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newspaper

# The Somerville Times

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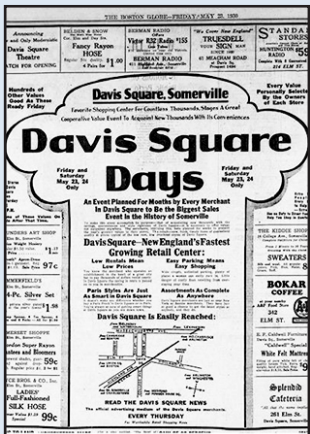


VOL. 10 NO. 19

SOMERVILLE, MASS. WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022

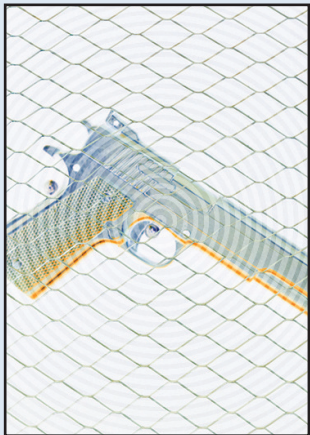
TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

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## New state zoning requirement for MBTA communities will affect Somerville



The multi-family zoning demand for MBTA Communities requires communities served by the MBTA to update their zoning to allow at least one district of multi-family housing.

— Photo by Bobbie Toner

By Molly Rains

The Somerville Land Use Committee met on May 5 to continue their discussion of proposed amendments and future updates to the city's zoning laws.

One area of discussion was the new multi-family zoning requirement for MBTA Communities, part of the Economic Development Bill signed by Governor Baker in 2021. The requirement mandates that communities served by the MBTA update their zoning to allow at least one district of multi-family housing.

This district must be within a half-mile of an MBTA station, meet a minimum unit density of 15 units per square acre, and encourage family-friendly housing by being "suitable for children" and lacking age restrictions, according to the Massachusetts Office of Housing and Economic Development.

As one of 175 MBTA

Continued on page 4

## PorchFest 2022 hits Somerville porches this Saturday

By Ryan DiLello

Somerville's PorchFest returns this year on Saturday, May 14, 12:00 – 6:00 p.m. The event is "not a festival per se," but an open invitation for artists to perform on local porches across the city. Artists also raise money for local charities. Each year, PorchFest raises thousands of dollars for local and global charities.

"We have a high number of bands who have registered. It should be a lot of fun," said Gregory Jenkins, Executive Director of the Somerville Arts Council. "I recommend that people stay out of the streets, no public consumption of alcohol. Go to our map (<https://somervilleartscouncil.org/porchfest/2022>) and look for porta johns. Have an amazing time and be respectful of neighbors. There is a ton of great music out there."

Interested musicians can register through the Somerville Arts Council event page at <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/porchfest>. The deadline is May 12. See you out there!



The 2022 edition of Porchfest takes place this coming Saturday, May 14.



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

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) raised the COVID-19 Community Level for all of Middlesex County including Somerville to **HIGH** on **Thursday evening, May 5**. The city is strongly encouraging that high-quality masks be worn indoors in public while the CDC COVID-19 Community Level remains high and that all persons ensure they are up to date on vaccination. Free KN95 masks provided to Somerville by the Commonwealth are being offered to residents at all city libraries and at City Hall. For more information visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-resources>

\*\*\*\*\*








Love to play music? Registration is underway for bands and musical performers interested in participating in the **Somerville Arts Council's PorchFest 2022** on **Saturday, May 14**. The deadline to register is **Thursday, May 12**. To register and learn more, visit: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/porchfest>.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Farmer's markets** are back in Somerville. **Union Square Main Streets** kicks off the 18th season of the **Union Square Farmers Market** in Somerville this **Saturday, May 14**, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This season the market returns to its longtime location on the **Union Square Plaza**, and will be open rain or shine each Saturday **through October 29**. For more information visit <https://www.unionsquaremain.org/2022-fmseason>. The **East Somerville Farmers Market** opens on **Sunday, May 15**, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at **115 Broadway**. Join them for fresh produce, bread, baked goods, mead and much more. More information is available at [www.eastsomervillemainstreets.org/market](http://www.eastsomervillemainstreets.org/market). The **Davis Square Farmers Market** is back with an expanded vendor roster that includes locally grown fruits and vegetables, farm-raised protein and cheese, mushrooms, baked goods, ready-to-eat meals, along with a host of other locally made products. Find the full vendor list here: <https://www.massfarmersmarkets.org/davis>. The market takes place on **Wednesdays** and runs **from May 18 to** *Continued on page 7*

## Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of May 11 – May 17 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 <b>Wednesday</b> <i>May 11</i>	Cloudy	55°/48°	7%	6%	NNE 12 mph
 <b>Thursday</b> <i>May 12</i>	Partly Cloudy	67°/55°	13%	11%	ENE 9 mph
 <b>Friday</b> <i>May 13</i>	Partly Cloudy	78°/62°	17%	14%	SSE 11 mph
 <b>Saturday</b> <i>May 14</i>	Partly Cloudy	82°/62°	17%	13%	SW 15 mph
 <b>Sunday</b> <i>May 15</i>	Partly Cloudy	75°/60°	26%	21%	SSW 14 mph
 <b>Monday</b> <i>May 16</i>	Partly Cloudy	76°/60°	24%	19%	WSW 13 mph
 <b>Tuesday</b> <i>May 17</i>	Partly Cloudy	73°/55°	16%	12%	W 15 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: *Police respond to report of shots fired in Somerville*

Tim K. says:

Unacceptable. This has been occurring in this area regularly. Meanwhile crickets from the mayor. What's her plan?

Casimir H. Prohosky Jr. says:

I heard she's planning on slapping a six-shooter on her hip and slowly sauntering down the middle of the streets of the city with a defiant scowl on her face.

Jing! Jing! Jing!

### Response to: *The Train*

Ron Newman says:

The little stub end of track between Lowell and Cedar streets stayed active for many years after the rest of the rails were taken up and replaced by bike paths, Statue Park, and the Davis busway. I remember freight cars being dropped off at MaxPak (International Paper). If you walked up the tracks from Cedar Street, you had to climb a steep dirt path to an opening in the fence on the Lowell Street bridge.

### Response to: *Dedication of the Sullivan Brothers Memorial*

Courtney O'Keefe says:

Absolutely beautiful! Congratulations to all involved.

### Response to: *Somerville Open Studios 2022 a success*

Jesa Damora says:

Thanks, Ryan! Huge thank yous to Terry, the Board and all the volunteers. This year's SOS was wonderful, and felt like a reawakening, despite all the anxieties in the world. <3 <3

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

## The Somerville Times

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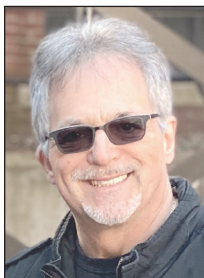


Life in the

VILLE

by Jimmy Del Ponte

# Davis Square Days 1930



In 1930 you could buy four car tires for about \$7. Gasoline was 26 cents a gallon and Davis Square was a very successful retail destination. I saw the picture of a newspaper circular advertising merchandise from stores in Davis Square in 1930. This is an account of some of those ads. Davis square boasted New England's "fastest growing retail center."

Davis Square Days was advertised as "an event planned for months by every merchant in Davis Square .... the biggest sales event in the history of Somerville." The dates were May 23 and 24, 1930.

Parke Snow advertised corsets for \$1.49. Jack Horn's men shop sold Arrow and Imperial shirts also at \$1.49.

White Furniture Co. offered a 5-piece unfinished breakfast kitchen set for just \$11.75. The Sirloin Store had steak for 39 cents a pound. Joyce Brothers store featured women's full fashion hose for 99 cents. At the Somerset Shop you'd find Gordon's super rayon bloomers for 59 cents. Summerfields sold a 24-price silver set for \$1.98. Wow, what a deal!

At Enterprise, Somerville's most complete department store, you could purchase Pequot sheets for \$1.19.

Bergman's radio offered a Victor R22 for \$155. At The Excel Shoe Store, women's novelty shoes cost \$2.95 while Quintons market had bantam corn at two for 23 cents.

If you needed women's flat crepe slippers for 57 cents, and Gorin's sold sheets for 88 cents.

Corsets sold for \$1.49 at Parke Snow and Betty Bright mops for 53 cents.

The Kiddie Shoppe sold sweaters for 88 cents. Summerfield's had sturdy porch rockers at \$2.68. Bokar coffee was featured at A&P. Joyce Brothers and company featured men's Shantano Broadcloth shirts for \$1.85. After shopping, you could grab lunch at The Superior Cafeteria on Elm St.

Somerville Trust Company and Highland Trust were financial institutions in Davis Square back then.

Parke Snow, Gorin's and A &P are the

PARKE SNOW, INC.  
Davis Square, Somerville  
P. N. Corsets  
\$1.49  
Watch for Opening

Bank with the  
Highland Trust Co.  
425 Highland Ave.  
Somerville

JACK HORN'S Men's Shop  
28 Davis Square, Somerville  
Arrow and Imperial  
Novelty Shirts  
\$1.49  
Watch for Opening

SIRLOIN STORE  
208 Elm St., Somerville  
Friday and Saturday  
Special  
Sirloin Roasts 39¢  
Super Cured Hams 29¢  
Watch for Opening

WHITE FURNITURE CO.  
200 Elm St., Somerville  
Unfinished 5-Pc.  
Breakfast Set  
\$11.75  
Watch for Opening

PARKE SNOW, INC.  
DAVIS SQUARE  
BETTY BRIGHT MOPS  
53¢  
Watch for Opening

THE KIDDE SHOPPE  
208 Elm St., Somerville  
Friday and Saturday  
Special  
Sweaters 88¢  
Watch for Opening

ENTERPRISE  
Somerville's Most Complete  
Department Store  
200 Elm St., Davis Square  
Pequot Sheets  
\$1.19  
Watch for Opening

SOMMERFIELD'S  
212 Elm St., Somerville  
24-Pc. Silver Set  
\$1.98  
Watch for Opening

SOMERSET SHOPPE  
208 Elm St., Somerville  
Friday and Saturday  
Special  
Gordon Super Rayon  
Bloomers and Blouses  
59¢  
Watch for Opening

JOYCE BROS. & CO., Inc.  
212 Elm St., Somerville  
LADIES'  
Full-Fashioned  
SILK HOSE  
99¢  
Watch for Opening

