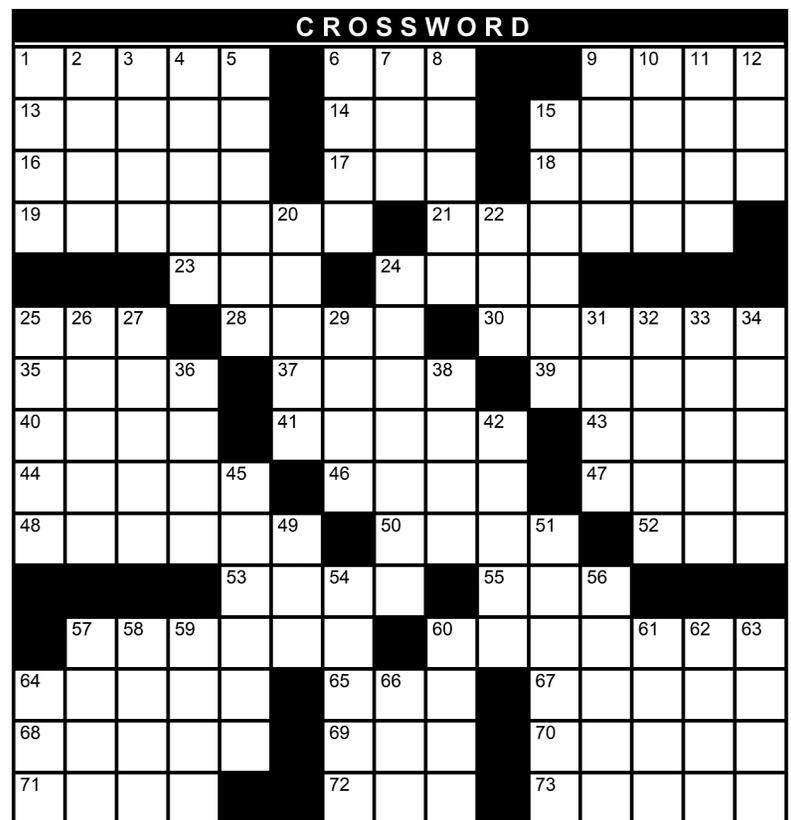
PLANTS

ACROSS

1. Canvas primer
6. Chlorofluorocarbon, acr.
9. Heroin, slang
13. Poetic although
14. Indochinese language
15. Part of a whole
16. Like certain suspects
17. Rainbow, e.g.
18. Not mainstream, as in art
19. Coast ____, world's tallest tree
21. Vanilla-producing plant
23. Classic film production company, acr.
24. ____ in the neck
25. ____ the season!
28. Ready and eager
30. "Reader's ____" magazine
35. "Do ____ others..."
37. Rubber bulb on an old bike
39. "Lord of the Flies" shell
40. Bear's den
41. Colorful daisy-like bloom
43. The corpse flower emits a foul one
44. Spouse's parent
46. EU money
47. Unadulterated
48. Fish food unit
50. Karl of politics
52. Between NE and E
53. Fat Man or Little Boy
55. Major time period
57. Fastest-growing plant
60. Coffea ____ a.k.a. coffee plant
64. Dam
65. Slovenly abode
67. More painful
68. Change the Constitution
69. Old Man's turf, according to Hemingway
70. Black tie one
71. Shakespeare, a.k.a. ____ of Avon
72. Kum Ba follower
73. What defense does, after presenting

DOWN

1. India's wild ox
2. Something ____
3. Poker variety
4. Medieval oboe
5. Study of bird eggs
6. Armor- ____
7. Distant
8. Cold-weather drink
9. Hyperbolic sine
10. Ghana money
11. Battery fluid, e.g.
12. "Wow!"
15. Alfresco meal
20. Nebraska's largest city
22. Antonym of keep
24. Throw out of kilter
25. It once was more valuable than gold
26. Absurd
27. Static picture
29. U. S. national flower
31. Gwyneth Paltrow's brand
32. Empower
33. Open disrespect
34. Leaves of ____, let them be
36. Non-written exam
38. Infamous Roman tyrant
42. Space exploration vehicle
45. Like duck's foot
49. Likewise
51. Pencil tip
54. Covered with sphagnum
56. Beyond's partner
57. Pulpit predecessor
58. Affirm with confidence
59. Darn a sock, e.g.
60. Nursemaid, in India
61. Wraths
62. One-tenth of a dime
63. Liberal pursuits
64. Blood testing site
66. Camellia sinensis drink



