



## Inside:



**Do you remember gimp?**

page 3



**Decades of breakfast together**  
page 15



**Block party time!**  
page 19

## Council pay increase not approved



The Somerville City Council voted against increases in salaries for council members, the mayor, and school committee members.

By Jeffrey Shwom

The City Council voted not to approve an automatic increase in city council, the mayor's, and school committee members' salaries at its latest regular meeting on Thursday, April 10. After much discussion and two public versions of the ordinance, the council had a majority at six votes to five, but they needed eight votes to pass.

The ordinance, sponsored by Councilor Ewen-Campen and supported by the Finance Committee members, would have become effective January 1, 2026, after this year's municipal election cycle.

The first draft had suggested an automatic increase every year tied to the annual cost-of-living percentage adjustment (COLA) received by non-union city personnel. As mentioned by *The Times* previously [1], there was a perception the recommendations of the five-person board and city personnel department would be overridden

Continued on page 4

## The Center for Arts at the Armory to host GLOWBALL 2025

On Friday, April 25, GLOWBALL will transform the Armory Performance Hall into an immersive Glow-in-the-Dark Rave created by Afro House DJ Adam Gibbons with hypnotic visuals by Jay Medina, all in support of The Center for Arts at the Armory.

GLOWBALL is an anti-gala – there will be no speeches, formal presentations or auction. There will be pop-up performances by SambaViva, Sinha Capoeira, and Sidy Maiga on djembe. GLOWBALL tickets include complimentary international bites, and glow in the dark accessories and face painting by Arty Mari.

This year Arts at the Armory will be honoring three outstanding individuals connected to the arts in Somerville: Lifetime Achievement: Rachel Strutt; Outstanding Artist: Nelson Salaza Community; and Arts Advocate: Clay Fernald.

Continued on page 17



GLOWBALL's Glow-in-the-Dark Rave will also include honors to community arts advocates Rachel Strutt; Nelson Salaza, and Clay Fernald, with beats provided by DJ Adam Gibbons.

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**Patriots’ Day is Monday, April 21.** All city offices are closed. Trash and recycling pickup will be delayed by one day. Join the **Somerville Museum** and the **City of Somerville** for the annual **Patriots’ Day celebration at Foss Park**. Play colonial games and activities, enjoy refreshments, and greet Paul Revere. Admission is free. 11:30 am at Foss Park.

\*\*\*\*\*

Grab your baskets and join **Connexion** and **East Somerville Main Streets** on **Saturday, April 19** at 12 pm (sharp) for an **Easter Egg Hunt in Foss Park**. The event is free.

\*\*\*\*\*








Somerville’s **Fair Housing Commission**, **Department of Racial and Social Justice**, and the **Somerville Public Library** invite you to hear from attorney **Todd Kaplan** about how to legally handle Section 8 vouchers for both tenants and landlords. Food and drinks will be provided. Thursday, April 17, 7:00 – 8:30 pm, 79 Highland Ave. Registration is required: <https://somervillepubliclibrary.assabetinteractive.com/calendar/fair-housing-month-discussion-tenants-and-landlords-rights-2/>. This event is hybrid.

\*\*\*\*\*

To those celebrating their birthdays this week: A big happy birthday to **Mayor Katjana Ballantyne** who is celebrating this week. We hope she has a great day. Happy birthday to former alderman and great guy, **Jack Connolly**. We hope he has a nice day. Happy birthday to **Jesse Moos**, we hope he enjoys his day. *Continued on page 7*

# Somerville Weather Forecast

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

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 <b>Wednesday</b> <i>April 16</i>	Cloudy	50°/38°	3%	2%	W 18 mph
 <b>Thursday</b> <i>April 17</i>	Sunny	60°/37°	2%	0%	NW 12 mph
 <b>Friday</b> <i>April 18</i>	Partly Cloudy	64°/50°	10%	7%	SW 11 mph
 <b>Saturday</b> <i>April 19</i>	Rain	74°/48°	32%	26%	SW 14 mph
 <b>Sunday</b> <i>April 20</i>	Sunny	58°/40°	3%	1%	N 13 mph
 <b>Monday</b> <i>April 21</i>	Partly Cloudy	61°/47°	12%	8%	NW 12 mph
 <b>Tuesday</b> <i>April 22</i>	Partly Cloudy	64°/50°	22%	12%	SW 13 mph

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

## TheSomervilleTimes.com Comments of the Week

### Response to: JUST SAY NO!

Frank Malsbenden says:

Thank you for this excellent history of Davis Square, your leadership in making it one of the greatest neighborhoods in the country, and your thoughtful recommendations for it’s future. To say you have some credibility on the topic would be the understatement of the year.

slaw says:

“I understand the need for more housing; I agree, but what Somerville needs is more affordable housing for our long-term residents who are being forced out by high rents.” This proposal will have 100 units of affordable housing. If it is reduced in size that number will be reduced proportionately. The 400 other units will similarly take pressure off existing housing stock and provide people options to live closer to transit. I don’t think “this building is tall” is a good reason to oppose affordable housing, while claiming to support it.

### Response to: Statement by a friend of Rumeysa Ozturk

Anne C. Sullivan says:

Can a few of us fly to Basile, Louisiana this month to support her there? I too had a scholarship in 1978 for Eliot Pearson Dept of Child Study and earned an M.Ed. in 1980 from Tufts. I am shocked over her kidnapping and her being taken to St. Albans VT and flown from Burlington.

### Response to: Milkshakes and mercurochrome

Steve Keenan says:

At the corner of Temple and Mystic Ave we had Sam’s(owned by Sam Cone) and also Doc’s. They went by the Wayside when their side of Mystic Ave was demolished to construct Route 93. This poem touched my heart—so tender, brave, and full of light. Sahiba, your words shine with truth and hope. Thank you for sharing your beautiful voice.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

# The Somerville Times

news@thesomervilletimes.com

www.thesomervilletimes.com

Phone: 857-488-5138



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Publisher – Somerset Valley Publishing Inc.

Editor – Jim Clark

Assignment Editor – Bobbie Toner

Advertising Director – Bobbie Toner

Arts Editor – Doug Holder

Writers: Jim Clark, Harry Kane, Jeffrey Shwom  
and Cathleen Twardzik

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

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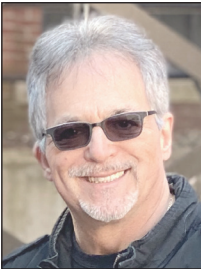
Life in the

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.

# Do you remember gimp?



When the idea hit me, I started by looking up gimp. But I didn't even know how to spell it. Then gimp came up as an app to enhance the use of Photoshop on computers. I finally found the description of the summer activity that was enjoyed when we were kids at our neighborhood playground. Here is the definition found on the internet.

"Gimp is a flat or round plastic string used in crafts. It comes in a variety of colors and can be plaited, braided, knotted or woven. Other names include boondoggle, craft lace, lanyard or scoubidou. Children enjoy making braided ropes or lanyards for key chains or friendship bracelets, but adults enjoy creating projects with it as well, and the crafts created can be complex. Braiding or weaving crafts with gimp stimulates creativity and hand-eye coordination."

We didn't know any of that about gimp except that we enjoyed making stiff out of it. All we had to do was show up at a Somerville playground in the 60s and 70s



and the councilors handed out the gimp and we went to town.

The playground counselors would pass out the gimp and show you how to use it. I made things out of gimp at The Brown Schoolyard and Powder House Park. Other Somerville people added their comments about gimp, in quotes.

**Powder House Park**

"I remember at the playground we had counselor trainees teaching us. It was called Camp and the name of the playground you went to. They had games, crafts and snacks and it was so much fun. They should bring these things back. Yet, I know, wishful thinking."

*"I loved making these at the parks"*

"I remember those days! That was back in the 1950s. I tried to make a necklace with that. I never could get it started. Once it was, then I would finish it. It was kind of tricky but the person in charge was always there to help you."

"At Powder House Park! They charged a little bit for the materials and it was a big deal to get the money from mom ... maybe 25 or 50 cents? Choosing my gimp colors, then sitting down and attaching the clip end onto the chain link fence to start the braiding was a right of passage!"

Some kids played with gimp at YMCA camp. I went a couple of years but all I remember was going to Hood's Cherry Hill Farm. Most of the friends who re-



membered doing fun activities at city playgrounds recall making good friends as one of the most vivid.

"I loved making these at the parks. Started at Northeastern then Burns. Such great memories. Also loved dodgeball and jacks."

**The Brown School schoolyard**

"One of my favorites!! Grimmon's playground every summer. Also, the chains we made out of gum wrappers!"

"I really wish I could remember how to make the (gimp) box at the end of the lanyard. Wore mine whenever I roller skated. Always knew wear my skate key was. I wonder, if I made one today could I place the car key fob on it? I'd never misplace or drop my car and house keys."

There was a store on Broadway near Clarendon Hill Apartments where we got our gimp.

Some closing thoughts about having fun at our city's playgrounds with gimp.

"I loved doing the 'box stitch' to bring the chain into a loop and finish off the piece."

"I used to love making them. Looking back, I think having those recreation parks open for us as kids and teenagers kept a lot of us out of trouble. Great memories!"

Great memories!



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## Somerville Police Dept Crime Log March 23 – April 7

### Assault

25016391: On 3/26/25 at approximately 5:01 pm, Somerville Police took a report from a female who stated she was taking care of an elderly male at her workplace and was struck with a cane by the male.

### Arrest

25017160: On 3/30/25 at approximately 6:33 pm, Somerville Police responded to Beacon St. for report of a fight. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he got into an altercation with an employee at a nearby business. During the altercation, the suspect brandished a knife and held it to the victim's throat. Officers located the suspect and he was placed under arrest.

### Residential Breaking and Entering

25018681: On 4/7/25 at approximately 10:26 pm, officers responded to a residence on Dimick St. for a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated she was on vacation and when she returned, she noticed numerous items were stolen.

**Other Crimes:** 2 MV thefts • 11 Car breaks • 2 Bike thefts • 1 Vandalism • 1 Package theft

— Somerville Police Department



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## Council pay increase not approved

CONT. FROM PG 1

by the council.

Upon review of the first draft, city spokesperson Grace Munns said, "The city has not opposed the concept of COLAs, in fact, other municipalities such as Cambridge and Northampton have implemented them, and we are open to exploring the idea." However, the city raised issues regarding the structure and language. "The challenge is in the how, not the what. Somerville doesn't have a history of using a COLA model for elected officials" and has relied on the MCAB recommendation process. That process, last held in 2017 though it is supposed to occur every other year, allowed for a 60% pay increase (from \$25,000 to \$40,000).

On April 8, the finance committee recommended approval of the compromise second version that outlined if and when city councilors, the mayor and school committee members receive an automatically yearly pay increase.

The newest language asked for compensation to increase by a maximum of two percent or the annual average consumer price index increase for the Boston and north of Boston metro area,

whichever figure is lower. The catch was that when the Municipal Compensation Advisory Board [2] issues a recommendation, their findings supersede the automatic increases.

For example, if the ordinance was in practice this year, there would be no automatic salary increases because in January 2025, MCAB recommended no changes, citing above-average pay for those civil servants compared to adjacent towns and cities. Finance Chair Jake Wilson remarked during the meeting, "I believe we have figured out a way to do cost of living adjustments for electeds while solving for the conflict of interest...and the MCAB recommendation issues."

Since the first draft, the authors of the ordinance worked to make it more clear they were not trying to directly give themselves a raise. Brendan Salisbury, Legislative and Policy Analyst for the city who helped with the draft, suggested using January 1 of the preceding year for the salary increases, so that the increase would be "a year behind" and would avoid the perception that councilors were giving themselves raises."