Announcing  
New and Only Modernized  
Davis Square  
Theatre  
WATCH FOR OPENING

REIDEN & SNOW  
Cor. Elm and Elm St.  
Fancy Rayon  
HOSE  
Regular 4 Pairs for \$1.00  
4 Pairs for \$1.00  
Watch for Opening

BERMAN RADIO  
411 Highland Ave., Somerville  
Victor R22 Radio \$155  
Watch for Opening

"We Come New England"  
TRUESDELL  
YOUR SIGN HERE  
SINCE 1906  
41 MEAGHAM ROAD  
at Davis Sq.  
Watch for Opening

STANDARD STORES  
212 Elm St., Somerville  
HUNTINGTON \$59.50  
Watch for Opening

GORIN'S  
Davis Sq., Somerville  
14-18 "Flannel Broad"  
SHEETS  
88¢  
Watch for Opening

THE EXCEL  
SHOE STORE  
204 Elm St.  
Women's Novelty  
\$2.95  
Watch for Opening

QUINTON'S MARKET  
204 Elm St., Somerville  
MEATS & PROVISIONS  
Special for May 23-24  
Lawrence Brand Golden  
Bantam Corn  
Watch for Opening

ENTERPRISE  
Somerville's Most Complete  
Department Store  
200 Elm St., Davis Square  
Ladies' Flat  
Crepe Slips  
57¢  
Watch for Opening

SUMMERFIELD'S  
212 Elm St., Somerville  
Sturdy  
Porch Rockers  
\$2.68  
Watch for Opening

BOKAR  
COFFEE  
200 Elm St., Somerville  
Salt and  
Pepper Shakers  
\$1.25  
Watch for Opening

Somerville  
Trust Company  
Largest  
COMMERCIAL BANK  
in Somerville

JOYCE BROS. & CO., Inc.  
212 Elm St., Somerville  
Men's Shantano and  
Broadcloth Shirts  
\$1.85  
Watch for Opening

Davis Square, Somerville  
Favorite Shopping Center for Countless Thousands, Shoppers & Great  
Cooperative Value Event To Attract New Thousands With Its Conveniences

Friday and  
Saturday  
May 23, 24  
Only

Davis Square  
Days

An Event Planned For Months by Every Merchant  
in Davis Square to Be the Biggest Sales  
Event in the History of Somerville

Friday and  
Saturday  
May 23, 24  
Only

Low Rentals Mean  
Easy Shopping

Assortments As Complete  
As Anywhere

Davis Square Is Easily Reached:

READ THE DAVIS SQUARE NEWS  
The official advertising medium of the Davis Square merchants  
EVERY THURSDAY  
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stores still operating in the 60's and 70's. I still remember the smell of fresh ground coffee when you went to the A&P, and of course the concrete floors. I don't remember too much about Parke Snow and Gorin's except one of them had a shoe repair service downstairs. And there you have it, the biggest sales event in Somerville's history back when my dad was just 10 years old.

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# THE WEEK IN CRIME

By Jim Clark

## Late night vehicle burglar thwarted

Somerville Police officers were dispatched to a Minnesota Ave. location last week on reports of a person breaking into motor vehicles.

Police dispatch informed responding units that the suspect was walking up Minnesota Ave. heading towards Broadway and supplied a partial description.

As officers were arriving in the area and turning onto Minnesota Ave. from Broadway, they encountered the suspect, later identified as Christian Mercedes, who matched the provided description.

The officers immediately exited their cruiser to speak with Mercedes and asked him where he was coming from. He stated that he was walking down the street and when asked if he was in anyone's yard, he stated that he was just urinating.

The officers noted that Mercedes' pockets were all bulging as if items were stuffed into them.

Mercedes denied going into any vehicles and kept stating that he just wanted to go home. He said that he was coming from Davis Square, but he missed the last bus so he was walking home towards Everett.

During the interaction with Mercedes, police reportedly noted he was fidgety and kept moving around. Because of this, they placed him in handcuffs for officer safety and patted him down for any weapons. Due to his pockets being so bulgy, some items had to be removed from his pockets to properly clear them.

The reporting party stated that he was alerted via a camera app on his phone at approximately 2:00 a.m. that there was some motion in his drive way. On camera, Mercedes was shown checking the door handle to his vehicle. He then reportedly left the reporting party's driveway and checked another vehicle's door handle. The reporting party looked out his window and watched what Mercedes was doing. He reportedly observed Mercedes walk in the general area of his house and then get into a black Dodge Ram pickup truck. He exited the vehicle a short time later. Mercedes then walked down Minnesota Ave. and went into a back yard under construction. He was then observed walking onto Pennsylvania Ave. and then returned to Minnesota Ave. heading towards Broadway.

Police then spoke with the owner of the pickup truck, who stated that his vehicle was parked in front of his house and it was unlocked. When officers alerted him that his vehicle was broken into and asked to check to see if anything was missing, he realized that a check for \$5,000 was missing along with some losing scratch tickets.

Inside Mercedes' bulging pockets was the losing scratch tickets and the check for \$5,000. Also in Mercedes' pockets were two coin purses with \$11 in one and \$31.54 in the other. Loose bills and coins totaling \$197.25 along with eight pairs of headphones and a watch were also discovered.

Mercedes was subsequently placed under arrest on charges of attempt to commit a crime and felony nighttime breaking and entering of a vehicle or boat.

### SOMERVILLE POLICE CRIME LOG

<b>Arrests:</b>				
<b>Stephen Costigan</b> , of Cambridge, May 2, 6:32 a.m., arrested at Whipple St. on warrant charges of assault	and battery on a police officer, disorderly conduct, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery on a person over 60	or disabled, resisting arrest, and shoplifting by concealing merchandise.	<b>Christian Mercedes</b> , of Everett, May 3, 2:32 a.m., arrested at Minnesota Ave. on charges of attempt to commit a crime and felony nighttime breaking and entering of a vehicle or boat.	<b>Amanual Beshah</b> , of Malden, May 3, 6:11 a.m., arrested on a warrant charge of armed assault to murder


## DA update on Somerville Police Officer

As reported by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, on May 5, former Somerville Police Officer Michael McGrath admitted to sufficient facts in Cambridge District Court to the charge of assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon.

McGrath admitted to having pepper-sprayed a handcuffed man on October 1, 2019. When the police administration learned of the incident, McGrath was placed on unpaid leave. An internal investigation by the Somerville Police Professional Standards Division found McGrath responsible for several violations of Departmental policies and Rules and Regulations including the use of unnecessary force. He was suspended without pay for a period of five days with a recommendation for additional discipline up to and including termination of his employment from the City of Somerville. McGrath resigned prior to the date of the suspension taking effect.

"While the overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers perform their duties with full professionalism, those who are alleged to have committed an act of misconduct will be held accountable. The city must be able to rely on the good judgment of its officers using force only when warranted by the circumstances as defined in Departmental policies. The public must have confidence that officers discharge their duties with all due care and restraint. The events depicted in the findings and related evidence fall disappointingly short of the Department's expectations and do not represent the values of the Somerville Police Department," said Acting Somerville Police Chief Charles Femino.

— City of Somerville



Former Somerville Police Officer Michael McGrath speaking at a 2016 rally at Somerville City Hall.

— Photo by Bobbie Toner

## New state zoning requirement for MBTA communities will affect Somerville

CONT. FROM PG 1

Communities across Massachusetts, Somerville must consider how best to comply with the new requirement, said Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning Daniel Bartman. Though the guidelines released by the state are not yet final, the current draft calls for a 50-acre area of compliant zoning within the city, or about eight percent of a square mile.

Much of Somerville falls within a half-mile radius of an MBTA stop, giving many options for neighborhoods in which this new zoning could be implemented. The committee did not identify neighborhoods of interest at this time. The Assembly area, said Bartman, could function as a sort of "relief valve," but the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development "already does not believe that is the right answer."

Rather, Bartman identified the possibility of distributing patches of compliant zoning across the community. "We believe that many of our squares could handle additional density within walking distance of transit," he explained. City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin agreed, saying, "I don't want to see it condensed... We need to spread [housing] out, in order to get the benefits of the Green Line."

Somerville's urban planning office must await finalized guidelines before taking further action, but the city councilors had no shortage of ideas for taking advantage of updated zoning. Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen voiced his support for increased residential over commercial development. "This is really an opportunity – I don't see this as a burden," said Councilor McLaughlin, who suggested taking advantage of the new requirement to build more affordable housing.

Councilor Beatriz Gómez Mouakad emphasized the importance of educating the Somerville public on zoning changes. The official guidelines for compliance have yet to be released by the state. Once the new requirement is finalized, said Bartman, city planners and councilors will seek input from residents on proposed changes.



# Somerville High School to install shooter detection system

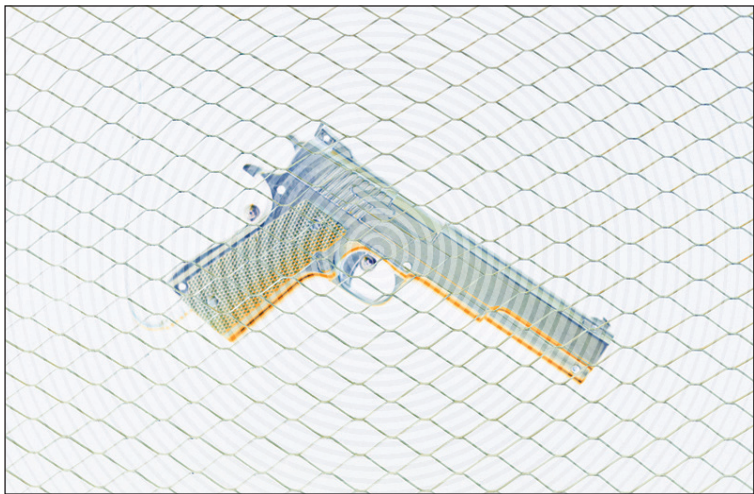
By Kyle Dante

Safety is a concern in schools. With several mass shootings across the United States, there is a call to action. Not only in protecting children and staff but response time by nearby police departments.

On April 12, 2022, Lt. Sean Sheehan proposed the Guardian Indoor Active Shooter Detection System (GIASDS). The system utilizes ten sensors throughout different parts of Somerville High School. It is listening for a shot, akin to an acoustic bang, and looking for infrared flashes of gunfire. With the implementation, it will eliminate false reports.

