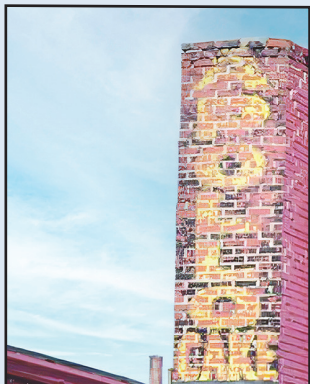


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'Yes in God's Backyard' initiative to unlock affordable housing opportunities



The Somerville City Council recently voted in favor of supporting the "Yes in God's Backyard" housing initiative.

By Harry Kane

City Councilors Jon Link and Wilfred Mbah advocated in support of a proposed housing initiative filed as Bill S.1430, known as "Yes in God's Backyard" legislation, during the September 24 City Council meeting.

The Massachusetts YIGBY legislation would allow religious institutions to build multi-family housing without special local zoning permits by right on land they own.

The bill could help these faith-based organizations build much-needed affordable housing, explained Link. "Throughout the Commonwealth ... it would actually create quite a boon."

If passed by the Massachusetts Senate, unused property would be transformed by *Continued on page 4*

'Start Where We Are Earth Music Festival' brings climate conversations to Somerville

By Eliot Josti

At Bow Market, set in the heart of Somerville, music and local connections came together with one common mission. Bringing awareness to the environmental and climate crisis across the world.

The *Start Where We Are Earth Music Festival* created an evening of conversation this past Wednesday. Cozy fire pits, food and drinks, and eco-friendly vendors encouraged residents to join the cause in building a bridge of environmental information to the community.

The festival, founded in 2023, was created by a group of Boston Berklee graduates, led by Sofia Villarreal.

"It started with the intention of healing the Earth through music. I asked myself, 'What role do musicians play in the climate crisis?'" *Continued on page 4*



The *Start Where We Are Earth Music Festival* brought climate crisis awareness to Bow Market Last week. — Photos by Roman Villarreal

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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.

Community members are invited to join Mayor Jake Wilson, the City Council, and the School Committee during the 2026 Neighborhood Connect meeting series. The next meetings will be on Ward 7 (West Somerville, Teele Sq., and more): Thursday, October 1, West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria, 177 Powder House Blvd., and Ward 3 (N. Union Sq., Prospect Hill, Spring Hill, Central Hill, and more): Wednesday, October 7, Somerville High School Cafeteria, 81 Highland Ave. Meetings will kick off with quick citywide updates and a brief welcome from the Mayor and Ward Councilor before breaking to allow attendees to move about for one-on-one and small group conversations. Unsure about which ward you live in? Find out with the MySomerville address lookup tool at somervillema.gov/mysomerville.

We offer our sincere condolences to Councilor Kristen Strezo on the loss of her mother. We hope she and her family feel the support and love of those around them during this difficult time. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Happy birthday this week to several locals: We wish Sal Mingace a very happy birthday. We wish him well and hope he enjoys his day. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as Edward Barry, Rick Gaetano, Terri Monsalve, Kevin Driscoll, AnnMarie Carey-Browne, and Diane Kerins Conneely, a happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the

Continued on page 7

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of September 30 – October 6 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday September 30	Cloudy	66°/57°	8%	3%	NE 5 mph
 Thursday October 1	Partly Cloudy	77°/65°	12%	4%	SW 11 mph
 Friday October 2	Partly Cloudy	81°/58°	18%	7%	SW 13 mph
 Saturday October 3	Sunny	68°/50°	16%	6%	NNE 10 mph
 Sunday October 4	Rain	63°/51°	44%	27%	ENE 10 mph
 Monday October 5	Partly Cloudy	66°/41°	24%	11%	NW 11 mph
 Tuesday October 6	Sunny	57°/34°	5%	2%	NNW 12 mph

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

TheSomervilleTimes.com
Comments of the Week

Response to: Somerville PorchFest feedback sought via community survey

Josh Dahl says:

I love it and I want MORE.. also, your stupid survey requires that I put my email address in there to send it but the slot in which I was supposed to put that said mail. so I put in my mailing address. And then it told me I was wrong, the only reason I mention this is to say that that's how much I love porch Fest is that I put up with your irritating misleading, stupid, stupid format for submitting my opinion, cuz I knew that there would be some jerk who's so mad about parking, parking, parking, parking parking that they're going to go through the same s*** so listen. I love porch Fest. I don't care about parking or traffic. traffic I want more music and this submission form is annoying as hell

Courtney says:

I think it would be ideal to not have it on mother's Day weekend. It seems like this makes it that much more difficult to have a rain date for Sunday

Mary says:

I love porchfest, but the timing has been weird the last few years. Why is it literally on Mother's day? And then there's never a rain date, and it always rains. I think porchfest is one of our best community events, and I look forward to it every year. Just please build in a rain date, rain is so tough on attendees. Performers can set up tents and usually do, but its just way worse of an event when it rains. And also don't do it on literally Mother's day weekend, just pick a later weekend in June when the weather will be better.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

The SomervilleTimes

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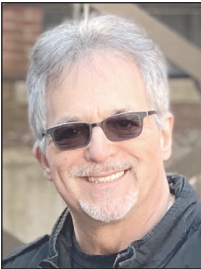
Life in the

MASSACHUSETTS
VILLE
The Spirit of America

by Jimmy Del Ponte

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

Lost Treasure: Apollo Cake Co.



Remember how we used to roll our eyes when our parents told us how they could see five movies, buy candy, soda, and popcorn, ride the trolleys all day, and still come home with change of a quarter? Well, let’s congratulate ourselves because we have officially become our parents.

An online search tells us that The Apollo Cake Company opened in 1929 at 16 Garfield St. in Somerville. It used to cost a nickel to swim at the Foss Park pool, and a nickel for a brownie at the Apollo Cake Co. Apollo Cake closed in the late 70s – early 80s (we’re not sure), but not before just about every kid in the ‘Ville enjoyed their wide variety of delicious, frosted, creamy, raisiny, freshly baked treats.

Many of my friends have memories and stories about Apollo Cake. “We used to run across the highway from Foss Park and get the brownie seconds, two for a

quarter. Sometimes, when we were playing at Foss, that was breakfast and lunch.” You could get a whole bag of hermits for a dollar.

Another friend recalls, “We would get dime bags of broken brownies every Saturday morning! We would sacrifice our cartoons for brownies – often! Miss those days! My favorites were those huge cupcakes that had the big center filled with cream ... YUM!!!! We also loved the Swiss Roll!” We would sometimes pool our money to get one of those and share it among my friends. It got very messy but so worth it!”

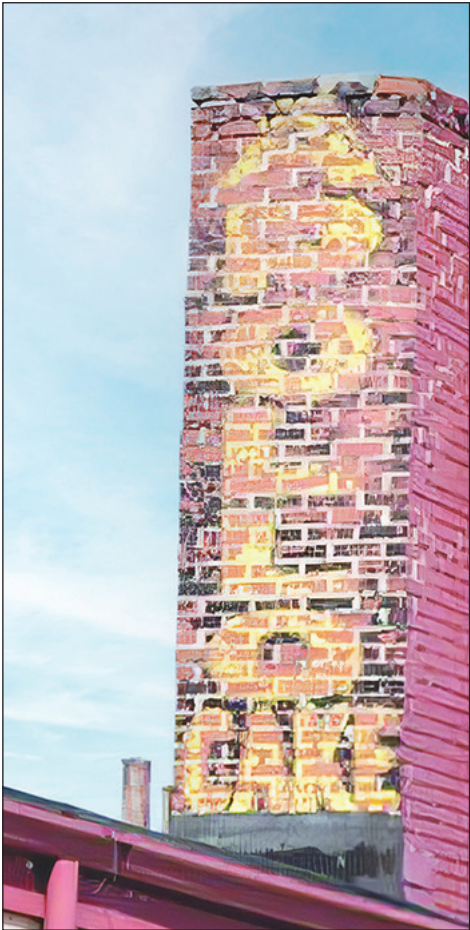
A buddy of mine tells me that his aunt worked at Apollo and would bring home lots of cupcakes and other goodies. This is my favorite Apollo Cake story: “My father would get what he called a sweet tooth and have one of us ride our bike down to get a couple of the chocolate roll cakes. They were the only sweets he ever really liked. I liked it best unrolled and eaten flat. After, I’d lick off the cream. The