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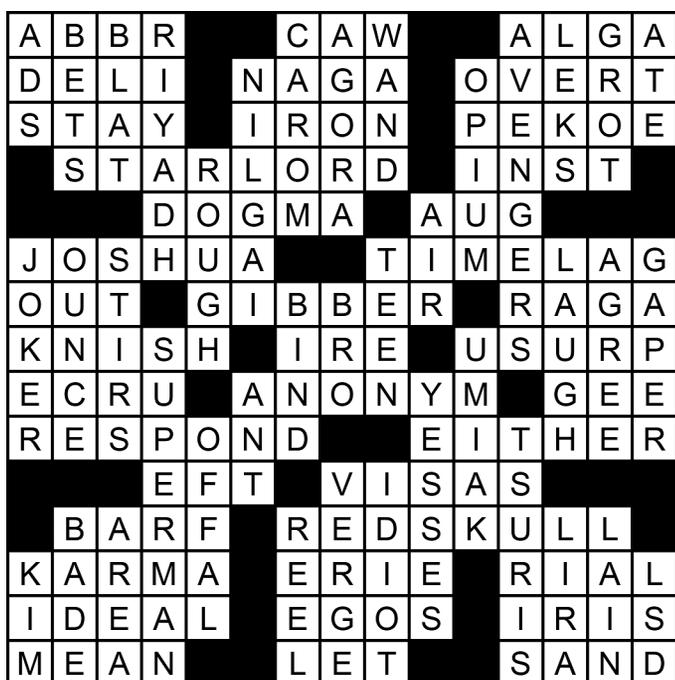
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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:



Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Somerville declares 2026 the Year of the Neighbor



Somerville is kicking off a yearlong push to strengthen the connections between its residents, highlighting City programs, initiatives, and community events under a united theme: 2026 is the Year of the Neighbor.

The designation, proclaimed this week by Mayor Jake Wilson, aims to make sure every resident in every ward has real opportunities to meet the people around them, bridge divides, contribute to their neighborhood, and feel a sense of belonging. Each month will spotlight a different theme — from shoveling sidewalks together in January to supporting local nonprofits in December — giving residents a rotating set of ways to show up for one another throughout the year.

“Community is Somerville’s superpower,” said Mayor Wilson. “At a moment when so much in our national life threatens to pull us apart, our city is choosing a different path. We’re choosing community over isolation, generosity over indifference, and love of neighbor over fear of the unfamiliar. Even small acts of connection can have profound impacts, and this year we’re inviting every resident to be part of that.”

The year’s programming kicks off this spring, starting with neighborhood cleanups and an “Adopt a Thing” month where residents can take stewardship of trees, drains, pollinator gardens, fire hydrants, or causes, including opportunities such as becoming a Climate Ambassador.

Summer brings block parties, festivals, and outdoor film screenings through SomerMovie Fest. Fall turns to civic life, food access, and giving back — with September focused on joining a city board, commission, or activity, October highlighting resources for neighbors facing food insecurity, and December shining a light on being loyal to local businesses. And come winter, neighbors can team up for the Best Shoveling Award.

For a full calendar of events and ways to get involved, visit somervillema.gov/neighbor.

“When we find ways to make connections with the people around us, especially those with whom we might not agree on major issues, we make our community stronger, and we open up opportunities for learning and growth,” said City Council President Lance Davis. “And, even better, we make new friends. I’m excited for the Year of the Neighbor, and for all the ways it will enable us to come together.”

Throughout the year, the city will also be encouraging awareness and idea sharing of ways to be good neighbors — or as Mr. Rogers put it, be “the helpers.” From welcoming a new neighbor, to exploring Know Your Rights resources, to running errands for a senior, or throwing a block party, the city will highlight ways to connect or give or get support and seek resident suggestions to share. Residents will be invited to nominate a neighbor who deserves recognition for their work in the community, or just for a small act of kindness.

Year-round, residents can connect through Parks & Recreation programming, events at the Somerville Public Library, and Somerville Arts Council festivals and initiatives, as well as spring and fall Slice of the City and neighborhood meetings where neighbors can get to know their ward and their local officials.