The Somerville Police Department must account for monitoring GIASDS. Training will occur in a service course. The GIASDS company will visit on how to detect and report the shot. Any gunshots found to result in a text message and email report. In doing so, SPD can find out where the shooting occurred and the victims' current location.

For privacy purposes, GIASDS



is supposedly safe. It will not provide personal information to the police. The sole purpose is to uncover a gunshot and call to action if it occurs.

So far, SHS has done some wiring. The current action is to detail and understands the technology. It is due to the complexity of GIASDS as a technology. Sheehan mentions the old SHS system being similar to GIASDS. The difference is that GIASDS does not video record the shots. It is solely a notification for the police department and those involved with the system.

The concerns from the City Council are about validating

GIASDS. It lacks a microphone in the recordings. It is akin to another program, ShotSpotter. Therefore, the alert will depend on the acoustic bang sound and infrared flashes.

Keep up with the information regarding GIASDS through the City Council website, especially as SHS implements it. It is the second discussion of GIASDS; the first was during the April 14, 2022 City Council Meeting.

To download the GIASDS impact report, go to: <http://somervillecityma.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?-Type=4&ID=26239&MeetingID=3539>.

## Aeronaut Brewery, artists and activists to host 'Pick Your Price' art sale

A fundraising event to benefit the immigrant community offers the public an opportunity to buy original local art with a "set your own price" policy at a Somerville craft brewery.

"Our moto for this event is 'Do good, buy art,'" said Jeremy Fischer of Boston For All, which is organizing the fundraiser at Aeronaut Brewery. "Every piece of art has been donated by the artist who created it, and they include sculptures, drawings, paintings and more. We're proud that 100% of proceeds will go to La Colaborativa, a trusted partner to Massachusetts' Latinx immigrant community."

Based in Chelsea, La Colaborativa supports youth and adult members of the community through food, housing, jobs, English classes, citizenship pathways and community organizing. La Colaborativa Excecutive Director Gladys Vega explains, "We believe in the power of these human rights and everyone, regardless of circumstance, deserves to be listened to and treated with dignity."

Boston For All, founded in 2017, has raised over \$80,000 for nonprofit organizations through a wide range of live and virtual community engagement events ranging from fun runs to concerts and more. When Boston For All and Aeronaut teamed up for Art For All 2 in 2019 they raised over \$12,000 to support the Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network. Joining with this grassroots group to host such inclusive celebrations is fully in line with Aeronaut's standing as a welcoming member of the Somerville community.

The event is open to all, with no minimum purchase price for art.

"Art for All is a chance for anyone to give whatever they're able to a great cause and walk away with an original keepsake," Fischer said.

**What:** Art For All 3

**When:** Sunday, May 15, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

**Where:** Aeronaut Brewery, 14 Tyler St., Somerville



## The Somerville Times Historical Fact of the Week



Eagle feathers #253

### Menotomy

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

Until 1842, Charlestown Beyond the Neck, as Somerville was then called, consisted of present-day Somerville and a northwest extended area called Charlestown End. This area that stretched beyond Alewife Brook Parkway included part of today's East Arlington and its Morningside section.



Arlington was first settled around 1635 as part of Cambridge and embraced the Indian name, Menotomy. This moniker was after the river with that name, which today is the Alewife Brook. In 1807, the area was incorporated as West Cambridge. In 1850, pruning of its territory helped shape Winchester and in 1859, helped mold Belmont. On April 30, 1867, the name of Arlington was chosen in honor and remembrance of those Civil War heroes buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This town's historic and celebrated chronicle doesn't end there.



- In 1639, Pawtucket's Queen Squaw Sachem deeded the land including Menotomy to colonists.
- Early in the morning of April 19, 1775, Paul Revere's famous ride took him to Lexington through Menotomy Village.
- The bloodiest part of the battle of Lexington and Concord was fought in Menotomy between what is now Arlington Heights and Arlington Center. Forty-nine Patriots and 65 British were lost on the first day of the American Revolution. Twenty-five Patriots, and 40 British were lost in Menotomy alone.



- An Arlington Center memorial states, "Near this spot Samuel Whittemore then 80 years old. Killed three British soldiers April 19, 1775. He was shot, bayoneted, beaten and left for dead but recovered and lived to be 98 years of age."

• Samuel Wilson, the national personification of the United States, U.S. and Uncle Sam, was born in historic Menotomy/Arlington near today's Minuteman Bikeway. *Continued on page 12*



Beacon Hill Roll Call



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

**THE HOUSE AND SENATE.** *Beacon Hill Roll Call* records local senators’ votes on roll calls from the week of May 2-6. There were no roll calls in the House last week.

Technical audio problems plagued the Senate live broadcast near the end of the session. All Senate sessions are broadcast live on the Legislature's website at [www.malegislature.gov](http://www.malegislature.gov) After the Senate adjourned and the online video broadcast ended, the audio could still be heard online.

Sen. Will Brownsberger (D-Belmont) who presided over the Senate debate, conducted several “mic checks” and could be heard asking a technician, “It doesn’t sound like I’m underwater anymore?”

All Senate roll calls were on amendments to the bill allowing undocumented/illegal immigrants to apply for a Massachusetts standard driver’s license.

Sen. Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester), the sponsor of several failed amendments to the bill, did not respond to repeated requests from Beacon Hill Roll Call to comment on why he filed the amendments. Sens. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn) and Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), two key backers of the bill, did not respond to repeated requests from Beacon Hill Roll Call to comment on why they opposed all of Tarr’s amendments.

**UNDOCUMENTED/ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS CAN GET DRIVER'S LICENSE (S 2851)**

Senate 32-8, approved a bill allowing undocumented/illegal immigrants to apply for a Massachusetts standard driver’s license. The House has approved a different version of the bill and the Senate version now goes to the House for consideration. The bills are similar and both branches approved their version by veto-proof margins. Once the two branches agree on a final version, the measure goes to Gov. Charlie Baker.

The legislation requires an applicant “without legal presence” in the United State to provide the RMV with a foreign passport and at least one of five other documents: a driver's license from another state, a foreign driver's license, a birth certificate, a foreign national identification card or a marriage certificate or divorce decree from any U.S. state.

“The [bill] makes our roads safer and, just as importantly, makes the lives of more than 185,000 Massachusetts immigrants without status easier by allowing them to earn a standard driver's license,” said Sen. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn). “In the absence of a robust regional public transportation system, it is impossible for many Massachusetts residents to get through their day without the use of a car. No one should fear detention or deportation over essential everyday tasks such as getting to work, school, doctor's appointments and grocery stores. It is time for Massachusetts to join the 16 other states who have passed this common-sense legislation.”

“It was important to me to listen to my local police chiefs many [of whom] indicated to me that they had concerns,” said Sen. Anne Gobi (D-Spencer), one of only five of the Senate’s 37 Democrats to vote against the bill. “As well-meaning as the legislation is, I do believe there will be unintended negative consequences. For one, the legislation will task the RMV with verifying documentation. You do not have to look very far to see problems the RMV continues to have, including the Brockton RMV improperly awarding 2,100 drivers licenses with-

out a road test.”

“We are a nation of immigrants, and our commonwealth continues to be profoundly and positively shaped by immigrants from all over the world,” said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). “They deserve to be able to safely get to work and school, care for their families and participate in the lives of their communities. I am thrilled that the Senate has moved forward with this proposal which will support families, improve public safety and be good for our economy.”

“State-issued drivers licenses are a primary form of identification in our society and they carry real-world consequences and responsibilities” said GOP Minority Leader Sen. Bruce Tarr who led the opposition to the measure. “We proposed safeguards to ensure that a privilege to drive does not, under any circumstance, become misused for any purposes including access to voting in elections or anything else that could put the public at risk. The 9/11 Commission said that all layers of government should secure state-issued identification documents describing it as a national security and law enforcement imperative to combat identity fraud and illegal immigration.”

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

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

**MUST HAVE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES (S 2851)**

Senate 8-31, rejected an amendment that would require the license to have a background color and other features which will distinguish it from all other licenses issued by the RMV.

“[This] would have helped address issues raised by a number of local police chiefs in the district I represent who I consulted with prior to yesterday’s vote,” said Sen. Marc Pacheco (D-Taunton). “Based on the input I received, the possible corruption of our state licensing process was flagged as a significant concern.”

Amendment opponents said law enforcement officers do not need a distinctive license to identify a driver. They said the amendment could create be an opportunity for stigma and allow someone to discriminate against its holder.

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

Sen. Patricia Jehlen No

**NOT VALID FOR ID (S 2851)**

Senate 7-32, rejected an amendment that would require that the license include the words “Not valid for identification” prominently in bold text.”

Amendment supporters said that the license is meant to operate a motor vehicle and it should be made clear that it is not valid for identification purposes.

Amendment opponents said the amendment is unnecessary and will only lead to and open up opportunities to discriminate.

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

Sen. Patricia Jehlen No

**REQUIRE RMV TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO CITY AND TOWN CLERKS (S 2851)**

Senate 10-29, rejected an amendment that would require the RMV to provide information on the holder of a Massachusetts driver’s license to any city or town clerk requesting information to verify the identity and eligibility of any individual using a Massachusetts license to vote or to register to vote.

Amendment supporters said this would ensure that anyone who receives a Massachusetts license who is not eligible to vote is not accidentally registered to vote. “The bill does very little to prevent the issue of an undocumented citizen using their driver’s license to register to vote,” said Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton). “This poses a challenge to the integrity of the process to register to vote, because city and town clerks will not be able to determine whether or not an individual is eligible to register. My amendment would add strength to the security of this process by ensuring that Massachusetts is in compliance with the law that enables U.S. citizens to vote.”

Amendment opponents said getting a driver's license has nothing to do with a person’s ability to vote. They noted there are many non-citizens, such as green card recipients, who have earned a license but are not eligible to vote.