The finance committee agreed. Councilor Wilson said, "We did not want to chain it to anything that we would have (direct) input on." Furthermore, the councilors could vote to waive a pay increase by a two-thirds vote. Salisbury said, "If it was going to be a particularly lean year ahead, the council could know well in advance" whether or not to allow or waive the next increase.

Not all the councilors were satisfied. Councilor J.T. Scott motioned to change two percent to be four percent before withdrawing. "I think we are doing a lot of gymnastics that really are not necessary. I did want to point out that the standard pay increase for the entire time I have been on council for non-union personnel is 4%. In some rare cases, there was a 2% year...even in our catastrophic Covid year, when some raises were delayed, the city was able to give non-union employees their pay raise."

Councilor Clingan also said that he thought the new language seemed "overly complicated. I have been a proponent of just tying it to Social Security COLA, which happens in October each year," giving

the city time to plan for its budget. And Councilor Burnley expressed that he still does not think this language fixes "the historic gap" in pay. "It is supplemental without solving the root issue" of councilors not getting paid enough.

Even so, Councilor Ewen-Campen, who sponsored this ordinance, emailed, "The last time the Municipal Compensation Advisory Board made a recommendation on the salaries of elected officials in Somerville was nine years ago. These salaries have been frozen since then. There are no other jobs in Somerville that have not seen a pay raise in a decade. The cost of living in Somerville increases every year, and if pay doesn't increase, it's basically giving people a pay cut every year. I think it's a matter of basic fairness that public servants should see a modest cost of living increase each year."

### Links:

[1] <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/139396>

[2] <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/municipal-compensation-advisory-board>



# Somerville talks clean energy, invasive plants, and yard waste

By Carlie Lombardi

On April 7, the Open Space, Environment, and Energy Committee tackled several major sustainability topics, including infrastructure upgrades by Eversource, invasive species management, and changes to the city’s yard waste pickup calendar.

**Eversource discusses project costs, energy demand, and community disruption**

Representatives from Eversource joined the committee to provide updates on major energy infrastructure projects, including upgrades to the Prospect Street Substation and modernization of underground cables. While much of the equipment for these projects was ordered years ago and is unaffected by recent geopolitical tensions, Eversource acknowledged that ongoing trade disruptions and global demand for energy technology may increase costs for future projects.

Committee members voiced concern that rising project costs could ultimately be passed on to ratepayers. In response, Eversource representatives said that costs are

typically spread across the state and spread out over the lifespan of each project.

Discussions also focused on shifting demand projections, especially as some previously planned life science developments are converted to other commercial uses. Eversource said it is monitoring these changes and believes its current 10-year plan, including the upcoming completion of the expanded Substation 402, can support increased residential density near new and existing transit spots.

**Mass Save budget cuts and rate stability**

Much of the conversation also focused on Eversource’s delivery charges, which have risen in recent years. The Mass Save energy efficiency program has seen budget cuts of \$500 million statewide. Officials explained that while more people are using Mass Save benefits, the growing cost of participation has driven up utility bills.

Somerville Director of Sustainability Christine Blais reminded residents that Somerville’s Community Choice Electricity program locks in rates through 2028, offering some protection from vol-



The Open Space, Environment, and Energy Committee recently addressed the lack of invasive species management, among other issues.

atility in energy markets.

**Push for invasive species position ends in disappointment**

The committee also formally closed a long pending proposal to create a dedicated city position for managing invasive plant species. Committee member, Willie

Burnley Jr., who first submitted the order 15 months ago, expressed frustration at the lack of progress.

Members and advocates agreed on the importance of invasive species management, especially for aggressive spreaders like black swallow-wort *Continued on page 13*





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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 representatives' votes on roll calls from the week of April 7-11. There were no roll calls in the Senate last week.

**\$1.3 BILLION FOR TRANSPORTATION AND EDUCATION (H 4005)**

House 140-14, approved and sent to the Senate a \$1.3 billion supplemental budget that uses funds generated from the recent surtax imposed on taxpayers' earnings of more than \$1 million annually, to fund \$353 million for education-related projects and \$828 million for transportation-related ones. It also includes non-surtax spending that pushes the combined bottom line to roughly \$1.3 billion.

The surtax was created by voters in November 2022 when they voted for a constitutional amendment that allows a graduated income tax in Massachusetts and imposes an additional 4 percent income tax, in addition to the flat 5 percent one, on taxpayers' earnings of more than \$1 million annually. Language in the constitutional amendment requires that "subject to appropriation, the revenue will go to fund quality public education, affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and public transportation."

A total of \$818 million of the \$828 million for transportation will be used for various MBTA projects while \$10 million will fund unpaved roads.

The \$353 million for education includes \$190 million for Circuit Breaker reimbursements, which provide financial assistance to public school districts to offset the cost of delivering high-cost special education services to students; \$50 million for capital improvements at vocational schools; \$40 million for early education and care workforce; \$10 million for universal school meals for all public-school students; and \$10 million for Green School-Works to decarbonize and increase efficiency in schools through green energy projects.

"Ensuring that every Massachusetts resident has access to a safe and reliable public transportation system, and that every student in the commonwealth receives a high-quality education, are two of the most fundamental responsibilities that we have as elected officials," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). "The investments being made in this supplemental budget are representative of the House's continued focus on meeting those responsibilities and were made possible as a result of years of fiscally responsible, consensus driven budgeting."

"The use of these one-time surplus of funds are a unique opportunity for us to better strengthen the common-

wealth in numerous ways," said Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston), chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means. "By further improving our educational and transportation sectors, we will build off the work we have done in the last several budget cycles with a judicious use of the Fair Share funds."

"[The] session was dominated by votes that favored pork barrel spending and neglected support for cities and towns in transportation and education," said Rep. Marc Lombardo (R-Billerica) who voted against the package. "Instead of allocating critical funding for roads and bridges to benefit all communities, the bill was filled with pork spending for House leadership. Moreover, instead of fully funding special education costs that are straining municipal budgets, we allocated hundreds of millions of dollars to the MBTA. Overall, the bill failed to provide comprehensive financial support to communities across the commonwealth. Beacon Hill needs to do better."

"While the education piece was strong, the transportation piece was not," said Rep. Joe McKenna (R-Webster). "The stark disparity in funding between the MBTA getting nearly the entirety of funding while the 277 cities and towns without direct MBTA access were effectively left out, was too large a gap to support the bill."

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

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

**\$50 MILLION TO CITIES AND TOWNS FOR LOCAL ROADS (H 4005)**

House 25-125, rejected an amendment that would reduce funding for the MBTA by \$50 million (from \$818 million to \$768 million) and instead give the \$50 million to cities and towns for roads using a formula based strictly on each municipality's local road mileage. Currently, communities receive roads funding based on their population, employment and total road miles.

"The amendment would have shifted only \$50 million - just 6 percent out of \$828 million - for the MBTA and reappropriate it to Chapter 90 to be allocated based on a town's road mileage," said amendment sponsor Rep. Joe McKenna (R-Sutton). "This would have shown a strong commitment from the commonwealth to provide regional equity in transportation infrastructure in all corners of the state, while still infusing a massive \$743 million dollars to the T."

Rep. James Arciero (D-Westford) said that adequate

funding for roads and bridges is always important, but it's part of a larger discussion. This is a subject that's better suited for examination before the public at the committee level. The Transportation Committee will take up this very subject tomorrow when it hears the governor's \$1.5 billion proposal for the Chapter 90 program. The committee looks forward to hearing from legislators, stakeholders and municipal leaders across the state as we examine the governor's proposal.

(A "Yes" vote is for \$50 million for cities and towns. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber	No
Rep. Mike Connolly	No
Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven	No

**ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL**

**TRANSGENDER STUDENTS AND SCHOOL SPORTS** - During the debate on the surtax, Freshman Rep. John Gaskey (R-Carver) proposed an amendment that would prohibit any public school from allowing a biological male athlete to participate on a girls' sports team and also prohibit a biological female athlete from participating on a boys' sports team. Any school found not in compliance with this ban would forfeit all games which violate the ban.

"For too long Massachusetts has put girls at risk in sports," said Gaskey. "There have been several instances of boys seriously injuring girls on the field during matches. This is not a transgender issue alone, this is protecting children and creating a system of fair competition. Boys are stronger, faster and more aggressive, and put girls, who are more prone to injury (Harvard study), at greater risk. Massachusetts is putting federal funding at risk by not addressing this requirement as well."

The House did not vote on the ban itself because Rep. Ken Gordon (D-Bedford) offered a further amendment that would delay the ban from taking place until the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education studies the transgender students in school sports issue. The House approved the delay and essentially killed Gaskey's bill. The vote was conducted on a voice vote without a roll call.

Rep. Gordon said that the issue is not a simple one but rather a complex one, involving issues of federal and state law, and also is the subject of multiple bills that are being considered by the Committee on Education, including one proposed by Gaskey himself. He argued that the study and a public hearing on the ban should be complete before the House votes on it.

*Continued on page 16*



COMMENTARY

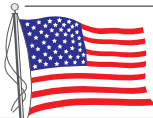
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Happy spring holidays, Somerville.

Our View Of The Times



If there’s one universal certainty among most – if not all – people, we surely enjoy the transition from the cold, gloomy atmosphere of winter to the explosion of life and natural beauty as the months of spring unfold.

Hallmarks of this special time include the religious holidays that many of us celebrate, such as Easter, for those of the Christian faith, and the rites of Passover

practiced by those of the Jewish faith. Likewise, the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr begins later this month.

Whatever one’s faith – or lack of religious belief – we can all pretty much agree that the old-fashioned traditions we have known our lives can bring us closer together, as long as we embrace them in the spirit of goodwill and community involvement.

One doesn’t have to necessarily have re-

ligious convictions to enjoy watching the young ones having a ball at a neighborhood Easter egg hunt.

History tells us that the custom of the Easter egg hunt has its origins dating back to the late 16th century, when the Protestant reformer Martin Luther organized egg hunts for his congregation. Easter eggs and the egg hunt became more popular in mainstream England in the late 19th

and early 20th centuries as society began to change. The tradition continued on through the present day, and it looks as though it will go on into the future.

This has become a tradition that the religious and secular alike can enjoy either participating in or simply observing.

And hey, if nothing else there are those great after-Easter candy blowout sales at your local pharmacy. Just don’t overdo it.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Happy birthday to a nice guy, **Blake Maddux**, who has written in the past for this us. We wish him a great day. Happy birthday to **Julie Phelan Brady**. We hope she enjoys her day. Happy birthday to **Jim Cook**, who is celebrating this week. Happy birthday to **Bob DiGuardia**, who is also celebrating this week. We wish a happy birthday to all of our Facebook friends, such as **Eilen Langille**, **Karen Muti Standel**, **Missy JT**, **Olga Solomita**, **Joanne Veneziano Finnegan**, **Patricia Ferrelli**, **Lee Erica Byron Palmer**, **Rachel Strutt**, **Paul Stanford** and **Benjamin Holmes** who are all celebrating this week. To all the others we may have

missed and, yes, we must admit there are a few more out there. We sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Joshua Sariñana’s** upcoming exhibition, *Mental Mapping*, will be showcased at **SomArt @ the Armory**, 191 Highland Ave., Second Floor, Suite 2A, Somerville. The exhibition runs from April 1 through June 22, 2025. This exhibition delves into the intersections of neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and visual storytelling. Mental Mapping explores how internal networks, such as memory, perception, and emotion, shape the way we experience and navigate the world.[https://www.](https://www.joshuasarinana.com/mental-mapping)

[joshuasarinana.com/mental-mapping](https://www.joshuasarinana.com/mental-mapping)

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**Poetry Class** at the **COA** meets on **Wednesday, 16, 23 and 30** from noon to 1:00 pm Free of charge. Learn more about how to create your own poems at the **Somerville Council on Aging**, led by Somerville poet **Shirley Ware**. Learn the art of writing poems in a nurturing, creative environment. Grab-n-Go lunch is available upon request. RSVP to **Natasha Naim** by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2317.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Around Hear: Spring Break Concert.** **Saturday, April 26, 2 – 3:30 pm**, **Mystic**

**Activity Center**, 530 Mystic Ave. Somerville. Free, open to the public. Listeners of all ages are welcome. Refreshments served. Write, draw, move while you listen. After-concert pizza party. Come join in for a concert of music so uplifting, you might find yourself flying around the room. Between musical flights of joy by **Telemann and Beethoven**, they will be sharing a set of songs from their evolving “**Superdoves!**” project: a combination adventure novel+song cycle. And exciting news: besides having two incredible human guest musicians joining in for this program, **Flappy the Pigeon** will be on hand (literally) to teach

*Continued on page 21*



FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#970

1. How many marzipan balls are traditionally on a simnel cake?

2. In Switzerland, what animal delivers Easter eggs to kids?

3. In what country did the tradition of the Easter Bunny originate?

4. The original Easter bunny in Germany was actually what sort of animal?

5. What is Fat Tuesday?

6. What is the traditional Easter mascot in Australia?

7. Which president

was the first to introduce an Easter bunny to the White House Easter Egg Roll?