“In our schools, we see every day how powerful it is when young people feel connected, supported, and known within their community,” said Dr. Emily Ackman, Chair of the Somerville School Committee. “The Year of the Neighbor is an opportunity to extend that spirit across Somerville — strengthening the relationships that help each of us thrive. When we invest in knowing one another, we are also investing in safer schools, stronger families, and a city where everyone feels that they belong. I’m proud to support this initiative and look forward to the many ways our schools and neighbors will come together throughout the year.” — Photo courtesy of the City of Somerville

The Somerville Times Historical Fact of the Week



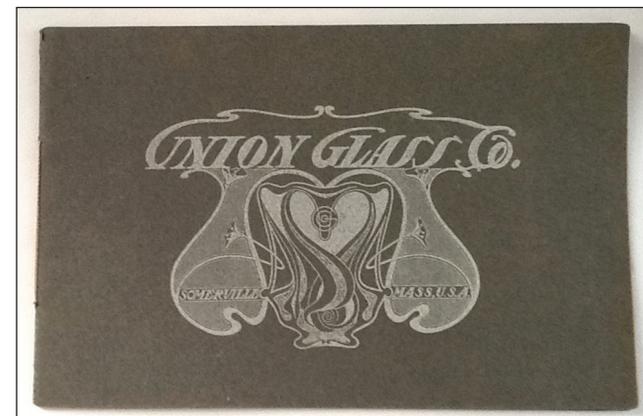
Eagle feathers #350

This article first appeared in the February 19, 2014, edition of *The Somerville Times*.

Raise Your Glasses

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

If you find yourself driving along Route 128 just south of Route 2, it’s hard to miss the brown and white signs directing you to the DeCordova Museum. Its art exhibits are found in and surrounding the grounds of the former Julian De Cordova Mansion, the heart of the popular museum, which he donated to the town of Lincoln. Julian acquired much of his wealth as the last owner of the Union Glass Company of Somerville.



The first owner was Amory Houghton, who entered the glass business in 1851 and founded Union Glass Company in 1854. The family-owned company operated it for over a decade. It employed a small crew that grew to over 250 workers, Somerville’s largest industry at that time. The large factory works were located on the eastern side of Webster Avenue, just beyond Prospect Street. In 1864, the company outgrew the local demand for its variously shaped glass offerings. The family sold the business and moved to New York City, acquiring the Brooklyn Flint Glass Company. Four years later, they relocated 250 miles north of the city, taking on the name of that sleepy little town, Corning.



Through the years, it became an internationally known conglomerate. Today, the company is the world leader in specialty glass and ceramics, and its creations touch everywhere around the globe and beyond, from fiberglass boats to nose cones for rockets.

Some members of the Houghton family acquired fame in their own right. One was women’s rights advocate Katharine Houghton Hepburn, whose daughter was the twelve-time nominee and four-time Oscar winner, actress Katharine Hepburn. She was the granddaughter of the Union Glass founder.

Corning began in Union Square, and *Continued on page 11*

LEGAL NOTICES

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



NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT and NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

Date of Publication: March 18, 2026
 City of Somerville
 Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
 167 Holland St.
 Somerville MA, 02144
 617-625-6600

Request for Release of Funds

On or after **April 2, 2026**, the City of Somerville will submit a request to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the release of the following funds: Community Project Funding, and Section 108 Loan funds to undertake a project to be known as Clarendon Hill Phase II located at 34 North St. in Somerville, MA. The project is to be undertaken on A site that contained a 216-unit public housing complex, built in the 1950s, is being demolished and rebuilt in three phases. The new development will be a 591 unit mixed-income development, with 216 units still being public housing, 75 rental units restricted to households at or below 80% AMI, 5 rental units restricted to households at or below 110% AMI, and 295 unrestricted market rate units. The project design includes physical traffic calming treatments, improvement of residents' access to the surrounding community (including safe access to the large, green, open space across the street), and the creation of an equitable neighborhood out of an isolated housing development. The development is currently owned by the Somerville Housing Authority, and each phase will be transferred through a 99-year ground lease. An award of \$2,400,000 in CPF funding has been allocated, and an application has been submitted for \$9,750,000 as a Section 108 Loan. The project is a collaboration between the Somerville Community Corporation, the Preservation for Affordable Housing, and the Somerville Housing Authority. The total estimated cost of this phase of the project is \$98,000,000.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The City of Somerville has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) and is available on request. Any individual, group, or agency may submit written questions on the ERR to Miranda Rubin, City of Somerville, OSPCD, 167 Holland St. Somerville, MA 02144. ERR may be examined or copied during normal business hours' Mon, Tues, and Wed, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Thurs 8:30 AM-7:30 PM, Fri 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

Public Comments

Any individual, group, or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on this activity may submit written comments to the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development at the address indicated above or to mrubin@somervillema.gov. All comments received by **April 1, 2026**, will be considered by the City of Somerville prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which notice and proposed project they are addressing.

Environmental Certification

The City of Somerville certifies to HUD that Jake Wilson, the Certifying Officer, in his capacity as Mayor of Somerville consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the City of Somerville to use HUD program funds.