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

Sen. Patricia Jehlen No

**HOW LONG WAS LAST WEEK'S SESSION?**

*Beacon Hill Roll Call* tracks the length of time that the House and Senate were in session each week. Many legislators say that legislative sessions are only one aspect of the Legislature's job and that a lot of important work is done outside of the House and Senate chambers. They note that their jobs also involve committee work, research, constituent work and other matters that are important to their districts. Critics say that the Legislature does not meet regularly or long enough to debate and vote in public view on the thousands of pieces of legislation that have been filed. They note that the infrequency and brief length of sessions are misguided and lead to irresponsible late-night sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding the end of an annual session

During the week of May 2-6, the House met for a total of 45 minutes and the Senate met for a total of five hours and 32 minutes

Mon. May 2	House 11:01 a.m. to 11:21 a.m. Senate 11:08 a.m. to 11:11 a.m.
Tues. May 3	No House session No Senate session
Wed. May 4	No House session No Senate session
Thurs. May 5	House 11:02 a.m. to 11:27 a.m. Senate 11:12 a.m. to 4:41 p.m.
Fri. May 6	No House session No Senate session

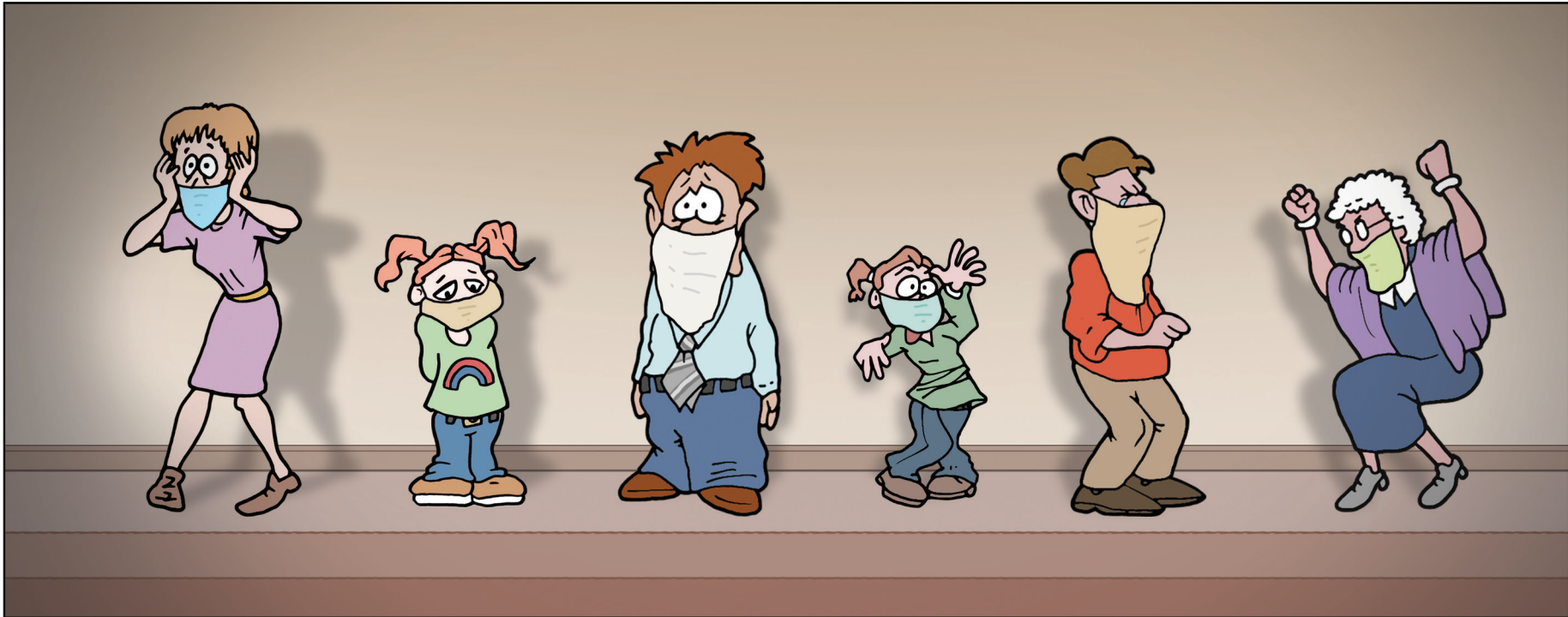
Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at [bob@beaconhillrollcall.com](mailto:bob@beaconhillrollcall.com)



COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Oh no! Masks again?

Our View Of The Times



Well, sometimes it seems like we take one step forward, just to be pushed back two steps again and again. After an invigorating period of relaxed guidelines for unmasked gatherings indoors, it looks like we'll have to raise our guards once more as we deal with another unwanted surge in COVID cases in our area.

News that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) raised

the COVID-19 Community Level for all of Middlesex County including Somerville to HIGH last week has thrown us a nasty curve for the time being.

According to the city, high-quality masks should be worn indoors in public places for as long as the level remains high, and everyone should be current with their vaccination/booster status.

It is also highly recommended for any-

one who has symptoms to get tested. Additionally, it is important to stay home if you feel sick – barring the need for medical attention, of course.

Anyone can pick up high-quality KN95 masks for free at all three Somerville Libraries and at City Hall. Free N95 masks provided by the federal government are also available at participating pharmacies throughout the city. The CDC provides

a free mask lookup tool at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/free-masks.html>.

The city has many resources and info available at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-resources>.

It may be a pain, but it's up to us to do our part to stay safe, for ourselves and others.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

**November 23, 12:00 – 6:00 p.m.**, rain or shine, in the **municipal parking lot** at the intersection of **Herbert St. and Day St.** in Somerville, across from **American Flatbread** at 44 Day St.

\*\*\*\*\*

To those celebrating their birthdays this week: Happy birthday to **Melissa Hurley**, who is celebrating this week. A nice person, we hope she has a great birthday. Happy birthday to **Donald Chamberlain**, we wish him the best. Happy birthday to **Caroline Shea Rosas**, who is also celebrating this week. Happy birthday to local attorney **Neil Berman**. We hope Neil has a great birthday. To another great local attorney, **Edwin Smith**, we wish him nothing but the best as well. A great guy, and one of the best real estate attorneys here in Somerville. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Lisa Dervishian, Janet McLaughlin-Hanscom, Paul Curley, Ann Kane-Peters, Mary Ellen MyhrDiane Murphy Sullivan, Donny Caprigno** and **Beth Foley Delacruz** a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

\*\*\*\*\*

Somerville residents who otherwise do not have a means of transportation can once again sign up for **free taxi rides** to access food and local medical care through the city's **Taxi to Health** program. Ride vouchers are also available to use in the future. To learn more, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/somervillecab>. Open to all over age 18. Residents aged 60 and over can book rides directly by calling **Connie Lorenti** at the **Council on Aging**: 617-625-6600 ext. 2319.

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the **Flip the Switch** event that celebrates the **East Somerville Community School's** newly installed **solar array** that covers 51.7% of the building's energy use! Instead of a traditional ribbon cutting, the **Somerville High School Carpentry students** built a large switch for the event. **Thursday, May 12** at 6:00 p.m. ESCS 50 Cross Street.

\*\*\*\*\*

Somerville's **Board of Health** unanimously approved the city's proposed **extension of the eviction moratorium**. The moratorium now has a 60-day sunset period and **will end on June 30**. The city urges tenants and homeowners to use this period to seek assistance if they are facing housing instability. The

**Office of Housing Stability (OHS)** is ready to help and can be reached at 617-625-6600 ext. 2581. Landlords are encouraged to contact OHS on a tenant's behalf rather than pursuing eviction. For more information, visit [somervillema.gov/ohs](http://somervillema.gov/ohs).

\*\*\*\*\*

Don't miss the next **Somerville High School student theatre production**, this time written, directed, and performed by students. On **May 12 and 13**, it's **Highlander Fringe 2022**. Pay what you can and get tickets at [www.highlandertheatre.org](http://www.highlandertheatre.org). These performances contain strong language but are otherwise appropriate for most audiences. Somerville High School, 81 Highland Ave.

\*\*\*\*\*

The city is hiring **Crossing Guards** to help protect student safety at intersections along school routes. Uniforms and on-the-job training provided. The ability to work both morning and afternoon shifts is required. Applicants **must pass a pre-employment CORI and drug screen**. For more information, contact **School Safety Officer Joseph Teves**, at (617) 625-6600 ext. 7248 or visit [somervillema.gov/CrossingGuards](http://somervillema.gov/CrossingGuards).

\*\*\*\*\*

The **City of Somerville** and **Center for Teen Empowerment** will hold a **Somerville Youth Peace March, May 13**, at 6:00 p.m. March with them **from Foss Park to City Hall** as they raise awareness of violence in our community and work together to create peace. The march starts at 6:00 p.m. The vigil and rally at City Hall starts at 7:15 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Want to learn **how to grow** food in your backyard or on your front porch? Join in at the **Groundwork Somerville farm on May 27** for the **Vegetable Gardening 101 workshop**. Each participant will leave with a miniature, portable herb garden. Register here: <https://groundworksomerville.org>.

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC) Big Sleep Out weekend** is this weekend. **Sleep In Sleep Out, May 13 – 15**, while you sleep in your yard, basement, porch, couch or anywhere that isn't your bed. SHC members will be sleeping outside (rain or shine). No planning necessary, just register with the link below and share the event with your friends and family. To register: <https://app.mobilecause.com/vf/22SLEEPOUT>



FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#826

1. What horse broke the 37-year Triple Crown drought?

2. Which post position has never won the Kentucky Derby?

3. When did the Great Fire of London occur?

4. Who is the youngest Nobel Prize winner?

5. What is the oldest musical instrument?

6. anadian Space Agency astronaut Chris Hadfield?

7. In the film *The Polar Express*, Tom

Hanks portrays how many different characters?