8. Which American President died during Passover?

9. What is egg dancing?

10. What flower is considered the symbol of Easter?

11. What is the name of the ceremonial dinner held on the first two nights of Passover?

12. What type of bread is eaten during Passover?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Hummingbirds are the only animals that can fly backward.

2. Many oranges are actually green.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

- ACROSS
1. Little Richard's "\_\_\_\_ Frutti"

6. Arrival time, acr.

9. Deity, in Sanskrit

13. \_\_\_\_-under, pl.

14. Lysergic acid diethylamide

15. Support person

16. Fictional professor Lupin's first name

17. Snoop

18. Computer accessory

19. Pill alternative

21. Medical care

23. Use eyes

24. Slap on

25. Hot beverage amount

28. Tear down

30. Tissue testing

35. Smell

37. Gardener's storage

39. Shipping box

40. Eight furlongs

41. Subject matter

43. Square footage

44. Like some towelettes

46. Russian ruler, once

47. Pasturelands

48. Acted

50. Enthusiasm

52. "Silent Spring" subject

53. Popular PBS science show

55. Letters of distress

57. Stitches

61. Perpetual illness

65. Offer two cents

66. \_\_\_\_ Hot, pain relief patch

68. Branch of economics

69. Sega hedgehog

70. Bubble maker

71. Be of use

72. December stone

73. Born, in society pages

74. Rental agreement

CROSSWORD														
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8			9	10	11	12
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
19						20			21	22				
			23				24							
25	26	27		28		29			30		31	32	33	34
35			36			37			38		39			
40						41				42		43		
44				45		46					47			
48						49		50			51		52	
				53		54			55		56			
57	58	59	60					61					62	63
65						66	67			68				
69						70				71				
72						73				74				

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- smoking

6. Other than what's implied

7. 5 cc, for short

8. Aadytum, pl.

9. Mendelsohn on "The New Look"

10. Cocoyam

11. Julia Louis-Dreyfus' HBO role

12. Major employer

15. Pertaining to amoebae

20. Minimum

22. Busy airport

24. \_\_\_\_ blue \_\_\_\_, to Baby Beluga

25. French WWI battle site

26. Expression

27. Disease once alleviated with iron lung

29. Tdap/DTaP, e.g.

31. Type of thermometer

32. Peeled and cut, as in pear

33. Lieu
34. Leavening agent

36. Bed \_\_\_\_

38. Obsolescent phone feature

42. Violent collision

45. Hedgehog-like Madagascar native

49. Anonymous John

51. Like 97 to 99 degrees

54. "Peace" with fingers (2 words)

56. Wine from Verona

57. Average

58. Fairytale's second word?

59. Like Elton John's Dancer

60. Type of operating system

61. Inflorescence

62. March Madness org.

63. Part of #2 Down

64. His was a merry old soul

67. Pool tool
- Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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



OBITUARY

Darin James Carney



Darin James Carney  
June 7, 1994 – May 21, 2024

A funeral mass will be held for Darin on April 24, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. at St. Monica Church, 331

Old Colony Avenue, South Boston, a five-minute walk from Andrew Station on the Red Line. He will be laid to rest at Woodlawn Cemetery, Everett at a later date.

Darin loved and was loved by his mother Megan Fewtrell, his father Jason Carney, his grandparents Frederick Fewtrell and Leslie Baldner, the late Denise Carney and Joseph Carney and the late Shane O’Neil who was his brother. All from Somerville, MA. Darin also had many other treasured family and friends.

Come to remember Darin who was a shining light in our lives and will continue to be forever.

Honoring Memorial Day in Somerville

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the Somerville Department of Veterans’ Services are announcing that Somerville’s Memorial Day parade will be held on Sunday, May 25.

The parade will step off at 11 a.m. from Davis Square, proceeding west on Holland Street through Teele Square and onto Broadway, ending at the Veterans Cemetery between Alewife Brook Parkway and North Street. This year’s Grand Marshal is Somerville resident and Medal of Honor recipient Thomas G. Kelley.



The City’s annual remembrance ceremony will immediately follow at the Somerville Veterans’ Memorial Cemetery to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while in service to our country. The ceremony will feature remarks by Mayor Ballantyne and Director of Veterans’ Services Jerome Thomas.

**Sign Up to Join the Parade or Volunteer**  
Somerville community groups, organizations, and local businesses are encouraged to participate and march along with local Veterans and first responders, as well as volunteers to help the parade run smoothly.

To sign up to participate, or volunteer, please complete a brief form at [somervillema.gov/memorial-day](https://somervillema.gov/memorial-day) or call 617-625-6600 x 4700. The deadline to register as a parade participant is Friday, May 2.

Please contact the Somerville Department of Veterans’ Services at [veterans@somervillema.gov](mailto:veterans@somervillema.gov) or call 617-625-6600 x 4700 with questions.

Want to write local Somerville stories?  
Call 857-488-5138  
and speak to the Assignment Editor

Dorothy’s Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Passover Charoset

Charoset symbolizes one of at least five traditional items found on the Seder Plate during Passover. Charoset is a sweet relish of fruits, nuts, honey, spices, and wine. It represents the clay that was used to make bricks when the Israelites were enslaved in Ancient Egypt.

For more detailed information, go to <https://jamiegeller.com/recipes/ashkenazi-style-charoset/>. The recipe below was adapted from <https://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/browse-all-recipes/charoset>, Emily McKenna.

- 2 Apples, peeled and chopped into small pieces
- 1/2 Teaspoon lemon zest
- 1/2 Lemon, juiced
- 1/2 Cup toasted walnuts
- 1/2 Cup raisins
- 1/8 Cup honey

- 1/4 Cup orange marmalade
  - 1/2 Teaspoon cinnamon
  - 1/8 Teaspoon Chinese five spice
  - Pinch of kosher salt
- Preheat oven to 350°. Place the walnuts onto a cookie sheet and place in the oven for 10 minutes. Prepare the apples and place into a medium bowl. Add the lemon zest and lemon juice to the apples and mix well. This helps keeping them from oxidizing.
- In a small saucepan, add the raisins, honey, and orange marmalade. Place over a low heat and stir until the raisins are completely covered, about 2 minutes. Take off the heat and add the cinnamon, five spice, and salt, stir until completely mixed. Chop the walnuts into smaller pieces and add to the apples, then add the raisin mixture to the apples and blend everything together until well incorporated.
- Let sit for 4-6 hours in the refrigerator. Serve with matzo crackers. Serves



4-6 people.

If you’re planning on cooking a brisket and the side of tzimmes, here’s a link to a crock pot tzimmes recipe from a previous post I did in the past:


<https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/64030>.

Visit Dorothy’s website at <http://ddimarzo2002.wix.com/thymethief>.



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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, May 6, 2025** 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 2 of the Acts of 2025, 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/join/4s2IBRljQ66HJzuErnNJaQ>  
Webinar ID: 864 6024 6012

**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**

**Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties**

**HP25-000004 – 80 Hinckley Street**  
Applicant: Eric Kortz  
Owner: Peter Doherty  
*The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter a LHD property by removing the rear mudroom, installing an awning on the rear, and replacing the vinyl windows.*

**DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE (STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)**

**HP25-000008 - 6 Wheatland Street**  
Applicant: Adam Dash Assoc.  
Owner: NPO Properties LLC  
*The Applicant seeks to demolish a building constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.*


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

**HP24-000119 - 60 Franklin Street**  
Applicant: Pablo Picker-Picker Construction  
Owner: Shelley J Milligan  
*The Applicant seeks to demolish a building constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.*

*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.*

4/16/25 The Somerville Times

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



**City of Somerville**  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

The Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will hold a virtual public hearing on **Wednesday, April 30, 2025**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to [ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov](mailto:ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov).

**TO USE A COMPUTER**

Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/join/WN\\_HTGLnaSvSWS5Tmap9vsk\\_Q](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/WN_HTGLnaSvSWS5Tmap9vsk_Q)  
Webinar ID: 815 6753 5100

**TO CALL IN**

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


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

<b>238 Summer Street</b>	Mary Agner and Denis Moskowitz seeks relief from S20 Section 3.1.7.b, regarding the minimum sum of side setbacks, which requires a Hardship Variance.
<b>56 Webster Avenue</b>	Triad Alpha Partners, LLC seeks an extension of time on a previously granted special permit (ZBA #2008-65) and a modification to the conditions of its approval.
<b>22 McGrath Highway</b>	Juice Joint LLC. seeks to establish a Formula Business principal use in the Commercial Business (CB) 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 Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to [ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov](mailto:ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov).

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**167 HOLLAND STREET, 3RD FLOOR**  
**SOMERVILLE, MA 02144**  
**BID #S2026-04**

The School Committee of the City of Somerville invites sealed bids for:

**School Bus Transportation Services for Special Needs Students**


The IFB package may be obtained by emailing Leah Arredondo in the Finance Office, [larredondo@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:larredondo@k12.somerville.ma.us) or can be picked up at the Somerville School Department, Finance Office, 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144 on or after **Tuesday, April 8, 2025**.

Sealed bid responses will be received no later than **4 p.m. on Monday, April 28, 2025** at the Finance Office, Somerville School Department, 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144 at which time and place they shall be publicly opened and read aloud. This is a three (3) year contract: **July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028**.

*The School Committee of the City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part or parts thereof, waive any minor informality in the Bid process and to award the Contract that is deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Somerville School Department.*

**Patricia Durette**  
Interim Chief Financial Officer  
Somerville Public Schools

4/9/25, 4/16/25 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, May 1, 2025**, 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. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to [planningboard@somervillema.gov](mailto:planningboard@somervillema.gov).

**TO USE A COMPUTER**

Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/join/WN\\_nM3JSLxmSP6Jzw84n3g0rg](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/WN_nM3JSLxmSP6Jzw84n3g0rg)  
Webinar ID: 898 6072 8392

**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:

<b>74 Middlesex Ave</b>	Leone's Donut Shop, Inc. seeks to establish a Formula Business principal use in the Assembly Square Mixed Use (ASMD) district, which requires a Special Permit.
<b>362-368 Mystic Ave</b>	Haze of Somerville, LLC proposes to establish a Cannabis Retail Sales use in the Mid-Rise 5 (MR5) 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](mailto:PlanningBoard@somervillema.gov).