Objections to Release of Funds

HUD will accept objections to its release of fund and the City of Somerville's certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the City of Somerville; (b) the City has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by HUD; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to the HUD Office of Community Planning and Development at Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building 10 Causeway Street, 5th Floor Boston, MA 02222-1092, (617) 994-8350 or via email: ma_webmanager@hud.gov. Potential objectors should contact HUD to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Jake Wilson, Mayor of Somerville, Certifying Officer

3/18/26 The Somerville Times



**City of Somerville
 PLANNING BOARD**

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The **Somerville Planning Board (PB)** will hold a virtual public hearing on **Thursday, April 2, 2026**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

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

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_q_L55qNThqhs_IkE_Vkpg

TO CALL IN

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

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

- 365 Somerville Avenue** Somerville Family Dental PC request to remove a condition of a previously issued Special Permit (DRA#2020-012) in the Mid-Rise 5 (MR5) zoning district.
- 369 Somerville Avenue** Somerville Family Dental PC request to remove a condition of a previously issued Special Permit (DRA#2020-012) in the Mid-Rise 5 (MR5) zoning district.
- 1 McGrath Highway** Somerbridge Hotel LLC proposes a Major Revision to the previously Site Plan Approval case # P&Z 21-028 in the High-Rise (HR) zoning district.
- 1 McGrath Highway** Somerbridge Hotel LLC proposes to establish a Hotel Use in the High-Rise (HR) zoning district, which requires a Special Permit.
- 1 McGrath Highway** Somerbridge Hotel LLC proposes to establish a Formula Business in the High-Rise (HR) zoning district, which requires a Special Permit.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions>. Interested persons may provide comments to the Planning Board at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to PlanningBoard@somervillema.gov.

3/18/26 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
 PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
 INVITATION FOR BIDS
 IFB #26-57**

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

Personal Property Audits As-Needed

An IFB 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, March 19th, 2026**. Sealed bids will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2:30 pm, Wednesday, April 2nd, 2026**.

The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all bids if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please email тчukhatsang@somervillema.gov for more information.

Thupten Chukhatsang
 Senior Procurement Manager
 617-625-6600 x3400

3/18/26 The Somerville Times



LEGAL NOTICE

City of Somerville
 Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD)

RFP# 26-PS1 CD
 RFP # 26-ESG CD

The City of Somerville, Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD)

invites sealed proposals for the 2026-2027 HUD Action Plan for the: **Community Development Block Grant Program Emergency Solutions Grant Program**

Community Development Block Grant Program. Proposals must be for programs that provide Public Services to low- and moderate-income residents of the City of Somerville. Bid Number RFP # 26-PS1 CD **Emergency Solutions Grant Program.** Proposals must address the needs of homeless individuals and families in the City of Somerville. Funds for the Emergency Solutions Grant are provided by the federal Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Bid Number RFP # 26-ESG CD

Request for Proposal packages for both programs will be posted and available for download on the City of Somerville website beginning at **8:30 A.M. Wednesday, March 18, 2026**, at

www.somervillema.gov/CDBGFRFP and www.somervillema.gov/ESGRFP

Print copies are available upon request to Julie Melgar at OSPCD@somervillema.gov.

An electronic PDF file should be emailed to OSPCD@somervillema.gov and Public Services proposal packages must be submitted no later than

12:00 P.M. Friday, April 24, 2026, for Emergency Solutions Grant **12:30 P.M. Friday, April 24, 2026**, for Community Development Block Grant

Please contact Julie Melgar, Program Compliance Officer, by email Jmelgar@somervillema.gov, for information and proposal packages.

Thomas Galligani, Executive Director
 617- 625-6600, x 2531

3/18/26 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
 PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
 RFP# 26-28**

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement & Contract Services Department invites proposals for:

Real Property Valuation Software and Consulting Services

The RFP package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, March 18th, 2026**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **3:00 pm, Wednesday, April 1st, 2026**.

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

Please email тчukhatsang@somervillema.gov for more information.

Thupten Chukhatsang
 Senior Procurement Manager
 617-625-6600 x3400

3/18/26 The Somerville Times

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



Somerville Fair Housing Commission
Question of the week



Q: My landlord wants access to my apartment. Is this allowed?

A: Yes, the landlord is allowed “reasonable access” to your apartment, which usually means that they must give you 24 hours notice to determine a convenient time for both parties. You must comply if they have a reason such as inspections, repairs, or showing the unit to prospective tenants or buyers. In addition, if there is an emergency, the landlord is allowed access.