8. What are the letters that aren't vowels called?

9. Name the legendary red-haired dance partner of Fred Astaire?

10. In 79 AD, which volcano destroyed the city of Pompei?

11. A Flemish giant is what type of animal?

12. Which nation is both a country and a continent?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise.

2. Dolphins give each other names.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

GRADUATION

ACROSS

1. Like a bug on windshield noise

6. G-man

9. Type of race

13. Late actor Ledger

14. Waikiki necklace

15. Group of lions

16. Knight's shiny garb

17. Ensign, for short

18. One to beat

19. Graduation proof

21. "School's Out" singer

23. An indigenous person in Laos

24. 6-shooter

25. Founder of People's Republic of China

28. Porous rock

30. MFA or BA

35. Comrade in arms

37. Be inclined

39. Had in mind

40. Was a passenger

41. Ventricular beater

43. Same as ayah

44. \_\_\_\_ Trick, rock band

46. Nicholas II, e.g.

47. Initiation ceremony, e.g.

48. "Pollock" actor Ed

50. Foolish one

52. Ever, to a poet

53. "House of Gucci" star

55. Masters Tournament peg

57. Mortarboard attachment

60. "No more \_\_\_\_, no more books"

64. Fancy boat

65. Mozart's "L \_\_\_\_ del Cairo"

67. Arm bones

68. Orderly arrangement

69. Granola grain

70. Gustatory sensation

71. Lord Byron's composition

72. Dashboard unit

73. Weasel's aquatic cousin

DOWN

1. Herring's cousin

2. "Frasier" actress Gilpin

3. Bulb holder

4. Coral reef island

5. Neck cavity

6. Pestilence pest

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
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
64						65	66			67			
68						69				70			
71						72				73			

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ACTIVATION

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

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

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

7. Even, to a poet

8. "Saturday Night Fever" music genre

9. Type of coffee maker

10. Gauche or Droite in Paris

11. Month of Purim

12. Styling product

15. For the time being, Latin (2 words)

20. Cave opening

22. Like Hemingway's certain man on sea

24. Type of rummy

25. One in "Pomp and Circumstance" series

26. Hello to Israel Kamakawi'o'ole

27. Ahead in years

29. \*"You have brains in your head, you have \_\_\_\_ in your shoes"

31. Cleats to soccer player

32. China grass

33. Related on mother's side

34. Olden days anesthetic

36. School \_\_\_\_, which is about 180 days

38. No-win situation

42. Old-hat

45. Wilbur's home

49. \*Famous frat house

51. Adjective in sheet music

54. Low light

56. Enthusiastic approval

57. Tropical edible root

58. Land measure

59. A fake

60. Beaten by walkers

61. Research facil.

62. It's better than never?

63. Tiresias in "Oedipus Rex"

64. Small dog's bark

66. Gown's companion

66. Fla. neighbor

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Soulution to last week's sudoku puzzle:

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

Soulution to last week's crossword puzzle:

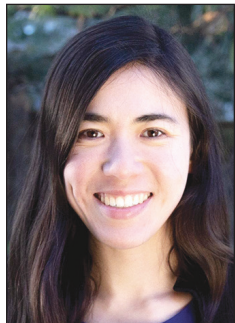
L	A	M	I	A		W	O	K			N	E	A	P
A	D	O	R	N		A	B	A			R	A	M	I
M	A	R	I	A		R	I	P			U	S	I	N
P	R	E	S	L	E	Y			P	O	P	A	R	T
						H	O	D		N	A	P	E	
B	A	G			G	I	B	E		S	E	E	S	A
R	E	A	M			T	O	G	S		S	A	I	G
O	R	S	O			S	O	L	U	S		C	L	O
W	I	E	L	D		M	E	E	T		H	O	R	N
N	E	S	T	O	R		C	Z	A	R		S	A	E
						W	A	N	T		R	H	O	
		B	R	A	N	D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



# COMMENTARY

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

## The threat to abortion access is an existential threat to our democracy



By State Representative  
Erika Uytterhoeven

In threatening to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court has become an illegitimate institution. Overturning a seminal, settled constitutional right is a flagrant violation of the intended duties of the judicial branch. This is a violent attack on health care access, abortion rights, and reproductive justice that will disproportionately harm queer, transgender, Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities, young people, and working-class people.

The majority of justices — five out of nine — were appointed by presidents that lost the popular vote. Our system is deeply flawed, undemocratic, and in need of structural change.

With a Democratic majority in the House and Senate, as well as a Democrat in the White House, we not only have the ability, but the *responsibility* to codify the right to abortions across the country. We should be expecting and demanding more from our elected officials at the national level, who could pass legislation to protect the right to an abortion.

If we are serious about reproductive justice, platitudes

of “We’re with you” are not enough. This is an existential crisis of our democracy, and I encourage you to join me in calling upon our national legislators to act swiftly to protect the right to abortion.

### The Local Impact: Abortion Access in Massachusetts

There is some not-bad news: in Massachusetts, we have a solid foundation of abortion protections that will hold firm, regardless of what the Supreme Court does. 16 months ago, we passed the ROE Act in MA, which prevents what happened with SB8 in Texas. That means **if *Roe v. Wade* gets overturned by the Supreme Court, you will still be able to access abortion care in Massachusetts.** The ROE Act removed all criminalization language and cleaned up the laws on the books since 1974. It also crucially removed barriers to access for 16 and 17-year-olds in need of reproductive health care.

We would not be where we are today without the advocacy and leadership of groups like Sister Song and the countless Black, Indigenous, Queer, and Trans people who have led the reproductive justice movement. For decades, they have been fighting to protect the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.

I am also proud to co-sponsor and advocate for Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund’s priority bills: increase access to medication abortion, full spec-

trum pregnancy care, equitable birth access and safety, and LGBTQ+ inclusive sexual education, to name a few.

We did the right thing by codifying the right to abortion in MA. But, we can and must be doing a hell of a lot more for people seeking reproductive health care. At this time of existential crisis for our democracy, we must be thinking as boldly as possible about how we can center reproductive justice because we are far from all set here in MA. There are several areas of improvement I believe we must address in our abortion code.

### Misinformation

While abortion access is currently and will remain *fully legal* in Massachusetts, we still face a public health crisis in abortion care. There are nearly 30 crisis pregnancy centers (also known as CPCs or fake clinics) across the state of Massachusetts. These are unlicensed institutions disguised as medical centers that deter people from choosing an abortion through misleading and often medically inaccurate persuasion techniques.

The Somerville City Council voted to ban CPCs in the city just last month, for which I am deeply grateful. There are currently no fake clinics in Somerville, and this proactive measure will serve as a deterrent for malicious actors.

Unfortunately, in areas like the Cape and Western Massachusetts, CPCs are often more accessible than the nearest abortion provider. This is a public health crisis: it is easier for pregnant people to access

fake clinics with unlicensed staff than it is for them to access the safe, legal abortion care to which they have a right.

The State House has the ability and responsibility to follow in the Somerville City Council’s lead and ban CPCs statewide.

### Access

Furthermore, the ROE Act, while a crucial step in codifying the right to an abortion in MA, was chiseled down from a much more comprehensive and justice-informed original version. I see two further changes we must pursue to our current abortion code:

First, the ROE Act originally would have allowed for a full spectrum of reasons for an abortion beyond 24 weeks, including the physical or mental health of the pregnant person. However, the final language that was passed essentially only allows it in the case of lethal fetal anomaly. The health and wellbeing of a pregnant person is a valid reason to seek an abortion, and we should update the law to reflect that.

Second, under current law, those under 16 who are seeking abortion care must either obtain parental consent, or if that’s not an option, judicial consent. For those who do not wish to go through the trauma of judicial bypass or who are unable to get parental consent, the only other way to obtain abortion care in MA is to *get married*.

There is **no other medical care in MA that requires a judge to confirm the maturity of a patient before they are allowed to consent to their**

**health care.** We must remove all judicial bypass requirements for abortion care in Massachusetts in order to truly move towards reproductive justice.

### Funding and Financial Support

In addition to legal barriers, there are numerous other unnecessary obstacles to obtaining an abortion. In Massachusetts, abortions are not yet free for everyone — in fact, they can cost upwards of \$600, and insurance companies are not required to cover them. Abortion funds are available to help people pay for their abortion and logistical expenses like travel, lodging, child care, doula, and translation services. You can find a full list of abortion funds at [abortion-funds.org/funds](http://abortion-funds.org/funds).

The FY23 House Budget that was passed last month includes \$500,000 in funding for the three abortion funds in Massachusetts. Direct financial support for abortions is the most powerful way to support people in need of abortion care right now, and I am proud that we have earmarked funding for that.

However, in the weeks since, it has become clear that Massachusetts will become a safe haven for those seeking abortion care should the SCOTUS decision come to fruition as we predict. We must funnel financial support into our abortion funds. I stand with the Senate in their proposal to increase funding for abortions from \$500k to \$2M.

*Accessing abortion care is a human right. Abortions should be free, safe, and easily accessible for everybody.*

See you in the streets.

## RIP Roe?



By State Senator Pat Jehlen

When my family moved to Massachusetts, my mother couldn’t legally get birth control or even learn about it.

By the time I was in college, the Supreme Court had ensured that married women could get

birth control, though unmarried women couldn’t.

By the time our daughter was born, the Supreme Court had made birth control and abortion (within limits) legal. It seemed progress was slow but irreversible.

We are now reminded that freedom isn’t free, that rights aren’t permanent, and that elections have consequences.

Many people today can’t remember the time when abortion at any stage was illegal. They never searched an underground network looking for a “doctor” who would provide an

unknown substance that might or might not cause a miscarriage, or one who would provide a procedure that might or might not be safe. They never had a dorm mate who bled out in the common bathroom after an illegal abortion.

Abortion has never been an easy choice. Neither were some alternatives. Many people can’t remember their high school friends sent to live with out-of-state relatives until they gave birth and gave up their child. Other high school friends dropped out. Some got married quickly and sometimes reluc-

tantly and briefly.

Many people today never read a letter like this:

Is there any way possible for me to never become pregnant again? I mean until I die. We have been married for five years. I have had five children and one miscarriage ... I have a moral obligation to the five I have. I think I should rather end my life than go through another pregnancy and bring another child into the world where it cannot be cared for properly.

(According to the Guttmacher Institute, 59% of people who have an abortion already have at

least one child.)

Young people may not remember the murders at the Planned Parenthood clinic in Brookline, or the murders of other abortion doctors and clinic workers.

They could read *The Family Roe*, by Joshua Prager. Or they could ask their mothers or grandmothers.

We can be proud that Massachusetts passed the ROE Act, anticipating the Court’s decision, and protecting those rights. There are many ways to support people in other states who have lost reproductive rights — and voting rights. We should do that.



LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notices can also be viewed on our website at [www.thesomervilletimes.com](http://www.thesomervilletimes.com)



**SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
30 Memorial Road  
Somerville, Massachusetts 02145  
Telephone (617) 625-1152  
Fax (617) 628-7057 TDD (617) 628-8889

**Request for Proposal  
Rental Lease Agreement**

**Issued: Wednesday May 4, 2022**

**The Project and the Sponsor**

The Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) has received a planning grant award from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), to undertake a mixed-income redevelopment of Clarendon Housing Development, a state-aided family public housing development. The redevelopment will be carried out with the Preservation of Affordable Housing, Redgate, and Somerville Community Corporation, the SHA's designated Developers. The resulting mixed-income community will require the SHA to relocate approximately 75 families into apartments not owned by the SHA.