4/16/25 The Somerville Times



**LEGAL NOTICE**  
City of Somerville  
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD)  
WFD-25.4

The City of Somerville, Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) invites sealed proposals for the Childcare Career Advancement Initiative Workforce Development Grant Programs

**Workforce Development Grant Programs.** Proposals must be for programs that assist in the creation and maintenance of employment and career opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents of the City of Somerville. Funds for the Childcare Career Advancement Initiative are provided by the Job Creation and Retention Trust. Bid Number **WFD-25.4**

Request for Proposal packages for both programs will be posted and available for download on the City of Somerville website beginning at **10:00AM, Wednesday, April 16, 2025** at [www.somervillema.gov/wfd](http://www.somervillema.gov/wfd). Print copies available upon request to William Blackmer at email [WFD@somervillema.gov](mailto:WFD@somervillema.gov).

An electronic PDF file should be emailed to [WFD@somervillema.gov](mailto:WFD@somervillema.gov) and proposal packages must be submitted no later than **12:00 PM, Friday, May 23, 2025** for responses to WFD-25.4.

Please contact the City of Somerville's Workforce Development staff, by email at [WFD@somervillema.gov](mailto:WFD@somervillema.gov), for information and proposal packages.

Thomas Galligani, Executive Director  
617- 625-6600, x 2500

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SOMERVILLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

THE SOMERVILLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE WILL CONDUCT  
A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT'S FY2025 BUDGET

Wednesday, May 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.  
In the EAST SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM-50 Cross Street

To watch the Budget Hearing live from home:  
Use the following web address and choose GOVTV: [www.somervillema.gov/tv](http://www.somervillema.gov/tv)

THE PUBLIC IS CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND

Ilana Krepchin, Chair  
Somerville School Committee

Dr. Sarah Phillips, Vice Chair  
Finance and Facilities Subcommittee

Dr. Rubén Carmona  
Superintendent of Schools

For questions regarding the Budget Hearing, please contact your School Committee Ward Member:  
<https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-leadership/somerville-school-committee>  
Budget information will be posted on the Somerville Public School website prior to the Budget hearing here:  
<https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-leadership/central-administration/finance-and-facilities>

STATE-WIDE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM  
PUBLIC HEARING

THE SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL  
CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING TO  
DETERMINE PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL  
CHOICE PROGRAM FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR  
MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

4/16/25 The Somerville Times



City of Somerville  
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L.c.131§40, the SOMERVILLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION will hold a Public Meeting on **Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025**, at 7:00 p.m. to review the Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) on behalf of the Applicant, Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), the Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW) in conjunction with Offshoots, Inc. This Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) application and supporting materials pertains to invasive species management and installation of native plant communities at Blessing of the Bay Park in Somerville, MA. The proposed amendment involves installing pervious pathways as part of the park's ongoing ecological restoration effort. These pathways will allow water to filter through, reducing runoff, preventing erosion, and promoting groundwater recharge, and unlike compacted dirt paths that can erode over time, will protect water quality within the downgradient waters. Pervious surfaces are more durable, require less maintenance, and will provide more formalized access to sensitive areas, such as the restored plant meadows and woodland canopy understory plantings.

Copies of the application can be viewed at the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA. Contact Malik Drayton, Conservation Agent, at 617-625-6600 x2514, or send an email to [mldrayton@somervillema.gov](mailto:mldrayton@somervillema.gov) for more information.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, **this public meeting will be conducted via remote participation.**

TO USE A COMPUTER  
Webinar ID  
810 9985 4585

Registration URL  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN\\_6g3bPqwmR3uE2HJ4eHmCBA](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_6g3bPqwmR3uE2HJ4eHmCBA)

4/16/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
RFP # 25-63

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

Sewer Systems Repair and Maintenance

A request for bid (IFB) may be obtained online at [www.bidexpress.com](http://www.bidexpress.com), <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or from the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **Wednesday, April 16, 2025**. Sealed Bids will be received at the above office until: **2:00 PM EST, Thursday May 1, 2025**. 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 Jordan T. Remy at [jremy@somervillema.gov](mailto:jremy@somervillema.gov) for more information.

Jordan T. Remy  
Senior Procurement Manager  
617-625-6600 x3409

4/16/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
167 HOLLAND STREET, 3RD FLOOR  
SOMERVILLE, MA 02144  
BID #S2026-05

The School Committee of the City of Somerville invites sealed bids for:

School Student Transportation Services Including  
Charter Transportation for Somerville Public Schools.

The IFB package may be obtained by emailing Leah Arredondo in the Finance Office, [larredondo@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:larredondo@k12.somerville.ma.us) or can be picked up at the Somerville School Department, Finance Office, 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144 on or after **Wednesday, April 9, 2025**.

Sealed bid responses will be received no later than **10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 29, 2025** at the Finance Office, Somerville School Department, 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144 at which time and place they shall be publicly opened and read aloud. This is a three (3) year contract: **July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028**.

*The School Committee of the City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part or parts thereof, waive any minor informality in the Bid process and to award the Contract that is deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Somerville School Department.*

Patricia Durette  
Interim Chief Financial Officer  
Somerville Public Schools

4/9/25, 4/16/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING SERVICES  
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
RFQ# 25-64

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

On-Call Engineering Services for Various Public Works Projects

The bid package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's electronic bidding platform at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, April 16th, 2025** Sealed bids will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, and 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2:30 pm, Wednesday, May 14th, 2025**.

The City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all bids, 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 [procurement@somervillema.gov](mailto:procurement@somervillema.gov) for more information.

Thupten Chukhatsang  
Senior Procurement Manager  
617-625-6600 x3400

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Legal Notice

The following vehicles will be sold  
Pursuit to M.G.L. 255 S.39A  
2002 Toyota Camry Vin# 4T1BE32K22U579252  
2006 Ford E150 Vin# 1FTRE14L46DA83985  
2013 Ford Taurus Vin# 1FAHP2D88DG197982  
2013 Hyundai Veloster Vin# KMHTC6AD7DU142641  
2004 Honda Element Vin# 5J6YH285X4L012520  
2006 BMW X3 Vin# WVBXPA93466VWD28680  
2011 Land Rover LR4 Vin# SALAK2D47BA569733  
2010 Mazda 3 Vin# JM1BL1SG0A1188532  
2010 Toyota Corolla Vin# 2T1BU4EE7AC290527  
To satisfy the debt owed to  
Cityside Enterprises Inc.  
617-776-6111

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Be sure to visit us online at  
[www.TheSomervilleTimes.com](http://www.TheSomervilleTimes.com)  
and on Facebook at  
[www.facebook.com/somerville.times.1](http://www.facebook.com/somerville.times.1)

# Food For Free laces up for Project Bread's 57th Walk for Hunger

On May 4, Food For Free will step up for Project Bread's 57th Walk for Hunger. For the 7th consecutive year, the Somerville-based nonprofit will raise money to support statewide food security through the Commonwealth Program. The Commonwealth gives organizations addressing food insecurity 60% of all funds they raise to support their own hunger relief programs, with the remaining 40% applied to Project Bread's statewide food security efforts.

The Walk for Hunger, Project Bread's flagship community fundraiser, brings together a diverse community dedicated to ensuring food security across the state. The celebration is set for Sunday, May 4 at 9 am. and will feature family-friendly activities, food, and entertainment. This year's Walk will remain an accessible route on the fully paved sidewalks, allowing people with mobility devices, young children, and other needs to participate. ASL interpreters and multilingual staff will be present throughout the event.

"It is becoming more and more difficult for people to afford enough to eat," says Erin McAleer, President & CEO of Project Bread. "One in 5 families with kids are worried about where their next meal will come from. The Walk for Hunger is our opportunity to make an immediate difference in the lives of thousands of our neighbors. Organizations like Food For Free are what make The Walk for Hunger such a powerful event. Together, as a community, we're making sure people can access food with dignity and choice each day."

Food For Free acquires rescued, donated, and purchased food from a number of sources to meet the increased demand to

ensure everyone in the community—regardless of age, income, or background—has consistent access to nutrition. As one of the nation's first food rescue organizations, the leading food rescue and distribution nonprofit in Eastern Massachusetts now serves over 132,000 Massachusetts residents and distributes 6.2 million pounds of fresh and prepared foods annually.

With the end of the USDA's Local Food Purchasing Assistance limiting fresh produce access, funds from this year's Walk for Hunger will help expand offerings at summer School Markets. The team aims to raise \$8,000, rallying volunteers, community partners, and supporters to strengthen the movement for food equity.

"The Walk for Hunger is an opportunity to unite with others who share our commitment to ending food insecurity," says Alex Gladwell, Associate Director of Programs and Partnerships at Food For Free. "By walking, we not only raise funds but also awareness of the challenges many in our community face in accessing fresh, healthy food. Together, we can create meaningful, lasting change."

Beginning in 1969 as the first pledge walk in the nation, money raised from The Walk for Hunger is critical to fund systemic change for hunger relief. Project Bread launched the joint-fundraising Commonwealth Program in 2019. In 2024, 39 nonprofits raised more than \$228,000 to support their own programs for statewide food security.

Donate directly to Food For Free's Commonwealth fundraiser at <https://give.projectbread.org/team/644226>. To register as a participant for Project Bread's Walk for Hunger, or to support a walker or team



with a donation, visit [give.projectbread.org/walk](https://give.projectbread.org/walk). All individual walkers are encouraged to fundraise a minimum of \$25 and teams \$250. Participants who raise \$500 or more are recognized as Heart & Sole walkers and receive access to personalized fundraising support, exclusive event gear, free breakfast on Walk Day, and invitations to exclusive events.

People experiencing food insecurity should call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline (1-800-645-8333), which provides confidential, free assistance getting connected to a variety of food resources in 180 languages and for the hearing impaired. Counselors can pre-screen families and help them to apply for SNAP. Learn more at [projectbread.org/get-help](https://projectbread.org/get-help).

Project Bread is the leading statewide food security organization in Massachusetts. Beginning in 1969 with the first

Walk for Hunger, the nonprofit focuses on driving systemic change to ensure people of all ages have reliable access to healthy food. Project Bread works collaboratively across sectors to create innovative solutions to end hunger and improve lives across the Commonwealth. For more information, visit: [www.projectbread.org](https://www.projectbread.org).

Food For Free acquires rescued, donated, and purchased food from a number of sources to meet the increased demand to ensure everyone in the community—regardless of age, income, or background—has consistent access to nutrition. As one of the nation's first food rescue organizations, Food For Free now serves more than 132,000 Massachusetts residents facing food insecurity and distributes 6.2 million pounds of nutritious fresh and prepared foods annually. For more information, visit: [www.foodforfree.org](https://www.foodforfree.org).

## Applications now open for the Somerville Mayor's Summer Jobs Program

The City of Somerville is now accepting applications for the 2025 Mayor's Summer Jobs Program, a six-week paid career readiness initiative for Somerville youth ages 14 through the summer of high school graduation. This program offers teens the chance to explore potential career paths, build workplace and interpersonal skills, and connect with their community. Participants will work up to 20 hours per week from July 7 through August 15 in a variety of roles across more than 20 city departments and local organizations.

"Our young people are talented, capable, and full of potential," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "This program gives them the tools to step confidently into the workforce while making a real impact right here in their community. I can't wait to welcome this summer's new class of changemakers."

Work opportunities are available with the Parks and Recreation Department, Somerville Public Schools, the Department of Public Works, Library, Police and Fire Departments, Department of Racial and Social Justice, and more. A limited number of placements are also available with non-profit and private-sector partners throughout the city.

The city is accepting applications now through April 30, 2025. Interested applicants should complete the online application: <https://cityofsomerville.applytojob.com/apply/je32cinE40/Mayors-Summer-Jobs-Program?referrer=20250327141100OMN6GHYGAXAVBYZX>

After submitting the form, applicants will receive a confirmation email that their application has been received. For questions, please contact [summerjobs@somervillema.gov](mailto:summerjobs@somervillema.gov).