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

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

To donate visit:

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

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

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

Want to write local Somerville stories?

Call **857-488-5138**

and speak to the Assignment Editor

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



Who can shave 30 times a day and still have a beard?

A barber.

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

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

Somerville through the eyes of Denise



A plumber's helper waiting for an emergency... — Photo by Denise Provost

On This Day in History

March 18

- 37 – The Roman Senate annuls Tiberius' will and proclaims Caligula emperor.
- 1692 – William Penn is deprived of his governing powers.
- 1874 – Hawaii signs a treaty giving exclusive trading rights to the United States.
- 1881 – Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth opens in Madison Square Gardens.
- 1911 – Theodore Roosevelt opens the Roosevelt Dam in Phoenix, AZ.
- 1922 – Mahatma Gandhi is sentenced to six years in prison for civil disobedience.
- 1939 – Georgia finally ratifies the Bill of Rights, 150 years after the birth of the federal government.
- 1942 – The third military draft begins in the United States.
- 1953 – The Braves announce that they are moving from Boston to Milwaukee.
- 1965 – Cosmonaut Alexei Leonov becomes the first man to spacewalk.
- 1986 – Buckingham Palace announces the engagement of Prince Andrew to Sarah Ferguson.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

a **Somerville Math Fund scholarship.** <https://somerwillemathematicsfund.org/somerville-math/>. The scholarship is for \$1500 a year for 4 years for someone taking math or math-using or math-applying classes in college. If you have a child or friend who might qualify, share the link. The deadline is coming soon, so do this today. The deadline is on **March 20**.

Book signing by Somerville author **Bansari Mitra**, author of **GHOSTS FROM THE PAST: Gothic and Postcolonial Themes in 19th & 20th Century Novels**, Wilderness House Press. Lovestruck Books, 44 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. **March 22**, 1 – 3 p.m.

The **Somerville Recreation Adaptive Sports Clinic** is a welcoming, inclusive program designed for participants of all abilities to explore hockey, basketball, baseball, soccer, and football in a supportive and fun environment. With an emphasis on skill-building, teamwork, and confidence, this free clinic creates opportunities for athletes to move, play, and shine at their own pace. **Saturdays, March 14 – April 11**. Register online at www.somervillerec.com.

Somerville Media Center is hosting a special 3-part workshop series, **Women in Film**, on **March 22**. Sign up here: <https://app.amilia.com/store/en/smc/shop/activities/6682997>. Celebrate **Women's History Month** and learn about women's and nonbinary filmmaking history, get hands-on production and camera training, and create your own film project. All three classes are free for members and \$30 for non-members. Sign up at the link or email frontdesk@somervillemedia.org.

The **Somerville Arts Council** invites musicians, dancers, street performers, installation artists, craft vendors, buskers,

and creatives of all kinds to be part of **ArtBeat 2026**, Somerville's beloved summer arts festival in **Davis Square**. This year's theme is **REvolution**, a celebration of transformation, creative energy, and the ideas that move us forward. **July 18**, Davis Square. Apply now and help bring this year's ArtBeat to life. Learn more and apply: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/artbeat/calls>.

East Somerville Main Streets is looking for artisans, craftspeople, and small business owners to join them for **Carnaval** on **June 7**, 2 – 6 p.m. Rain date: June 14. Interested in being part of one of East Somerville's most vibrant community events? Find more details and apply now: <https://forms.gle/oWgWoh6BN-Fmy32g57>.

Please join **Somerville Media Center** in honoring former **Mayor Joe Curtatone** with their **Public Service Award** on **Thursday, June 4**, from 7 to 9 p.m. at **Arts at the Armory**, 119 Highland Ave, in Somerville. The celebratory evening will feature cheeses and specialty bites provided by **Formaggio Kitchen** and more, tasty drinks from Arts at the Armory, live music by **Revolutionary Snake Ensemble**, raffles, and a special presentation honoring Joe Curtatone's long-standing advocacy for community media and Somerville Media Center. Proceeds from the event will directly support our programs and services. Tickets are available online: <https://tinyurl.com/joecurtatone>

Uprooted / Transplanted – Stories of Displacement Call for Entry. Deadline: **March 30**. **The Nave Gallery**, in partnership with the **Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church (CHPC)**, invites artists to contribute to the curated exhibition. This exhibition will present images and stories of displacement, the

forced movement of people from their homes due to conflict, violence, or natural disaster. Learn more at <https://navegallery.org/wp/uprooted-transplanted-call-for-art/>.