The SHA is a public housing agency established by MGL c. 121B to provide housing to low-income residents in the City of Somerville. The SHA is not an agency of the City of Somerville; it owns and manages 1,415 Units throughout the City including family, elderly/disabled. In addition, the SHA administers a large rental assistance program (Section 8, MRVP, & AHVP).

**Scope of Services**

The SHA seeks multiple owners of developments or single rental units, proximate to Somerville, Massachusetts 02145 with preference given to those apartments in Somerville, MA with available 1-, 2-, & 3 - bedroom units that will be vacant Between May 2022 and October 2024, to enter into a master lease agreement (Attachment B) with the SHA for 18 months with a month-to-month extensions following the lease period. The Tenant shall have the right of first refusal to extend up to 30 months. The SHA will pay Fair Market Rent (FMR) as the applicable payment standards for the units. The SHA will be entering into an agreement with multiple owners, to sublease approximately 75 units, with an agreement signed for each unit occupied. The FMR payment standard by bedroom size is as follows.

- 1-Bedroom units - FMR \$ 1,986
- 2-Bedroom units - FMR \$ 2,399
- 3-Bedroom units - FMR \$ 2,966

To receive a full RFP Package please send a request via email to Kevin Bumpus at [KevinB@sha-web.org](mailto:KevinB@sha-web.org) on or after May 4th, 2022. All questions should be directed to Kevin Bumpus at 617-625-1152 Ext. 321.

Completed proposals should be emailed to [KevinB@sha-web.org](mailto:KevinB@sha-web.org) no later than 1:00 PM on Monday June 6th, 2022. Proposals may also be mailed to The Somerville Housing Authority, 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, Ma 02145 attention Kevin Bumpus.

5/4/22, 5/11/22 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**  
**PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**REBID IFB#22-46**

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

**Irrigation System Repairs and Maintenance at Lincoln Park**


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, MAY 11, 2022**. Sealed bids will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **3:00 pm, Thursday, May 26, 2022**.

The City of Somerville may cancel this solicitation or reject in whole or in part any and all bids, if the City determines that cancellation or rejection serves the best interests of the City.

Massachusetts Prevailing Wage rates apply. 5% bid deposit required. Please email [yrobles@somervillema.gov](mailto:yrobles@somervillema.gov) for more information.

**Yoli Robles-Casanova**  
Construction Procurement Manager  
617-625-6600 x3407

5/11/22 The Somerville Times



**SOMERVILLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING**

**THE SOMERVILLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE WILL CONDUCT  
A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT'S FY2023 BUDGET**

**Wednesday, May 11, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.** (Originally scheduled on May 4, 2022)  
**Via the Zoom Webinar Online Meeting Platform**

Please use the following web address to join the Budget Hearing:  
<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/82048063990?pwd=VDk3L0xzZ3pXYzZlNWk0rcjNFVXFZDz09>

**THE PUBLIC IS CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND**

**Andre Green, Chair**  
Somerville School Committee

**Ilana Krepchin, Chair**  
Finance and Facilities Subcommittee

**Mary Skipper**  
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 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR**  
**MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

Please use the following web address to join the School Choice Public Hearing, if you need to join virtually:  
<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/82142009956?pwd=dUtkNFpic1R3ZDhsSlZ4VXpZSUXxSdz09>

5/4/22, 5/11/22 The Somerville Times



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**8 BONAIR STREET**  
**SOMERVILLE, MA 02145**  
**BID S2023-4**

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

**A 2022 Fourteen (14) Passenger Activity Vehicle for the Somerville School Department.**

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, 8 Bonair Street, Somerville, MA 02145 on or after **May 3, 2022**.


Sealed bid responses will be received no later than **10 a.m., May 24, 2022** at the Finance Office Somerville School Department, 8 Bonair Street, Somerville, MA 02145 at which time and place they shall be publicly opened and read aloud.

*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.*

**Francis Gorski**  
Chief Financial Officer  
Somerville Public Schools

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**8 BONAIR STREET**  
**SOMERVILLE, MA 02145**  
**RFP# S2023-03**

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

**CONSULTANT SERVICES FOR STUDENT ENROLLMENT  
FORECASTING FOR SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Each Proposal shall be submitted in two separate sealed envelopes clearly marked "Price Proposal for Consultant Services for Student Enrollment Forecasting" and a "Non-Price Proposal for Consultant Services for Student Enrollment Forecasting" in accordance with the Request for Proposal and Contract Documents which may be obtained at the Finance Office (Room 321), Somerville School Department, 8 Bonair Street, Somerville, MA 02145 on or after **Tuesday, May 3, 2022** Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

All Proposals shall be filed no later than 4:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, May 24, 2022** at the Finance Office, Somerville School Department, 8 Bonair Street, Somerville, MA 02145. There will be a Proposal review including possible interviews with the finalists.

Please contact Leah Arredondo ([larredondo@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:larredondo@k12.somerville.ma.us)) or call 617-629-5218 to receive the proposal and register as a proposal vendor.

*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.*

**Francis Gorski**  
Chief Financial Officer  
Somerville Public Schools

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Somerville offers free taxi rides to local food and health services

Somerville residents can once again sign up for free cab rides to access food and medical care through its Taxi to Health program. After establishing the program in 2020 as a crisis measure during the early days of the pandemic, the City of Somerville is relaunching the initiative using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

The Taxi to Health Program provides residents with free cab rides to grocery stores, food pantries, farmers markets, and pharmacies in Somerville, as well as to non-emergency medical appointments in Somerville, Arlington, Boston, Cambridge, Everett, and Medford. The program is administered jointly by the Council on Aging and the Office of Food Access and Healthy Communities.

Residents can book rides directly through the city or request vouchers to use in the future. Vouchers are valid through February 2023. Rides should be booked at least two business days in advance. To learn more and request vouchers, visit [tinyurl.com/somervillecab](http://tinyurl.com/somervillecab) or call Lisa Robinson, Director of the Office of Food Access and Healthy Communities, at 781-747-8502. Residents age 60 or older can book rides directly through the Council on Aging by calling Connie Lorenti at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319.



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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 19, 2022, at 6:00pm** through GoToWebinar.

Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting of the Planning Board will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to [planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov).

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6967281252070083597>  
Webinar ID: 511-579-683

TO CALL IN

Phone number: 1 (631) 992-3221  
Access code: 350-019-980

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

- 518-524 Somerville Ave** Nuestra, LLC, D/B/A The Boston Garden Dispensary, proposes to establish a Cannabis Retail Sales use in the Mid-Rise 4 District, which requires a Special Permit.
- 304 Somerville Ave** Holistic Industries Inc., D/B/A Liberty, proposes to establish a Cannabis Retail Sales use in the Mid-Rise 5 District, which requires a Special Permit.
- 350 Assembly Row** Street Retail, LLC seeks a Major Amendment to Assembly Square Planned Unit Development-Preliminary Master Plan, Case # PB 2006-59 (as amended) to incorporate the Block 7A Guidelines and strike Block 7 from Condition 39.2.

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 mail to Planning & Zoning Division, 3rd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143; or by email to [planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov).

5/4/22, 5/11/22 The Somerville Times



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, May 18, 2022, at 6:00pm** through GoToWebinar.

Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to [planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov).

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5890858268965744656>  
Webinar ID: 586-818-643

TO CALL IN

Phone number: 1 (415) 655-0060  
Access code: 747-495-475

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

- 595 Broadway** Fidelis Bridge Loan Venture V REO LLC seeks to extend the validity of two (2) special permits (ZBA 2018-94) for one (1) year.
- 35 McGrath Hwy** 35 McGrath Highway Realty Trust seeks variances from the following requirements of the High Rise (HR) District: front setback requirements, driveway in the frontage area, and façade not parallel to the front lot line.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions>.

Interested persons may provide comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing or by submitting written comments by mail to Planning & Zoning Division, 3rd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143; or by email to [planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov).

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Boynton Yards celebrates opening of first purpose-built life sciences lab in Somerville

Last week, the development venture of DLJ Real Estate Capital Partners (DLJ), Leggat McCall Properties (LMP) and Deutsche Finance America (DFA) joined the City of Somerville and Flagship Pioneering companies to cut the opening ribbon on 101 South Street, the first purpose-built Class-A lab building in Somerville as part of the Boynton Yards 1.8 million square foot, mixed-use life sciences and cultural community.

The first of four master planned life sciences buildings, 101 South Street offers best-in-class, high-efficiency infrastructure where companies can imagine and grow. The nine-story, 289,000 square-foot building offers state-of-the-art R&D lab/office space, a fitness center, bike amenities, four levels of below-grade parking, and on-site retail offerings. A ground floor conference center along with Arts and Creative Enterprise space (ACE) within the building and centered in the “Hive” at 561 Windsor Street are available for use by tenants and the Somerville Community. Coming this summer, Firefly and Portico Brewery will open serving food and beverages.

The building was pre-leased prior to completion to Flagship Pioneering, a bioplatform innovation company headquartered in Cambridge, to meet critical growth needs for its companies Tessera Therapeutics, Laronde, Cellarity, and Generate Biomedicines. These tenants occupy 280,000 square feet on eight floors. Designed by architects Spagnolo Gisness & Associates and Hashim Sarkis Studios, the building was conceived with flexibility and sustainability for emerging life sciences and technology companies. Each floor has 35,000 square feet of column-free floor plates surrounding the building’s core, offering tenants flexibility to grow and redesign to meet the needs of their workforce. The building will achieve LEED



Gold and WiredScore Platinum certifications, a testament to the sustainable and highly efficient design approach. General contractor Shawmut Design and Construction completed the job on time despite pandemic-related obstacles and lockdowns. Enhanced safety protocols to support public health mandates were employed to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 across the job site.