# Middlesex DA announces indictment in the 2009 cold case murder of Charline Rosemond

Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan and Somerville Police Chief Shumeane Benford announced that Heinsky Anacreon, 38, of Malden has been indicted for murder in the shooting death of Charline Rosemond in Somerville in 2009. Charline Rosemond was last seen alive in Somerville on April 7, 2009. Her body was found slumped in her father’s car in a parking lot in Union Square on April 13, 2009. She had been shot.

At the time of her death, Charline Rosemond was 23 years old, living with her family in Everett and working at a car dealership in Brighton. She had told friends and family that she was planning to buy a used Lexus. She had withdrawn a substantial amount of cash from her bank earlier that week to make the purchase.

**Charline Rosemond**

Evidence developed by the Cold Case Unit of the Middlesex District Attorneys’ Office revealed that, acting together, Anacreon and his friend, Roberto Jeune, induced the victim to bring the cash she had withdrawn to a remote parking lot, where she was shot and killed. Jeune, whom the victim had believed was one of

her closest friends, convinced her he had a contact who could secure the type of car she was looking for at a favorable price. Anacreon played the part of that contact, as he had access, through his workplace, to the exact model of Lexus that the victim was seeking. Together, Jeune and Anacreon used that car as bait to gain the victim’s trust.

In the aftermath of the murder, Anacreon had admitted to a close confidant that he had provided the .44 Magnum firearm that was used to take the victim’s life and that he had disposed of the murder weapon by throwing it into a body of water. The murder weapon has never been recovered. Roberto Jeune died of natural causes in Philadelphia, PA on July 8, 2024.

“Charline Rosemond was a promising and hard-working young woman with her whole life ahead of her,” said District Attorney Marian Ryan. “We allege today that she was taken advantage of and murdered by two men who were willing to take her life for \$4,000. They killed her in cold blood. They celebrated the murder with a bottle of champagne, and they left

her body in a parking lot for days, while her family frantically searched for her. This indictment is the first step in holding Anacreon accountable for Charline Rosemond’s murder. It is another reminder of our commitment to neither forgetting nor giving up on uncharged cases. I want to thank our State Police homicide unit and the Somerville Police Department detectives who never gave up on this case,” said District Attorney Ryan.

In addition to the indictment for First Degree Murder, Anacreon has also been indicted for one count of Attempt to Willfully Mislead a Police Officer, and one count of Attempt to Willfully Mislead an Attorney, charges that arise from his efforts on May 21, 2024, to obstruct justice during a proffer session with authorities.

In a formal interview setting, and with his own attorney present, Anacreon claimed that his friend Roberto Jeune had admitted to him that he had committed the murder of Charline Rosemond but denied that he had any prior knowledge or any involvement in Jeune’s plan. Evidence developed during the course of the inves-



Charline Rosemond.

tigation convincingly demonstrated that Anacreon’s denials of participation were knowingly and willfully false.

An arraignment date in this case has not been scheduled. The prosecutor assigned is Chief of the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office Cold Case Unit David Solet. The Victim Witness Advocate is Susie Marshall.

## Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan discusses unsolved murder of Deanna Cremin with City Council

Last week at the regular meeting of the Somerville City Council held on April 10, Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan made an unprecedented appearance to answer questions from city councilors on behalf of members of the public, regarding the long-unsolved 1995 murder of Deanna Cremin.

DA Ryan’s visit comes on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the case, which continues to deeply impact the Somerville community. The engagement was prompted by renewed calls for transparency, justice, and accountability in one of Middlesex County’s most haunting unsolved homicides.

During the meeting, DA Ryan addressed inquiries about the possibility of tainted evidence, status of the investigation, challenges in solving the case, and the potential for new developments. Her appearance was seen as a long-awaited step toward public dialogue and renewed attention to the case.

The City Council, along with residents and advocacy groups, remain committed to seeking justice for Deanna and supporting her family’s decades-long fight for answers. The entire appearance can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/7xcgoiLg83k>.



## Somerville talks clean energy, invasive plants, and yard waste

CONT. FROM PG 5

and Japanese knotweed, but pointed out budget constraints and suggested leveraging volunteers and educational outreach instead. Members called for stronger public outreach, including multilingual educational materials and better online resources.

“This is the type of thing that’s incredibly difficult to get ahead of,” said Councilor Jake Wilson, who suggested expanding volunteer education efforts as a stopgap. **Yard waste pickup expanded after community push**

In a rare win for residents, officials

announced that the city will extend yard waste pickup through December and begin weekly collections earlier in October. The change comes after advocacy from Councilor Lance Davis, and will be implemented as a cost neutral pilot program in 2025.

**Looking ahead**

While much of the conversation touched on the challenges of balancing sustainability goals with limited resources, committee members remained optimistic about continued collaboration with Eversource, city departments, and community groups.



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Ms. Cam's

From page 8

Olio

Answers

1. 11

2. The cuckoo

3. Germany

4. Hare

5. The day before the start of Lent

6. Bilby

7. Richard Nixon

8. Abraham Lincoln

9. Placing raw eggs all over the lawn and dancing around them

10. Lily

11. The Seder

12. Unleavened bread



# Decades of breakfast together in Somerville

A brother and sister, Barbara Survilas and Joseph Roberts, have been eating breakfast at the same table at the same Somerville restaurant every day for 35 years – rarely, if ever, missing a morning meal together. To honor their commitment, loyalty, and dedication, McDonald’s owner-operator Vijay Selhi celebrated them last week and added a plaque to their table, which has now officially become Barbara and Joseph’s spot.



## Money Map Tip of the Week

**By Vincent Hicks, CPA**

**Q:** With the investments markets being so topsy-turvy, is there any simple, low-stress place to keep my money?

**A:** Yes! Check out a money market account.

It’s a type of bank account that:

- Pays higher interest – many are offering around 4–5% annual interest right now
- Is FDIC-insured, so your money stays protected
- Keeps your cash easily accessible – no withdrawal penalties like with CDs
- Is offered by most banks and credit unions

Great for short-term savings or when you

want to pause investing without sitting on the sidelines.

Just don’t confuse it with a money market fund – those are investments and aren’t insured.

**Any questions? I’d be happy to help.**

I’m Vincent Hicks, CPA, based in Somerville with over 20 years of experience. Reach out at [vchicksconnect@gmail.com](mailto:vchicksconnect@gmail.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.*





# Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 6

In his first speech on the floor of the House, Gaskey called Gordon's maneuver "a way to bury this and make sure that nobody ever gets this on the record."

"We don't need a study on how this is going to affect people," he said. "We already know this is going to affect people. We already know how many students are going to be affected — every student is going to be affected. Every student athlete will play on the team they were born to play on. That's what this bill is."

He said his proposed ban would bring Massachusetts in line with the federal government because President Donald Trump signed an executive order in February prohibiting transgender women and girls from competing in female sports.

**CONTRIBUTE VIA A MASSACHUSETTS TAX RETURN TO COUNTRIES COPING WITH GLOBAL WARMING (S 1922)** — The Revenue Committee held a hearing on a measure that would give Massachusetts residents the option, on their Massachusetts income tax form, to contribute to a special United Nations Fund -- the Least Developed Countries Fund -- to help developing countries cope with the effects of global warming.

Supporters say the state income tax form currently features six "tax check-off" options that give residents the option, when filing their state income tax return, to contribute all or part of their tax refund to various causes.

Sen. Mike Barrett (D-Lexington), the sponsor of the bill, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call to explain why he filed the bill.

"Sen. Barrett's idea is incredibly silly and just shows how out of touch some lawmakers become when they get elected," said Paul Craney, executive director of the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance. "As ratepayers see their utility and energy bills increase by 30 to 50 percent to fund climate mandates passed by the Legislature, the senator wants to send more money to the climate causes."

**PUBLIC HEARINGS ON TAX HIKES AND NEW TAXES (S 2057)** — Another bill heard by the Judiciary Committee would require the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means to hold at the least three public hearings in Boston, Worcester and Springfield on any legislation referred to them that would increase or expand any existing taxes or fees or establish any new taxes or fees. Each hearing would require at least fourteen days' notice to ensure that the public has sufficient time to prepare.

"I am sponsoring this bill because transparency of where taxpayer dollars are going between the Legislature and the public are of the utmost importance currently," said sponsor Sen. Patrick O'Connor (R-Weymouth). "The sense of trust and understanding between lawmakers and taxpayers sought by this legislation is only possible through thoughtful action to include everyone in the

legislative process."

**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING** — The Judiciary Committee held a hearing on several bills including these three:

**EMINENT DOMAIN (H 67)** — This proposed constitutional amendment would prohibit private property from being taken by the government for private commercial enterprise, economic development or any other private use without the consent of the owner.

"The right to own property is a basic principle of the commonwealth and it is one that I feel should be protected," said sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "I filed this proposed amendment in response to the Supreme Court's actions in *Kelo v. New London*, where a majority of the justices ruled against private property holders and determined that the New London Development Commission could take private properties for the purpose of economic development. This is a blatant overreach of government power, and this amendment is an attempt to correct that and protect private property owners in Massachusetts."

**PROHIBIT GAMBLING ON POLITICAL OUTCOMES (S 1237)** — This measure would make it illegal to wager on "political outcomes" including elections for public office within the state, appointments to public office, the passage, amending or failure of legislative measures and any other official decision-making processes conducted by political bodies within the state.

Supporters said that these platforms and wagering participation are problematic on many grounds, specifically misinterpreting political outcomes. They are commonly mistaken as indicators for who is winning an election when that is not the case.

"Since online gambling was legalized in Massachusetts, political wagering has significantly increased, with billions of dollars generated," said sponsor Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow). "In the 2024 presidential election, over \$3.2 billion in wagers related were placed on one platform alone. I filed this legislation to ensure stronger safeguards for our election processes and their accuracy. The bill is rooted in preserving the integrity of democratic processes by prohibiting wagering on elections or legislative outcomes, preventing the commodification of our democratic processes."

**PREVENT SUICIDE (S 1109)** — This legislation would criminalize coerced suicide. The measure would impose up to a 5-year prison sentence on a person who has actual knowledge of another person's suicidal ideation, and either coerces the other person to commit suicide, or provides the physical means, or knowledge of such means, to commit suicide.

"I filed this bill in honor of Conrad Roy, a young man who died after his girlfriend Michelle Carter relentless-

ly pressured him into taking his own life," said sponsor Sen. Barry Finegold (D-Andover). "Conrad's Law is a common-sense reform that has support from across the political spectrum. If passed, it will help save lives."

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Everything from gas to housing to taxes is too expensive. Too many kids aren't receiving the education they need to compete in a global economy. Our transportation system is still broken. The unspeakable violence in migrant shelters is a human tragedy and a national embarrassment. Our beacon on a hill has become a beacon in the rear-view mirror. I'm running for governor because I believe in the unlimited potential of our state through the power of our people." — *Mike Kennealy, former Secretary of Housing and Economic Development under former Gov. Charlie Baker, announcing his run for the Republican nomination for governor in 2026.*

"The people of Massachusetts know that a vote for Mike Kennealy is a vote for Donald Trump's agenda. From Trump's tariffs to the Republican crusade to eliminate health care to Elon Musk's halting cures for cancer and Alzheimer's — the people of Massachusetts need a governor like Maura Healey who is unafraid to take on Donald Trump and stand up for them." — *Massachusetts Democratic Party Chair Steve Kerrigan.*

"Strategic partnerships with organizations like The Last Mile are essential to equipping individuals with skills necessary for success. As technology continues to shape the modern workforce, we must proactively implement transformative programs that empower individuals to pursue sustainable careers." — *Gov. Maura Healey on the Massachusetts Department of Correction and the Last Mile, a national leader in technology training and reentry support for incarcerated people, announcing the graduation of the first five students from an intensive web development and coding program.*

"Preparing our children to engage with and thrive in a diverse society is a central premise of education. Local school districts have the right to determine that the use of LGBTQ-inclusive books helps to foster inclusive learning environments for all our students. I am proud to stand in defense of inclusive books, which teach our students to respect one another, regardless of, and without interfering with, their respective personal beliefs." — *Attorney General Andrea Campbell joining a coalition of 19 attorneys general in filing an amicus brief in the U.S. Supreme Court to defend the discretion of public schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, to incorporate LGBTQ-inclusive books into their curricula without offering parents an opt-out option.*

## 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

Continued on page 19



# Somerville launching guide to help small businesses secure favorable leases

Small businesses face many challenges, which is why roughly one out of five businesses fail in the first year, and about half close in the first five years nationally, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. But as part of overall efforts to combat the displacement of residents, artists, and local businesses, the City of Somerville just unveiled a new tool to help its small businesses improve their odds.