Please return your **Completed City of Somerville Census**. Participation in the census is essential for keeping an accurate population count, and it updates or maintains your status as an active voter for upcoming elections. Completed census forms can be returned via the postage-paid return envelope included in the mailing, by scanning the form and emailing it to census@somervillema.gov, or in person at **City Hall** (93 Highland Ave.). Please call 311 (617-666-3311) with any questions.

On **Friday, April 10**, **GLOWBALL** will transform the **Armory Performance Hall** into an immersive Rave created by **DJ WhySham** and visual projectionist **Jay Medina**, all in support of **The Center for Arts at the Armory**. **GLOWBALL** is an "anti-gala"—there will be no speeches, presentations, or auction. There will be pop-up performances by **Sean Bjerke** and **RHOUSE Dancers**; **The House of Nahdra**, **AfroFuture Fashion Portal**, and **Circus 617**. This year's honorees: **Ellen Waylonis**, Lifetime Achievement Award; **Willie Burnley**, Community Arts Advocate; and **Wendy Jehlen**, Outstanding Artist. **GLOWBALL** tickets include complimentary international bites and glow-in-the-dark styling and face painting. This will surely be Somerville's most illuminating party of 2026. For tickets and more information, visit: <https://art-satthearmory.org/>

Join this year's **Guns & Hoses** with **Somerville Fire and Somerville Police**, **Saturday, March 21**, 5 – 7 p.m., **Loconte Memorial Rink**, 97 Locust St, Medford. After Party at **Public Tavern**, 565 Broadway,

Somerville, 8 p.m. **Knock-Out 50/50**, \$100 each, cash only. All Proceeds to Benefit the **Somerville Youth Hockey** and **SHS Hockey Programs**.

The **Irish Film Festival Boston** tickets are now on sale for their **March Screening Series** with the **Consulate General of Ireland, Boston**, on **March 20 and 21** at the **Somerville Theatre**. Visit their website for tickets and film details: <https://www.irishfilmfestival.com>.

For anyone **in need of food resources**, go to the **Somerville Food Coalition's** website: www.https://bit.ly/4ocJ6NB. Free local pantries, community meals, community fridges, and more. Find more information at <https://www.somervillema.gov/snap>. Here are some locations where you can find free food: **Somerville's Community Fridges** can be found at 35 Prospect St., **Elizabeth Peabody House**, 275-277 Broadway, **St. Clements**, across from 29 St. Clements Road. Donations are welcome at these locations.

Take steps to protect yourself and loved ones against **COVID-19, the flu, and other illnesses** this

winter. Somerville's **Health and Human Services Department** is hosting free vaccine clinics at locations across the city. For more information, visit: <https://www.somervillema.gov/vaccinations>.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our **Arts Editor, Doug Holder**, for setting up a GoFundMe campaign for **The Somerville Times**. With the cost of printing going up and a lack of businesses having the resources to advertise, free papers feel the effect. We sincerely thank all who have already contributed and thank any future contributors. If you are interested in helping, please visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-somerville-times>. Or if anyone is interested in advertising, please contact Bobbietoner@aol.com. We offer great discounts to help our advertisers be able to advertise. Thank you all so much for your support!

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.

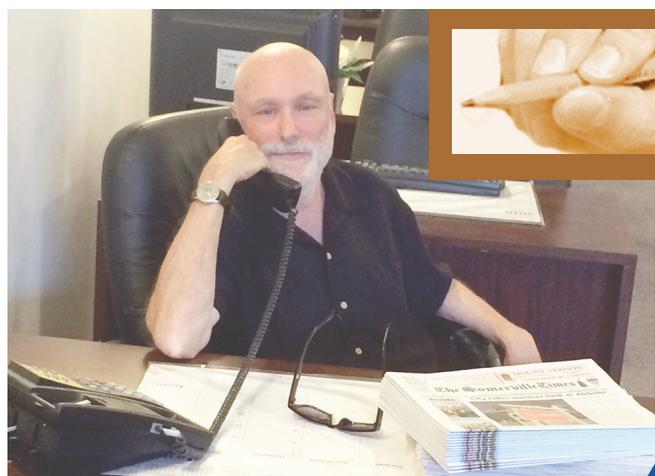
From page 8

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Answers

1. Vernal equinox	7. A young person
2. The crocus	8. Carbon dioxide (CO ₂)
3. Daffodil and the Jonquil	9. Margaret Thatcher
4. Japan	10. Piano
5. Pollen	11. Alaska
6. Its feet	12. Cigarette butts



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Somerville poet Sarah Beckmann: A poet of water and women's rights

I recently caught up with Sarah C. Beckmann, a font of literary energy and activism in our literary community.