“... the opening of 101 South Street reflects how civic leadership, a community-driven development process, and private investment can also work together to advance multiple community goals at once”

Boynton Yards will be a model for leading urban design with a progressive mobility management plan to decrease traffic and encourage connectivity using alternative transportation modes. Supportive ame-

nities include on-site bike facilities, Bluebikes stations, e-bike access, a dedicated tenant shuttle and pedestrian access to the new Union Square MBTA GLX train station just a short walk away. As the first master planned development to be approved under the new Somerville zoning ordinance as part of the City’s SomerVision comprehensive plan, Boynton Yards has evolved through an inclusive community-driven urban revitalization process. With neighborhood input, the future of the seven-acre site now includes commercial, residential, retail, public green, arts and performance spaces that will transform the area into a vibrant work-live-play neighborhood. Offering a contemporary cultural experience, residents, scientists and artists will enjoy a micro-community that includes more than two acres of civic and green space. The project brings approximately 4,000 permanent jobs to the City of Somerville and will establish it as one of the region’s most prominent life sciences hubs. “Usually when we hold a ribbon-cutting, we’re celebrating one new great thing, like a library renovation or a new monument. But the opening of 101 South Street reflects how civic leadership, a community-driven development process, and private investment can also work together to advance multiple community goals at once,” said Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. “Not only will this project establish a vital new anchor for life sciences in our region, it will bring with it jobs, innovation, new tax revenues, leading-edge sustainable construction, new open space, contributions to our affordable housing and jobs trusts funds, and ultimately the Boynton Yards project area will also support new housing and artist and maker space creation as well. That’s a lot of items on our checklist, and I applaud everyone that helped us get here.”



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# Marta Corvelo named Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services CEO

By Nathan Lamb

The Board of Directors for Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES) has announced that Marta Corvelo will be the agency's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). "I am honored to have been selected as SCES's next Chief Executive Officer and elated to be working alongside this dedicated team that is doing incredible work to support the independence and well-being of older adults in Cambridge and Somerville," said Corvelo. Corvelo brings nearly 20 years of leadership experience in the health and non-profit sectors to SCES. In her most recent role, she served as the Vice President of Operations at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center (GLFHC), where she worked for nine years and provided oversight for more than 250 employees, seven clinical sites, and several other ancillary departments

serving over 65,000 patients in the Merrimack Valley area. SCES Board President Leslie Hergert said the board was impressed with Corvelo's resume of leading programs that support health and provide care for under-served communities. "Marta's track record of effective leadership and balancing empathy with standards struck us as a perfect fit for Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services," said Hergert. "We are looking forward to working with her to support the independence and dignity of Cambridge and Somerville residents." Corvelo will succeed Paul Hollings, who retired at the end of March after four years at the agency. Corvelo's resume includes nine years at Cambridge Health Alliance, where she rose to the position of Operations Manager for the Cambridge Breast Center from 2005-2009. The Massachusetts Commis-

sion on the Status of Women recognized Corvelo in 2021 for organizing clinic vaccine efforts that provided COVID vaccinations to some of the most vulnerable populations in the Merrimack Valley. Corvelo holds a master's degree in Health/Health Care Administration/Management from Western Governors University and a bachelor's degree in International Relations and Affairs from the Universidade dos Açores in São Miguel, Portugal. She is fluent in Portuguese and Spanish. Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services is a non-profit agency that supports the independence and well-being of older adults in Somerville and Cambridge. For free advice and guidance on questions of aging, caregiving or disability, contact our Aging Information Center at 617-628-2601, email [info@eldercare.org](mailto:info@eldercare.org), or visit our website [eldercare.org](http://eldercare.org)



Newly named Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services CEO Marta Corvelo.

## Historical Fact

CONT. FROM PG 5

Arlington's Uncle Sam Memorial Statue marks his birthplace. ♦ The Jason Russell House is a Menotomy-era historic site. It is a museum which honors Russell and the eleven patriots who died fighting in his house on April 19, 1775. ♦ Cyrus Dallin, nationally acclaimed Native American sculptor, spent his adult life in Arlington. Locally, he is most famous for his statue of Paul Revere located in Boston's North End. He is also known for his Native American statue, The Appeal to the Great Spirit, that stands in front of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and The Menotomy

Indian Hunter, located in the attractive garden between Arlington's Robbins Memorial Town Hall and the Robbins Library. At one time, Menotomy was the original name of Arlington, of today's Alewife Brook, of Broadway, of the Somerville/Arlington border crossing bridge and of Spy Pond. It was an American Native name, an Algonquin word meaning Swift Running Water. The town's many ponds and brooks which once fed and flowed into the now Alewife Brook have been filled in through the years, reducing these great streams to today's trickle.



### BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring? Pilgrims.

## On This Day in History May 11

- 1573 – Henry of Anjou becomes the first elected king of Poland.
- 1689 – French and English navies battle at Bantry Bay.
- 1690 – In the first major engagement of King William's War, British troops from Massachusetts seize Port Royal in Acadia from the French.
- 1745 – French forces defeat an Anglo-Dutch-Hanoverian army at Fontenoy.
- 1792 – The Columbia River is discovered by Captain Robert Gray.
- 1812 – British Prime Minister Spencer Perceval is shot by a bankrupt banker in the lobby of the House of Commons.
- 1858 – Minnesota is admitted as the 32nd U.S. state.
- 1862 – Confederates scuttle the CSS Virginia off Norfolk, Virginia.
- 1960 – Israeli soldiers capture Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires.
- 1967 – The Siege of Khe Sanh ends with the base still in American hands.

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Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

Get a good start on **high school success**. Sign up **before May 15**: <https://bit.ly/3vXatRX>

Are you a **member of Somerville High School's Classes of 1970, 1971, or 1972?** The **SHS Class of 2022** is looking for participants for this year's **Class Day festivities**, which will take place on **Friday, June 3**, beginning at 8:00 a.m. at Somerville High School. This year will be the first Class Day that will take place in the new school building. Because there was no Class Day in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID-19, they are inviting alumni who did not have an opportunity to participate in this great tradition on the 50th anniversary of their high school graduation. They are looking for 50 graduates in total from the classes of 1970, 1971, and 1972 to participate. If you were an SHS 1970, 1971 or 1972 graduate and would like to participate in the 2022 Class Day festivities, please call **Barbara Favalloro** at (617) 625-6600, ext. 611018, or email her at [bfavalloro@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:bfavalloro@k12.somerville.ma.us). The SHS Class of 2022 looks

forward to seeing you!

**Bring your bicycle to the West Branch Library on Monday, May 16**, to get ready for fun and safe spring rides around Somerville. Join in the backyard from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. for activities like free bike safety checks and mini-tune-ups, visiting with **Sustainaville** to learn more about green commuting, decorating your bike, hanging out with fellow cyclists, and more. Registration is not required. For more information, contact **Jane** at [jphilbrick@somervillema.gov](mailto:jphilbrick@somervillema.gov).

The **City of Somerville** launched **mattress and box spring recycling**. This free service is available to all residential households that have city-managed trash collection. Residents will simply need to schedule a pickup and place their items on the curb on the pickup day. For more information on recycling in Somerville, please visit [www.somervillema.gov/MattressRecycling](http://www.somervillema.gov/MattressRecycling)

Stay protected against COVID-19. **Somerville YMCA** at 101 Highland

Ave is holding a **vaccine clinic Saturday, May 14**. The Pfizer vaccine will be available for all people 5 years and up, and boosters will be available for all people 12 years and up. The clinic is free, regardless of immigration status or health insurance. Identification is not required. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Pre-register via this link: <https://bit.ly/3vzGn7O>. For more vaccination options visit [www.somervillema.gov/vaccine](http://www.somervillema.gov/vaccine). If you need assistance to pre-register or help with transportation, please contact 3-1-1 at 617-666-3311.

The **Somerville Historic Preservation Division** invites you to take home a piece of **Somerville history**. Designed by local artists, this historic collection of **Somerville stickers and magnets** tells a unique story of Somerville's history. Purchases help support local organizations and small business, and display the Somerville pride. Visit the Somerville Historic Preservation Division website to find out more about their historic events, education, and

preservation efforts: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/historicpreservation>.

The **CHA Somerville Vaccine Center** is now **accepting walk-ins**, as supply allows. The center is open to all, five days a week and some Saturdays. You can get booster shots for ages 12+ and initial vaccines for ages 5+. The vaccines are free, regardless of immigration or health insurance status, and you don't need to show ID. Full hours and details are here: [challiance.org/vaccine](http://challiance.org/vaccine). You can still make an appointment at [tinyurl.com/metronorthvaccine](http://tinyurl.com/metronorthvaccine). If you're a CHA patient you can also make an appointment through **MyChart**: [challiance.org/mychart](http://challiance.org/mychart). If you need assistance finding a COVID-19 vaccine or booster, you can call 3-1-1 (617-666-3311).

Don't forget, if you would like to subscribe to receive a **digital edition** of our paper, go directly online to our website over to the right side and fill out your email address to receive a free, full PDF copy of the paper.





OFF THE SHELF  
by Doug Holder

Jason Pramas and the future of the Somerville Media Landscape

Well, with all the closing and mergers of community newspapers, I decided to contact Jason Pramas to get his take on it, and what he offers community newspapers through his advocacy and projects.

Pramas is the executive editor and associate publisher of the alternative newsweekly *DigBoston*, and executive director of the Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism that he co-founded with Chris Faraone in 2015.

**Doug Holder:** Jason, the *Boston Phoenix*, the *Real Paper*, and other alternative newspapers have folded over the years. Why do you think your paper *DigBoston* has survived?

**Jason Pramas:** My colleagues Chris Faraone (a former *Phoenix* reporter) and John Loftus and I took over the *Dig* from its founder Jeff Lawrence in 2017, when the paper's advertising revenue was at its lowest ebb since its launch in 1999. We've revived its fortunes and helped it to survive since that time through a combination of extremely hard work and an ethos of collaboration with other journalists and news outlets. The key to our very modest success in continuing to exist, however, is that we have built what we call a "hybrid economic model" in which the three principals also run the Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism. The commercial news outlet and the nonprofit (operating under our own tax-deductible IRS 501(c)(3) Massachusetts Media Fund, Inc. since 2019) that we started in 2015 (as a project of a friendly pre-existing 501(c)(3) nonprofit for its first four years) are operated as entirely separate legal entities. But Chris, John, myself, and all of our talent have been able to lean on the for-profit side or the nonprofit side to get paid for our work depending on societal conditions. Which has helped us all to keep on keeping on through difficult times. Still, the market remains extremely tough for small newspapers like *DigBoston* and we're still recovering from the huge hit our business took in the first year and a half of the pandemic, so we're not ready for a victory lap yet. Same goes for BINJ, as the nonprofit sector is no picnic either economically.

**DH:** You have been a great advocate of community newspapers for years. Why do you have such a passion for small media?