The city, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), has released a new Commercial Leasing Handbook. It includes vital tips to help small business owners secure favorable leases, which can mean the difference between rent and conditions they can afford or costs that make it harder to survive. The handbook takes owners through a range of steps to navigate the complex world of commercial leasing. The goal is to build long-term stability for businesses, their employees, and the city in a challenging real estate environment.

The handbook is a major deliverable from the city's Small Business Anti-Displacement Taskforce and was shaped by the voices and lived experiences of 20 Somerville small business owners, legal experts, and advocacy organizations. Their real-world knowledge is captured in practical, clear guidance to help entrepreneurs negotiate favorable leases, understand their rights, and avoid common pitfalls.

"This handbook is a real, tangible tool for our small business community," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "We heard from business owners who were being pushed out or struggling to grow because of unfair or confusing lease terms. This Handbook is one way we're giving our entrepreneurs the knowledge and power they need to succeed. And when our businesses succeed, our community succeeds: we get jobs, services, vibrant business districts, and tax revenues that fund the services and programs we deserve and need."

The handbook includes legal basics, negotiation tips, permitting guidance, and advice from other business owners. It is translated into multiple languages commonly spoken by Somerville's small business community.

"We really want to thank all the business owners who shared their insights and first-hand experiences for the Handbook. This kind of knowledge transfer can really help give newcomers the best possible strategies for making sure their leases help set them up for success here," said Somerville Director of Economic Development Rachel Nadkarni. "We are lucky in Somerville to not just have engaged residents, but to have such a truly community-minded business community as well."

To download the Handbook or request a printed copy, visit [somervillema.gov/commercialleasinghandbook](https://somervillema.gov/commercialleasinghandbook).

— City of Somerville



## The Center for Arts at the Armory to host GLOWBALL 2025

CONT. FROM PG 1

GLOWBALL promises to be Somerville's most illuminating party of the year in support of advancing Arts at the Armory's mission to provide an inclusive and accessible venue that creates opportunities for artists and cultural workers, brings diverse audiences together, enriches and transforms lives, and promotes the creative economy.

Tickets are available on the Armory platform. VIP Lounge tickets (7 pm start) are \$100 and include an opening reception; "sponsor an artist" tickets are \$100; general admission tickets (8 pm start) are \$40.

GLOWBALL Sponsors are being accepted through the event date.

The Center for Arts at the Armory is located at 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143. To learn more, please visit their website: <https://artsatthearmory.org/>, our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsattheArmory/>,

and follow them on Instagram at @ArtsattheArmory.

The awardees are:

**Lifetime Achievement Award: Rachel Strutt**

Rachel Strutt is the Cultural Director at the Somerville Arts Council, where she works on cultural placemaking projects, curates arts festivals and public art projects, and helps manage the LCC grant program, which funds approximately 80 local artists and cultural organizations annually.

She has created, and runs, multicultural programs such as the Intercambio Language and Culture Exchange and Nibble, a nationally recognized program that highlights the culinary talents of Somerville's immigrant communities and marries cultural programming with economic development; the program includes a restaurant and business incubator called

Nibble Kitchen.

Strutt is also a journalist, having written dozens of articles about art, culture, and travel for publications like the *Boston Globe* and *Boston Magazine*. Before joining the Somerville Arts Council, Strutt was the managing editor at the *Improper Bostonian* magazine. She holds a BA in Cultures and Languages from the University of Connecticut and an MA in art history from Tufts University, where she studied medieval art.

**Community Arts Advocate Award: Clay Fernald**

Clay Fernald (Clay N. Ferno) is a music business professional with over 20 years of experience, specializing in social media and marketing strategies. He serves as a Promoter Representative for comedy and podcast events with Bill Blumenreich Presents (BBPShows) and LeaguePodcast at Arts at The Armory. Based in Boston,

Clay enjoys riding bikes, creating podcasts, and writing about pop culture.

**Outstanding Artist Award: Nelson Salazar**

Nelson Salazar was born in El Salvador, immigrated to the United States in 1980, and has lived in Somerville for more than 40 years. He worked his way from dishwasher, to chef, and all the way to community and immigrant advocacy in the world of nonprofits including being executive director of The Welcome Project.

Along the way, Nelson discovered a passion for stained glass art, which he decided to continue exploring after retiring in 2020. In addition to exhibiting and selling his stained-glass work locally, he has remained dedicated to supporting the community by organizing fundraisers. Proceeds from the sale of his artwork have benefited local nonprofits, including Groundwork Somerville and Justice at Work in Boston.



## SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

**Medical Equipment Program** – Through the generosity of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and from the direction of Mayor Ballantyne, the Council on Aging can provide Durable Medical Equipment at no cost to Somerville residents. Residents with a documented need for medical equipment must be over the age of 60, or have a permanent disability, and must be otherwise unable to afford or access needed medical equipment. We currently have available: Commodes, Bath 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.

**Lockboxes for Seniors** – What is the Lockboxes for Seniors program? The Lockboxes for Seniors program is intended to provide Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) access to your residence in the event of an emergency where you are unable to open the door. A key to your residence will be stored in a secure metal storage device, like a realtors lockbox, at your residence. The access code to the lockbox will only be available to Police, Fire, or EMS personnel and used only during an emergency. Who is eligible? The program is targeted towards Somerville community members who live alone and are aged 65+, or those who are disabled and/or suffer from major medical illness at any age. Individuals living in apartment complexes or other facilities with maintenance staff are not eligible for this program. How do I know this is safe? A member of the Somerville Fire Department will install and demonstrate how the lockbox operates and answer any questions you may have. The four-digit combination on the lockbox will only be available to respond to emergency personnel in the event of an emergency. Who should I contact for more information? For more information, please contact Debby Higgins at the Council on Aging via E-mail at [dhiggins@somervillema.gov](mailto:dhiggins@somervillema.gov) or by telephone at (617) 625-6600 ext. 2321. There is no charge to participate in the program if you meet the established target criteria. The Council on Aging will verify eligibility for services. This program is designed for those who are at most significant risk for falls or have limited mobility. All participants will be required to provide a spare house key to be used in the lock box as well as a safety inspection of the property.

**Chronic Disease Self-Management Program** – Mondays, April 28th and May 5th and 12th starting at 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Ralph & Jenny Center. This program offers supportive workshops designed to help participants build confidence in managing their health and leading active, fulfilling lives. The workshop will be conducted in both Mandarin and Cantonese. RSVP by calling Yi Lam at SomerViva, 781-808-7346.

**De-Cluttering Group** – will meet on Wednesday, April 16th from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Looking for assistance with taking control of your clutter. This six-week group teaches you how to address your mess and skills on how to let go of items. This group is open to Somerville and Cambridge residents. RSVP by calling

Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email [nnaim@somervillema.gov](mailto:nnaim@somervillema.gov).

**Friendly Caller Program** - We have many wonderful volunteers who are waiting to give you a call. Whether you are looking to make a new friend or would just like a friendly chat to look forward to every week, this program has you covered. Call Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 to learn more about the program and to sign up.

**Knitting Group** – Every Tuesday in April from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center located at 167 Holland Street. Have you always wanted to learn how to knit or are you a knitter looking to find other friends who knit? Look no further than Knitting with Natasha. Join a supportive and fun group as we learn more about knitting while knitting together! Please RSVP to Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email [nnaim@somervillema.gov](mailto:nnaim@somervillema.gov).

**John Clark and his Great American Music Experience presents Big Band Swing** – Thursday, April 17th starting at 11:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. \$3. per person. Lunch will be provided by City Fresh Catering and served at noon. Join John as he shares the history of Big Band Swing and the Roots of Swing, Benny Goodman, Glenn Millar and more. Reserve your spot for the event and lunch by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

**Coffee & Conversation Groups** – Every Monday in April from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at our Ralph & Jenny Center located at 9 New Washington Street. And every Thursday in March at the Holland Street Center from 10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Join us for this staff-led discussion group which covers a range of topics thought up by participants. This is a friendly group, where all topics are discussed respectfully. Grab-n-Go lunch available. RSVP to Maureen Bastardi at 617-625-6600, ext. 2335 or email [mbastardi@somervillema.gov](mailto:mbastardi@somervillema.gov).

**Let's Celebrate Older Americans Month** – Thursday, May 1st starting at 11:00 a.m. at the Dilboy Post located at 351 Summer Street. Doors open at 10:15 a.m. \$10. per person. Lunch will be stuffed chicken, salad and vegetables. The 2025 theme, Flip the Script on Aging, focuses on transforming how society perceives, talks about and approaches aging. We encourage individuals and communities to challenge stereotypes and dispel misconceptions. Reserve your spot for the event and lunch by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

**Poetry Class at the COA** – meets on Wednesday, April 16th, 23rd & 30th from noon to 1:00 p.m. Free of charge. Learn more about how to create your own poems at the Somerville Council on Aging, led by Somerville poet, Shirley Ware. Learn the art of writing poems in a nurturing, creative environment. Grab-n-Go lunch is available upon request. RSVP to Natasha Naim by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2317.

**Looking for a location to chat with your friends?** – Come to the COA on Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., the senior center is open, and the coffee is on as we wait for the start of Bingo.

**General Exercise / Holland Street Center** – Every Monday in April starting at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00

a.m. and every Wednesday in April starting at 9:00 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. RSVP to Michelle Deutsch at 617-625-6600, ext. 2315 or email [mdeutsch@somervillema.gov](mailto:mdeutsch@somervillema.gov).

**Asian Tea: Chronic Disease Self-Management Program** – Mondays, April 28th and May 5th and 12th starting at 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Ralph & Jenny Center. This program offers supportive workshops designed to help participants build confidence in managing their health and leading active, fulfilling lives. The workshop will be conducted in both Mandarin and Cantonese. RSVP by calling Yi Lam at SomerViva, 781-808-7346.

**Looking for a location to chat with your friends?** – Come to the COA on Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., the senior center is open, and the coffee is on as we wait for the start of Bingo.

**Crochet with Anna** – Monday, May 5th, 12th & 19th from 11:00 a.m. to noon. We will provide hooks, yarn and patterns. Crochet has become increasingly popular over the last few years. If you are a beginner crocheter or haven't crocheted for a long time, join Anna, in a fun and welcoming environment. RSVP to Natasha Naim by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email [nnaim@somervillema.gov](mailto:nnaim@somervillema.gov).

**Tech Time** – Open Hours, Every Tuesday in April starting from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. Receive assistance with all your phone, tablet and computer questions. RSVP by contacting Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318 or email [mpagliu-ca@somervillema.gov](mailto:mpagliu-ca@somervillema.gov).

**Bingo** – Tuesdays, April 22nd & 29th at our Ralph & Jenny Center, starting at 10:00 a.m. Lunch is available following Bingo. \$1. per bingo card. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2323 or email [dhiggins@somervillema.gov](mailto:dhiggins@somervillema.gov).

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay connected via our Facebook page - Informative, entertaining, lots of photos and updates. Visit our page at <https://www.facebook.com/SomervilleCOA/>

Follow the Somerville Council on Aging on Instagram! You can find us under the Instagram handle: [somervillecouncilonaging](https://www.instagram.com/somervillecouncilonaging) If you have any questions or need help following us, contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or email her at [dhiggins@somervillema.gov](mailto:dhiggins@somervillema.gov).

### JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

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

The Ralph & Jenny Senior Center has a new phone number. You can reach the center by calling the city number at 617-625-6600, ext. 2336.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The views and opinions expressed in the commentaries and letters to the Editor of *The Somerville Times* do not reflect the views and opinions of *The Somerville Times*, its publishers or staff. Readers are invited to send letters to the editor to *The Somerville Times*. Please email your letters to [News@TheSomervilleTimes.com](mailto:News@TheSomervilleTimes.com) or mail them to 699 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144. *The Somerville Times* Reserves the right to edit letters for style, grammar and length. All letters must include an name and contact information. Contact information will not be shared with the public. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dear Editor,

repre-sentative.

From my perspective as a concerned citizen and voter residing in Somerville, it's obvious that Donald Trump is rapidly pushing our nation into authoritarianism. His threats not to leave at the end of his term in office are highly credible. What was once seen as hyperbole about the danger of his administration, from immigration to the economy, has become reality. He and his cabinet are lawless, unaccountable to our justice system, and have committed a multitude of crimes.

If we don't impeach him now, American democracy may not survive his destructive rule. I'm not willing to risk that.

Congresswoman Pressley is an effective representative of Somerville and other cities and towns in her district. She cares about her constituents. We need her support for impeachment. With utmost urgency, I request that Rep. Pressley publicly commit to upholding the most fundamental role of a congressional representative - removing tyrants from office. Commitment to the basic fact that Trump is a tyrant, and acting now to get him out of the White House, is imperative. If we wait for the 2026 election, it will be too late. We need Rep. Pressley's commitment now.

Brian J. Cook  
Somerville

Somerville streamlines block party permits for summer fun

Block party season is back, and now it's easier than ever to plan for them. The City of Somerville has rolled out a simplified Block Party application process, making it simple to bring neighbors together for a fun-filled street celebration.

Now available through CitizenServe, the block party application process has been redesigned for faster review and approval. Apply now via CitizenServe: <https://www6.citizenserve.com>.

"Block parties are a beloved tradition in Somerville, bringing our community together to soak up the outdoors, meet neighbors, and create a sense of belonging," said Mayor Ballantyne. "Thank you to our city staff for their swift work to enhance opportunities to connect."

- Plan Your Block Party
- To get started, you'll need:
- A completed online application form
  - A description of the proposed event, including date, time, and location
  - Approval from all neighbors affected by the street closure (if applicable)
  - Payment of any necessary fees (if applicable)

The city encourages all residents to take advantage of this new, streamlined process and in-vites everyone to continue fostering the vibrant, tight-knit community Somerville is known for.

For more information or to apply to host a block party, visit [somervillema.gov/blockparty](http://somervillema.gov/blockparty).



Beacon Hill Roll CallCONT. FROM PG 16

important work is done outside of the House and Senate chambers. They note that their jobs also involve committee work, research, constituent work and other matters that are important to their districts. Critics say that the Legislature does not meet regularly or long enough to debate and vote in public view on the thousands of pieces of legislation that have been filed. They note that the infrequency and brief length of sessions are misguided and lead to irresponsible late-night sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding		the end of an annual session. During the week of April 7-11, the House met for a total of seven hours and 26 minutes while the Senate met for a total of 20 minutes.	Wed. April 9	House 11:01 a.m. to 6:11 p.m. No Senate session
	Mon. April 7	House 11:31 a.m. to 11:41 a.m. Senate 11:12 a.m. to 11:19 a.m.	Thurs. April 10	House 11:00 a.m. to 11:06 a.m. Senate 11:15 a.m. to 11:28 a.m.
	Tues. April 8	No House session No Senate session	Fri. April 11	No House session No Senate session
Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at <a href="mailto:bob@beaconhillrollcall.com">bob@beaconhillrollcall.com</a>				

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





**Somerville Fair Housing Commission**  
*Question of the week*

**Q:** I hear that April is Fair Housing Month. Why, and what does that mean?

**A:** In April, we come together as a community and a nation to celebrate the anniversary of the passing of the Fair Housing Act and recommit to that goal which inspired us in the aftermath of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr’s assassination in 1968: to eliminate housing discrimination and create equal opportunity in every community.

*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.*

## Preschool screening for children 3–5 years

April 30, 8:30–11:30 a.m.  
The Somerville Public Schools conducts preschool screenings to check a child’s development and help identify children who may need further evaluation for special education services. Screenings are by appointment only. If you are a Somerville resident and have concerns about your child’s development, please fill out our Screening Intake Form or register by phone (617) 629-5670 ext. 3657.




**BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER**  
By Bobbygeorge Potaris

What do you call the Easter Bunny with fleas?  
Bugs Bunny.

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

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

## Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Dawn's early light... — Photo by Denise Provost

## On This Day in History

### April 16

0069 – Defeated by Vitellius’ troops at Bedriacum, Otho commits suicide.  
1065 – The Norman Robert Guiscard takes Bari, ending five centuries of Byzantine rule in southern Italy.  
1705 – Queen Anne of England knights Isaac Newton.  
1818 – The U.S. Senate ratifies the Rush-Bagot amendment to form an unarmed U.S.-Canada border.  
1862 – Slavery is abolished in the District of Columbia.  
1917 – Vladimir Lenin returns to Russia to start the Bolshevik Revolution.  
1922 – Annie Oakley shoots 100 clay targets in a row, setting a woman’s record.  
1945 – American troops enter Nuremberg, Germany.  
1947 – A lens which provides zoom effects is demonstrated in New York City.  
1968 – The Pentagon announces the “Vietnamization” of the war.  
1972 – Two giant pandas arrive in the U.S. from China.



Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

us all about her magnificent but often misunderstood species.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Tufts Community Sports Day, April 27, 1 – 3:00 pm** Families are invited to Tufts University for a fun event with Tufts student-athletes, student groups, and local community organizations. The event is free and families can visit whatever activities they are interested in. Find more information on the registration page. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdF-ox-ZaxiiPp6lbEz1mdbs9dUp1LaEhJ6UT-PRayZ7fpOxJkA/viewform>  
\*\*\*\*\*

Watch a free film screening of **Counted Out**, a documentary that explores how math shapes our world. The movie lasts 90 minutes (with Spanish subtitles) and a discussion follows. Recommended for staff, caregivers, and students in grades 6–12. You can register in advance but that is not required. Brought to you by the **Academic Department, Equity & Excellence Department, and Somerville Family Learning Collaborative**. **Wednesday, April 30, 6:30 – 8:30 pm.** **SHS Highlander Forum**, 81 Highland Ave. Spanish interpretation will be provided during the discussion.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Help celebrate **E-Mobility** during **SustainaVille Week**, returning **May 3 – 9**, with a full lineup of events celebrating sustainability and climate action in Somerville. Community members are invited to participate in an **E-Mobility Expo** to showcase their own electric rides, whether it's an e-bike, electric vehicle (EV), scooter, or some other electric transport. The expo will take place on **May 9** at the **Day Street Lot** in Davis Square (44 Day St.) from noon to 6 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**The Haitian Flag Festival** will be held on **May 17, 2 – 6 pm** (weather date May 18), 93 Highland Ave., is a vibrant celebration of Haitian culture and heritage, marking the creation of the Haitian flag. The event brings together the community to celebrate Haiti's rich history, pride, and unity through music, food, art, and cultural performances. A highlight of the festival is the opportunity to enjoy traditional Haitian dishes, adding a delicious and authentic taste of Haitian culture to the celebration. This special day honors the significance of the Haitian flag, which symbolizes freedom, resilience,

and the spirit of independence. The festival is an opportunity for everyone to learn about and appreciate Haitian traditions, while also creating connections within the community.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**PorchFest 2025** will take place on **Saturday, May 10**, from 12 to 6 p.m. (inclement weather date: Sunday, May 11). Applications are now open. Submit by **Thursday, April 10**, at 11:59 p.m. Application submission does not guarantee participation. Certain streets will be restricted for performances to ensure safety. View the restricted street map on our website or view the streets listed below. View how to submit your application for consideration <https://somer-villeartscouncil.org/porchfest/>  
\*\*\*\*\*

This May, the **Union Square Neighborhood Council** is holding its bi-annual election for the **USNC board**. All members are invited to vote in the election, as well as run for a board seat. (If you have any questions about the USNC or what it means to be a member, please consult their website at: [sites.google.com/view/usnc](https://sites.google.com/view/usnc). The election will be held in person as follows: **Day 1: Saturday, May 17, 8 am – 12 pm, Argenziano School**, 290 Washington Street. **Day 2: Tuesday, May 20, 7:30 am – 7:30 pm, [TBA]** Somerville.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Attend a **School Committee meeting**. Dates and times for school committee meetings are listed on the **SPS district website calendar**. Visit the **School Committee website** for information and find meeting details on the **City of Somerville Events page**: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/events/calendar>  
\*\*\*\*\*

Voting is now open for the city's second **Participatory Budgeting** cycle. Residents aged 12 and up can now vote on their favorite city improvement ideas. Voting is open through **Wednesday, April 30**. Learn more and cast your vote at: [www.somervillema.gov/pb](http://www.somervillema.gov/pb).

\*\*\*\*\*  
**A Lens Full of Light**, photographs by **Gretchen Ann Graham** and **Julián Cancino** are on view at the **Washington Street Gallery**, 321 Washington St. A Lens Full of Light is a dual exhibition by photographers Gretchen Ann Graham and Julián Cancino, which explores the profound connections that shape life across gen-

erations. Connecting these two collections as well are the names of the photographers' subjects, Helen and Eleni. Both names translate to "light" and "the bright one." This exhibit will feature both digital and silver gelatin prints, with several works on view for the first time. Exhibition dates: **March 28 – April 25**. Gallery hours: Saturdays 12 – 4 p.m. or by appointment.

\*\*\*\*\*  
April marks the start of **construction season** in Somerville. From sidewalks on Holland Street to the Clock Tower at City Hall there is a lot of work to keep up with. The city's monthly construction newsletter is one of the ways we work to make sure you know what is happening, where it's happening, and how it ultimately benefits our city. <https://www.somervillema.gov/construction#newsletter>.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Massachusetts has a thriving **zine scene**, and you're invited to check out as many zine libraries in the Greater Boston area as you can. During the **month of April**, complete your **Zine Library Crawl passport** for the opportunity to win prizes. Zine Library Crawl passports are available at participating libraries. The Zine Crawl takes place **throughout the month of April**, all day, at the **Central Library, East Branch, and West Branch**. No registration required. Questions? Contact **Tim**: [tdevin@somervillema.gov](mailto:tdevin@somervillema.gov).

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Somerville Animal Control** is in need of towels/blankets/linens. They can arrange a porch pickup if you message them on FB or they can be dropped off at the police station at any time.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Drum Your Heart Day, Saturday April 26**, at **Gilman Art Park**, Medford St., Somerville. Bring a bucket or metal or a drum and everyone will drum together led by a core of drum artists. Beginning around 1 p.m. Celebrate, protest, express yourself to the universe the good we know we need to overcome hate and prejudice from our neighborhoods across America. Gilman Art Park has been and continues welcoming artists to show Temporary Public Art until June, possibly through this Summer. On the first Saturday of June there will be a celebration honoring all the artists who have contributed their works to this temporary field of free expression.