Sarah C. Beckmann is a member of the Somerville Arts Council Board, where she promotes arts initiatives in the Somerville community through a local grant program and the SomerWrites event series. In 2021, she published a poetry chapbook, *Naiad Blood*, and her first full-length poetry collection, *The Race for Daphne*, is forthcoming in May, 2026. She earned an MFA from Emerson College in Boston and works in research communications at the MIT Media Lab.

Doug Holder: How has it been for you as a poet living in Somerville?

Sarah Beckmann: I moved to Somerville in 2022 while finishing my graduate degree in creative writing at Emerson College. After completing my degree, I wanted to find new community circles where I could continue practicing my art and network with other writers. Somerville ended up being one of the best places I could have chosen to do that! I applied to be a board member of the Somerville Arts Council, and over the past year, I've had a wonderful experience meeting new people and garnering a sense of community through my volunteer work.

DH: You have a new poetry series at Portico Brewery in Somerville. How did you come up with the idea? What distinguishes it from other poetry series in the area?

SB: The SomerWrites series is actually for writers of all genres and backgrounds, not just poets! The idea for this series was born during conversations I had last year with Greg Jenkins (former Executive Director of the Somerville Arts Council) and Somerville Poet Laureate Lloyd Schwartz. I enjoyed brainstorming with them, and also enlisted the guidance of a few other writers in the area, like David Blair (who runs a poetry workshop at the Armory). Before my time in Somerville, there were "salons" organized with similar aims, and Greg highlighted the need for a revitalized programming effort focused on writing in the community. I joined the SAC Board as the primary writer representative, so I was eager to capitalize on the opportunity.

I think what sets SomerWrites apart from other



events in the area (I hope) is its accessibility – the fact that it's open to writers of all kinds, no matter where you're from in the Boston area. I've had people from Cambridge, Brighton, and even Maynard (MA) reach out to me asking if they can attend and participate. Sometimes these types of events can be competitive and daunting– which is why the welcoming, kind, and enthusiastic support everyone has shown during SomerWrites has been so special.

DH: Your new collection of poetry, *The Race for Daphne*, invokes or is inspired by the mythical figure of Daphne, the daughter of a river god. Why is this figure of particular interest for you? We could say your poems are drenched in water.

SB: My latest poetry book talks a lot about women's rights, women in athletics (specifically in the sport of rowing, which I'm very passionate about), and women writers. In the Greek myth of Daphne and Apollo, she transforms into a laurel tree to escape his advances. Apollo then takes the laurel as his symbol for poetry, for athletic prowess and victory at the Olympics – but not many people realize the true backstory of that symbol. That's why I chose to highlight Daphne and her story over the *Continued on page 15*

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Somerville poet Ed Meek sends us a couple of new poems. He has a new book of poetry coming out titled *Great Pond*.



Asylum

It's as easy as cutting a cord,
to separate the mothers and children—
the ones seeking asylum
from gangs and violence,
so desperate to flee
they'll risk seizure
by the border patrol
and customs agents who need
at least two officials—
one who grabs the kids,
the other the mothers—
pinning their arms from behind,
to pry them apart
like oysters.

The agents must learn to ignore
the crying and screams.
They have a job to do,
commands to obey
that come all the way
from the top.

Really, it's as simple as turning a lock,
as easy as pulling a trigger.

Wanted: A Few Good Men

You can always find a gang of guys
willing to patrol the border
to keep the aliens out.

There's plenty of us rough and ready
to man the neighborhood watch,
roaming the streets with a gun on our hip.

And if you need a posse,
we'll leave our drinks on the bar
and mount our steeds
to track the miscreants down
and if need be, hang them from a tree.

We'll string up slaves who try to run

and negros suspected of flirting
with our women.

We always assume
the suspects armed and dangerous
and our shootings are always justified.

— Ed Meek

Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 14

more well-known tale of Apollo and his laurels.

Water certainly does “drench my poems,” as you say. I grew up near the ocean on the north shore of Massachusetts and spent many summers going to the beaches on Long Island, NY. And then learning how to row in college completely changed my perspective of the water, in a new way, which is what my chapbook *Naiad Blood* is about.

DH: You quote Whitman in the collection. Do you feel your poetry is Whitmanesque? Certainly Whitman would embrace the multitudes of imagery and metaphor in your work.

SB: I quote a few different, well-established writers in my latest poetry collection, Whitman being one of them. I do think my poetry can lean towards list-form, documenting things, which is characteristic of his work. However, I mention him in the beginning of my book more for a shared location: Long Island, NY. He’s from there and as I mentioned, I have a deep connection with the area—particularly the North Fork where my grandparents used to live.