**JP:** Because just as local politics is the foundation upon which American democracy is built (to paraphrase North Cambridge's most famous son Tip O'Neill), so, too, small media is the foundation upon which the national media that serves that democracy is built. You can't have one level of media without the other. Large state, regional, and national news outlets generally look to small news outlets to find out what's happening on the ground – since they could never cover every corner of their turf at the best of times. Thus, if we want a vibrant democracy at all levels, then we need a vibrant news media to cover it at all levels. Including the municipal and neighborhood levels of our society that are traditionally covered best by small local news organizations. Meaning that small media is much more important to a functioning democracy than most folks realize. And since local news media has been in trouble for many years, I've been passionate about helping it to survive the many challenges it faces and thrive in the long run.

**DH:** You are involved with the Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism. This organization wants to create a "replicable model that municipalities



around the U.S. could use to rebuild their failing infrastructure." Won't that create a uniformity among newspapers, perhaps affecting what makes them unique?

**JP:** Quite the reverse. The community organizing model our Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism is developing together with local volunteers through our *Somerville News Garden* project is based on a nonprofit news service (the *Somerville Wire*) funded, in part, by donations from local residents and business leaders through a new municipal foundation (the Somerville Media Fund that we spun off from BINJ as its own independent IRS 501(c)(3) charity in 2021) – and partly through grants from larger foundations. It also involves a media school (run with the Somerville Media Center public access TV station, of which I am currently treasurer of the board of directors) and a research group (run with Gino Canella, an Emerson College journalism professor). None of those initiatives presume to dictate what kind of reportage that a nonprofit news organization in any other municipality that uses all or part of our model will pursue. And the *Somerville News Garden* model is explicitly against the creation of any structures that would seek to control the editorial line of similar efforts in other cities, towns, and counties – or, obviously, to interfere in the editorial line of any news outlets here in Somerville. Strengthening the independence of local news outlets by improving their odds of economic survival is always one of our core goals.

**DH:** In your *Somerville News Garden* project – in which you hope to save and or protect the media landscape of Somerville – do you see a print paper in the future or only digital? Do you think a print paper is still needed?

**JP:** Since there is already an independent commercial community print newspaper, *The Somerville Times*, serving Somerville, and an independent commercial metropolitan print paper, *DigBoston*, that also serves the city. The *Somerville News Garden* project of the Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism founded the *Somerville Wire* as a digital-only news service (which readers can think of as a mini-Associated Press). The *Somerville Journal*, for its part, has just been removed from the scene by its parent company Gannett, merging it with the *Medford Transcript* right after announcing that it's "regionalizing" the content of all its local news properties. Meaning that the *Journal* is dead whether its successor outlet ever publishes another print edition or not. Which is precisely what our *Somerville News Garden* has been saying will happen for three years. *The Times*, the *Dig*, and any other small independent news outlets that may start operating in the city going

Continued on page 15

Lyrical  
SOMERVILLE  
edited by Doug Holder

Long ago, Denise Provost attended Bennington College to study poetry. She then became a lawyer, worked in local government, and served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives for fifteen years. She has published in such journals as *Ibbetson Street*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *qarrtsiluni*, *Quadrille*, *Poetry Porch's Sonnet Scroll*, *Sanctuary*, and *Light Quarterly*. Provost received the Best Love Sonnet award from the Maria C. Faust Sonnet Competition in 2012, and the New England Poetry Club's Samuel Washington Allen Prize in 2021. Her chapbook *Curious Peach* was published by Ibbetson Street Press in 2019. Her collection *City of Stories* was published by Cervenabarva Press in 2021.



This pavement is the bedside of a tree...

The tree doesn't yet know that it will die on Thursday, so it grows rosy leaf-buds, plump beads on its branch-tangle, reaching up where perching birds complain until they fly.

All the neighbors gather to say goodbye to the giant maple, soon to be cut down to a broad, flat, multi-ringed stump, its mighty trunk and branches hauled away.

Although today it is surrounded by a crowd come to read poems and offer praise, its fate shows in a vivid orange blaze that city workers painted on its side.

A single brushstroke – how easy to be hastened to premature mortality.

— Denise Provost

To have your work considered for the Lyrical send it to:  
Doug Holder, 25 School St.; Somerville, MA 02143. doughtholder@post.harvard.edu

Ms. Cam's

Olío  
Answers

From page 8

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. American Pharoah in 2015              | Hadfield           |
| 2. Post No. 17                           | 7. Five            |
| 3. 1666                                  | 8. Consonants      |
| 4. Malala Yousafzai, age 17              | 9. Ginger Rogers   |
| 5. Flute                                 | 10. Mount Vesuvius |
| 6. Canadian Space Agency astronaut Chris | 11. Rabbit         |
|  | 12. Australia      |



# Shop Local at the Union Square Farmers Market

Union Square Main Streets kicks off the 18th season of the Union Square Farmers Market in Somerville this Saturday, May 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This season the Market returns to its longtime location on the Union Square Plaza, and will be open rain or shine each Saturday through October 29.

Since 2005, the Union Square Farmers Market has helped shoppers fill their homes with top-quality, fresh, local food while serving as a catalyst for vibrancy, economic opportunity, and neighborhood connection.

Starting on May 14, this COVID-conscious market will feature a masked shopping hour from 9-10am. Everyone is welcome to shop during this time period, but masks will be required to enter the market area. After 10am masks are strongly encouraged, but not required.

“The Union Square Farmers Market has held a special place in the hearts and bellies of many Somervillians for 18 years,” said Jessica Eshleman, executive director of Union Square Main Streets, the nonprofit who produces the market. “With the Green Line now providing service to and from Union Square, it’s exciting to think of visitors who will discover the market for the first time, then brunch or lunch throughout the Square. Sharing our neighborhood traditions with more people throughout the greater Boston region brings much pride and joy to all who make the market possible.”

The Union Square Farmers Market is a destination for award-winning chefs, scores of shoppers, and customers vulnerable to food insecurity creating a deep source of community. The market is also a critical marketplace for ~30 local farms and food producers including Somerville businesses such as Tasting Counter, Deano’s Pasta, Hooked Fish Shop, Somerville Arts Council’s Nibble Kitchen, Tex Mex Eats, and Mahalab Bakery. These elements in particular resonate with the 2022 Union Square Farmers Market Season Sponsor, Boynton–Yards, a DLJ and Leggat McCall Project.

“The remarkable social impact that the Farmers Market and other USMS events continue to have on Somerville families continue to draw us in as a partner,” said John Fenton, managing partner of DLJ Real Estate Capital Partners, on behalf of the Boynton Yards development team. “USMS was the first nonprofit we supported upon our arrival to Somerville, and we look forward to continuing our commitment for years to come.”

The market also plays a critical role in Somerville’s food security system, having provided SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) customers with a match since its creation in 2005. Through a partnership with City of Somerville and the Somerville Farmers Market Coalition (in collaboration with Mass Farmers Markets, Somerville Winter Farmers Market, and Somerville Mobile Farmers Market), the dollar-for-dollar SNAP match up to \$15 per market is available again this year. This is thanks to a Somerville Community Development Block Grant, which continues a city-wide SNAP match for a third year.

While there is still emphasis on gathering safely, for the first time in two years, the Market is once again a place for the community to gather. Additionally, the intrinsic link between the Union Square Farmers Market and Somerville’s local economy remains strong. Shoppers should share pride supporting independent food producers in convenient proximity to nearby Square businesses who continue to anchor the neighborhood.



— Photo courtesy of Leigh Savary.



— Photo courtesy of Nic Buonanduci

The Union Square Farmers Market is made possible for a third year thanks to generous support from Boynton–Yards, a DLJ and Leggat McCall Project, its 2022 Season Sponsor; a Somerville Community Development Block Grant; and donors who contribute to help make the SNAP Match possible, including 2022 Good Food For All presenting sponsor Liberty Cannabis.

### About Union Square Main Streets, Inc.:

Union Square Main Streets works to strengthen the dynamic neighborhood of businesses and people in Union Square. We take a four part approach: promoting and celebrating its unique and spirited character; advocating for and assisting local businesses; working to create welcoming public spaces; and fostering connection and collaboration among diverse stakeholders and partners. More information is available at [www.unionsquaremain.org](http://www.unionsquaremain.org).

## Off The Shelf

CONT. FROM PG 14

forward are free to reprint any *Wire* articles they like. Large corporate news organizations operating in the city will have to pay for using the content. That said, we do indeed think having newspapers in print is still extremely important here, in tandem with a strong digital presence, to ensure that the entire reading public in Somerville is getting the news and views they need to participate in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of their municipality.

**DH:** If a newspaper chooses to be under the nonprofit umbrella of the Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism, would they lose a certain amount of autonomy?

**JP:** BINJ is not a nonprofit umbrella for other news organizations. It was founded in 2015 by Chris, John, and me to produce the kind of investigative journalism that small community newspapers like *The Somerville Times* and *DigBoston* can't afford to produce on their own and syndicate it to them for free. We started BINJ's *Somerville News Garden* project in 2019 as we grew more

and more concerned that communities around the Commonwealth and the nation were on the verge of becoming "news deserts" – municipalities that no longer had professional news organizations covering them regularly. We thought Somerville was the right size for a small organization like ours to try to experiment with ways to help reverse the collapse of its news infrastructure. We therefore welcome the arrival of new news outlets to the city, as they will help rebuild the city's news infrastructure, while remaining completely independent of each other. As we think it should be. News outlets that are IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofits will then be eligible to join the new Somerville Media Fund. Once accepted as what SMF calls a "qualified news organization," the outlet will share all monies raised by that fund equally with all our nonprofit news organizations that are already part of the foundation. But again, each member-outlet will continue to produce its content autonomously. SMF cannot, unfortunately, provide grant funding to commercial

news organizations.

**DH:** What is your ideal vision for the future of Somerville Media?

**JP:** First, my colleagues and I want to see Somerville residents and businesses take the importance of local news media to local democracy seriously enough to support at least one community news outlet financially for the long haul – be it commercial or nonprofit. Second, we'd prefer that the community finds ways to support multiple news outlets of different types (newspapers, magazines, news services, etc.) with different editorial lines, together with participating in Somerville's already vibrant social media scene, so that we always have a lively debate going on issues of the day. Based on facts reported by professional journalists in the public interest. Not just on rumor and hearsay. And having more independent news outlets helps keep them all honest, because they'll be watching each other's reporting and trying to outdo each other in terms of relevance, timeliness, and accuracy.




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