\*\*\*\*\*  
On **Friday, April 25**, **GLOWBALL** will transform the **Armory Performance Hall** into an immersive **Glow-in-the-Dark Rave** created by DJ **Adam Gibbons** with hypnotic visuals by **Jay Medina**, all in support of **The Center for Arts at the Armory**. GLOWBALL is an anti-gala. There will be no speeches, formal presentations or auction. There will be pop-up performances by **Samba Viva** and **Sidy Maiga** on djembe. This year's honorees: **Rachel Strutt**, Lifetime Achievement Award; **Clay Fernald**, Community Arts Advocate; and **Nelson Salazar**, Outstanding Artist. GLOWBALL tickets include complimentary international bites, glow-in-the-dark accessories and face painting by **Arty Mari**. This will surely be Somerville's most illuminating party of 2025. <https://art-satthearmory.org/glowball/>.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The **Somerville Arts Council's ArtBeat 2025 Calls for Talent** are now available. The Somerville Arts Council invites musicians, street performers, circus artists, installation artists, buskers, craft vendors, and more to participate at ArtBeat 2025. Festival date and new time: **Saturday, July 19, 1 – 9 p.m.** (Rain date: Sunday, July 20), Davis Square, Somerville.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Somerville Open Studios 2025** will take place on **Saturday and Sunday, May 3–4**, from 12 to 6 p.m. each day, at artists' studios and homes throughout Somerville. Nearly 400 artists in 118 locations citywide will open their studios to the public. Map, artist, and (soon) trolley info at <https://www.somervilleopenstudios.org/> The **SOS First Look Show** at the **Somerville Museum** will be open **from April 24 through May 17**.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**East Somerville's Spring Clean-up** will take place on **April 26**. Pastries and coffee are provided by **Ola Cafe**. 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., 115 Broadway, **East Branch Library**.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Community Health Worker Division Hours** are held **every other Thursday** at **Connexion** (149 Broadway, Somerville, MA) from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. They will provide hygiene kits, snacks, and referrals to internal and external partners for the following services: ESL, Housing, SHC, SNAP and MassHealth. Next event is **April 17**.

Continued on page 23





## OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

## Poet Sara Letourneau: A Poet who explores the maw of creation

Interview with Doug Holder (Board member of the New England Poetry Club)

I decided it was a good time to interview poet Sara Letourneau, as this accomplished poet and New England Club Poetry member has her debut poetry collection out titled *Wild Gardens*. And it seems that *Wild Gardens* is an apt label for her book because there is nothing “tame” about her work. It is a collection that drills deep and goes beyond what you see – to what it means – a full-faced exploration.

**Doug Holder:** *Wild Gardens* is your debut poetry collection. When did you feel confident enough to pen a first book? Were you encouraged by people in your community? Did you set a certain standard for yourself?

**Sara Letourneau:** It wasn’t so much about being confident enough to write a debut poetry collection. Rather, for a long time, I was focused on writing individual poems, revising them, and submitting them for publication. By the time I’d written enough poems and had enough published for a full-length collection, the milestone had sort of snuck up on me. My boyfriend, Jim, who keeps track of all my poems in an Excel spreadsheet, had a better “bird’s eye view” of my work being ready than I did!

After that, I knew getting a book published was the next step. That ended up being a longer process than I anticipated. In fact, almost two years passed from the time I started submitting the first version of *Wild Gardens* to the time I finally sent it to Kelsay Books, who ended up publishing the book.

Because it was such a long process, I definitely needed help staying encouraged and positive, and my community was a big help with that. At the be-



ginning, that community was small: my boyfriend; the other poets in my Poetic Inklings group, Carmen Barefield and Amanda Davis, a couple of close friends who frequently read or gave feedback on my work; and writer friends online who I’d met in various places.

Once I launched the *Pour Me a Poem* open mic with Wayne-Daniel Berard, that community grew exponentially. So, by the time *Wild Gardens* was accepted for publication (and then published), so many more people were cheering for me, and that was amazing.

**DH:** Your poems are set on the shores of Cape Cod, the lava fields of Iceland, etc. How did you pick your terrain to be the subject of your poetry? What spoke to you?

*Continued on page 23*

# Lyrical

## SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Vijaya Sundaram is the current Poet Laureate (2023-2025) for the City of Medford, Massachusetts. Her first collection of poems titled *Fractured Lens* was published in 2023 by Červená Barva Press. She has written short stories, plays and a short novel (not yet published). Her poetry and short pieces have appeared in publications like *The Rising Phoenix Press*, *The Stardust Review*, and *TELL Magazine*, among others. Vijaya’s statement about poetry: Poetry, to my mind, is the clarion call that urges us to see both the fullness and barrenness of life along with its joys and griefs; to experience the world with empathy and love; to create new landscapes and stories in distilled language, and to share our experiences in words that might be able to evoke those same experiences in others.



### Sear/ch – A Poem about Drought and Doubt

So many  
– too many to face –  
feelings spilling everywhere,  
water carried in a cup  
by a remote-faced water-bearer  
racing, swift-footed and urgent  
across burning sands searching for  
... someone who might not be there?

Tired of all the outrage,  
the rage, the hot words,  
the blood-gush, the ooze  
of death, the crushing of hope,  
you stop, and wait for cool rain  
to wash away everything,  
so you can sleep forever,  
or perhaps, help you rise up  
and fight without hurting.

You hope for calm voices,

for kindness, for food  
made by nourishing hands.

You hope for love  
that’s deeper than mere  
twanging within.  
You hope for a place  
to lay your head, and  
not worry about anyone  
anywhere, anymore.

Your hope dries out  
in iris-searing heat.

You raise the cup.  
You need that water.

You drink, knowing it might be  
your last drop.  
Perhaps, it will fill up  
soon, again.

Hope is hell, but  
what else is there to do?  
Time to resume what you seek.  
You start running.

An ibis looks up  
from a water-hole,  
almost gone under a  
blank, accusing sun,  
close, waiting.

— Vijaya Sundaram



Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 21

SCES is teaming up with City Fresh Foods to offer a five-pack of frozen home-delivered meals. This new meal delivery option is ideal for consumers who want the convenience of home-delivered meals but are not able to be at home each weekday to receive deliveries. Meal recipients can choose which week-day they would like to receive the frozen meals, with up to five meals in each bulk delivery. Each meal comes with bread, milk, and a dessert. Current SCES clients who are interested in receiving meals should call their office at 617-628-2601 or contact their case manager for more information.

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Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 22

SL: I'm a believer that "the poem chooses the poet." Ideas for new poems come to me; I don't go hunting for them. So, I can't say I consciously picked the terrain that's often the subject of poems in *Wild Gardens*. But I do know why I ended up writing about those places.

I grew up loving Cape Cod. My parents vacationed there before I was born, and I ended up celebrating my first five birthdays in Chatham. And since my family continued vacationing there well into my teenage years, I found my own reasons for wanting to come back to the Cape. I love the ocean and beaches, the parks and different ways of interacting with wildlife there, the charming downtown areas of Chatham and other towns, the myriad hydrangeas in full bloom during the summer, and the calmer, more peaceful vibe it has compared to mainland Massachusetts.

My parents and my brother now live on the Cape, so that gives me even more incentive to visit it now. In short, it holds so many beautiful memories for me, and I keep being amazed by its quiet yet ever-present natural beauty.

Iceland, on the other hand, was the first country I visited outside the US. (And for a writing retreat, no less!) Talk about being amazed by natural beauty! Reykjavik is an incredible city, and while I highly recommend spending a few days there if you go yourself, the countryside is what floors me every time. The mountains, the waterfalls, the geothermal – these and other places contribute to an environment that's wilder, more breathtaking, and unlike anything else I've seen in the world. Iceland captured my imagination and heart in ways that can now be best described by some of the poems in *Wild Gardens*.

DH: In your poem *Origin Story of Cape Cod*, you go well beyond the tourist view, and slip into the marrow of its creation. Cape Cod takes on a sense of profundity – that we may not realize as we are spreading tanning lotion on ourselves – while sitting on its ancient beaches. Your take?

SL: Yes, Cape Cod is more than just a summer tourist spot. It has a history that's richer than we may be aware of, and not just on a social or "human civilization" level. I was visiting the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster, and during the exhibit on the Cape's geologic history, this very idea struck me.

A place is more than just the benches where we sit, the trees and animals that inhabit it, the structures we've built there, and the stories we've created on its soil. I think we often forget that the planet Earth is billions of years old. Its landscape, climate, and wildlife have disappeared, been reborn, and evolved so much over time. Hundreds of thousands of years ago, the places where we now live, work, and play didn't look the way they do now. This left me imagining what Cape Cod would have been thinking, feeling, and observing if it was a character, and if it had the voice to describe what its "birthing" or creation process was like.

F.S. Fitzgerald wrote, "In a real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning, day after day."

DH: You chose 2:00 a.m. as your dark night in the poem 2:00 a.m. Do you think during these hours we are stripped naked, and for a little while the artifice that protects us from the concept of "nothingness" is gone" – and we see things in a sharp, cutting, clarity?

SL: The thing about 2:00 a.m. is that it's about the speaker's experience with insomnia induced by anxiety and overthinking. I've experienced this level of anxiety many times in the past, though not for a couple of years at this point. So this poem isn't exactly philosophizing about the dark night of the soul. Rather, it shows an almost literal "dark night of the soul," the experience of someone living with such intense fear and anxiety that they can't sleep, perhaps for nights on end.

When you experience such an acute form of anxiety that it leads to insomnia, yes, it can feel like you are stripped naked, in front of no one except yourself. But it's almost impossible to see things clearly because the thoughts that wrapped you into that vortex can sometimes be irrational and unjustified.

That being said, the experience shared in the poem is based on my own. Someone else's experience with anxiety-induced insomnia could be very different. But I hope that the common ground those readers can find with this poem is how terrifying and out-of-control those sleepless nights can be.

As for why I chose 2:00 a.m. as the title, I recall often turning over to look at the clock on those nights and finding it was roughly around that time.

DH: You are a writing coach. How objective can you be about your own work?

SL: It's so hard to be objective about your work, even when you work in this field and help other writers! Sometimes I discover how a poem needs to grow and be revised on my own. But most of the time, I share poems with my Poetic Inklings and (more recently) Orion Continued poetry groups, along with one other critique partner, and the perspectives and suggestions they offer are often things I might never have found on my own.

DH: Why should we read your book?

SL: *Wild Gardens* offers one reminder after another of how crucial and meaningful it is for us to pay attention to what's around us and be grateful for the surprises, the everyday, the wonders of our world, miracles big and small. If readers need or want more reminders of these things, then they're bound to appreciate reading this book.

An Origin Story of Cape Cod

Let's start at the beginning,  
twenty-three thousand years ago.  
Your parents were the earth and Laurentide,  
an ice sheet stretching from the Arctic Ocean  
all the way to what would later be known  
as the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.  
If anyone had borne witness, they would have found  
a cold crust of white as far as the eye could see.  
This didn't happen all at once, of course.  
Patience is both virtue and necessary evil  
when you need about five centuries to emerge.  
But not once did you complain as, leisurely,  
your more glacial parent retreated north.  
In three lobes, it scraped over bedrock,  
carving and molding you into moraines, kames,  
and outwash plains as if with a sculptor's tools  
but no final design in mind.  
In its wake, it strewed all manner  
of rock debris over you—miles upon miles  
of till, gravel, sand, and boulders hundreds of feet thick.  
But you didn't mind. You liked the way  
the meltwater streams dressed you, how their deposits  
filled your deltas and expanded west,  
how leftover lumps of ice melted  
and made jewellike kettle holes along your peninsula.  
You even chose to bear your relict valleys,  
your riverless battle scars, with pride.  
You couldn't fathom then  
that, one day, you'd be robbed in  
pitch pines, marshes, and cranberry bogs  
or called home by piping plovers, seals, and humans.  
You didn't even care about your name until  
the Wampanoag and the Nauset called you Turtle Island  
and the British colonists Cape Cod.  
No. That long ago, your only care  
was that you were born,  
and to be born means to exist,  
and to exist means boundless possibilities.

— Sara Letourneau



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