Why should we read this book?

You should read this book to, firstly, support a local author; but also because a lot of voices are being censored right now, in our current social and political atmosphere—in this country, and across the world. Women’s

voices have historically fallen and continue to fall under this category. My hope for this book is that it becomes a mouthpiece for not only myself, as a woman today, but also for the women in my family, my friends—amplifying the message that we still have voices and we will not be silenced. Women’s rights are human rights, and uplifting women is only to the betterment of humanity as a whole.

The Single Shell

An oar in each hand, one hull
keeping me afloat, I roll

to the catch, knees to my chest,
arms spread wide—try not to think

of the abyss below as blades glide
flat atop the surface. Not yet confident

to square, hover in air, then hook
that quicksilver. They say women

look more natural on the water.
Our bodies are always changing;

patience, control, rhythm, balance
are what we know best; an alchemical

process. To master the single shell—
both captain and crew—is to master

the soul. My careful strokes leave
puddles, dark and deep; pools whirl

in beats behind the rippling line
of my stern. Even aquatic creatures

can dream of flying. And me?
What might emerge when I shed

the various versions of myself—
something dying inside,

something wiser—monarch,
orange and black—

born.

— Sarah C. Beckmann

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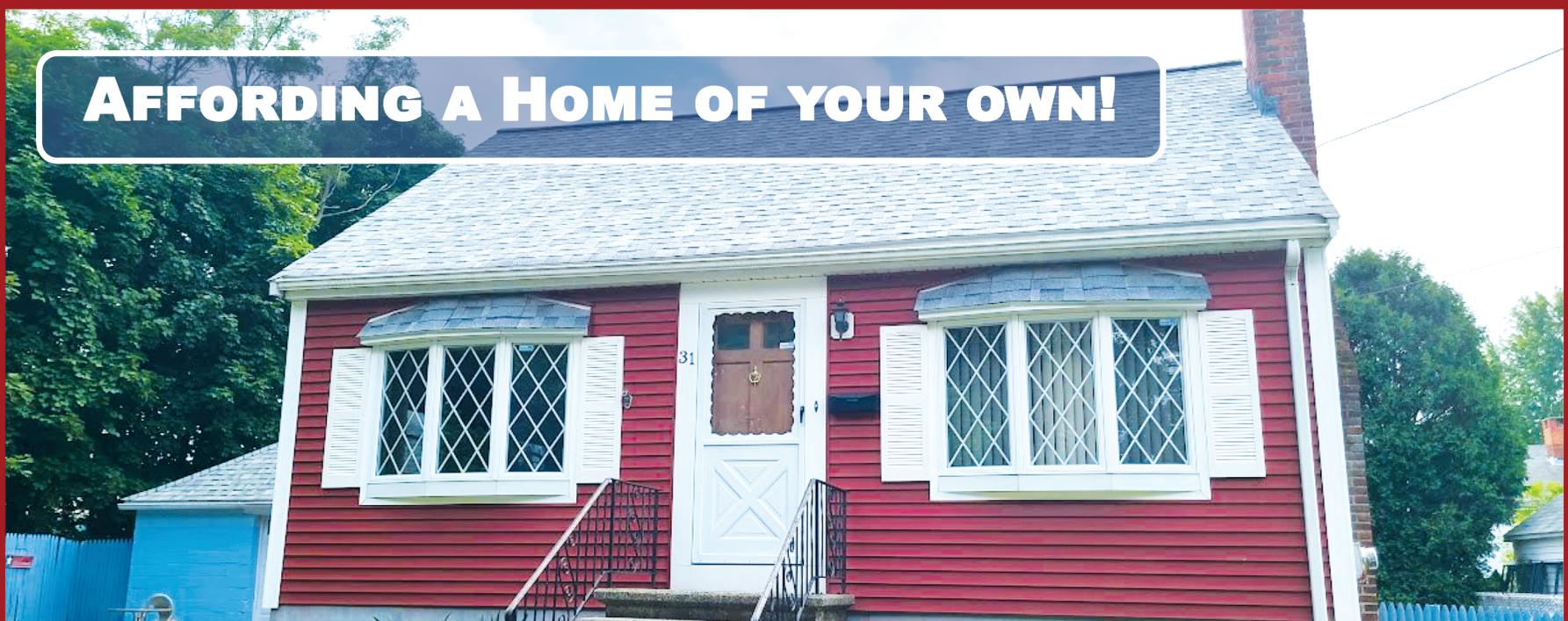


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