funny thing was that we couldn’t go off the street on our bikes, but all of a sudden going to get the cakes was no longer a dangerous ride. I miss my Dad, and I miss the cake as well!”

One friend attributes his addiction to carrot cake to Apollo Cake. Their spice cakes were not too shabby either. They featured an item called “twins.” It was a two-pack of Whoopee Pies. Now I ask you, what’s better than Whoopee Pies?

Another place we used to go to was Russell’s Donuts, which was across from Highland Road near the railroad tracks. We could smell the donuts baking while we were playing at Lexington Park. I got a lot of delicious donuts from Russell’s, and I miss it. I swear, I can still smell those huge honey dip donuts baking at Russell’s.

Somerville has a vast history of great bakeries. Some have lasted decades, and some have come and gone. The Apollo Cake Company in East Somerville provided many Villens with wonderful (and delicious) memories.



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Somerville High School will play against Cambridge Rindge & Latin at Fenway Park



This year, Somerville High School’s football team will be playing their Thanksgiving Game against Cambridge Rindge & Latin at Fenway Park on Thursday, November 24, 2026 at 5:00pm.

For tickets to this longtime rivalry and special tradition visit: <http://www.redsox.com/highschoolfootball>

Money Map Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

Q: If my income is below the standard deduction, am I exempt from filing a federal income tax return?

A: In many cases, yes. If your income is below the standard deduction for your filing status and you're only subject to regular income tax, you generally won't be required to file a federal income tax return. But there are important exceptions!

• **Your tax return reports more than just income tax.**

The standard deduction can reduce the income subject to federal income tax to zero. But your federal tax return is also used to calculate and report other taxes—including self-employment tax.

• **Self-employment is an important**

exception.

If you have \$400 or more of net earnings from self-employment, you generally must file a federal tax return—even if your income is below the standard deduction.

For example, suppose a single taxpayer has \$10,000 of net self-employment income and no other income in 2026. That's below the \$16,100 standard deduction for a single taxpayer in 2026, so the taxpayer generally wouldn't owe regular federal income tax. However, because the taxpayer would generally owe self-employment tax, they would be required to file a federal tax return.

• **Other exceptions can apply.**

Self-employment isn't the only situation in which someone may need to file even when their income is below the usual filing

threshold. Dependents, for example, have different filing rules. We'll look at those rules in an upcoming Money Map Tip.

Bottom Line: Not owing federal income tax and not having to file a tax return are two different things. If you have self-employment income or another situation with its own filing requirements, you may still need to file—even when your income is below the standard deduction.

And even when you aren't required to file, filing may still benefit you if you're entitled to a refund or a refundable tax credit!

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



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

'Yes in God's Backyard' initiative to unlock affordable housing opportunities

CONT. FROM PG 1

the YIGBY legislation into new real estate and be subject to taxation. This would generate new local tax revenue for the City of Somerville.

Link says he was originally skeptical the

measure wouldn't make much of a difference in Somerville, but after looking at the numbers, he sees "potentially thousands of affordable housing units" on the horizon.

"I think that it's something that we

should support," said Link.

Mbah said that he looks forward to advancing the policy on Beacon Hill to help families find a safe and stable home amid the housing affordability crisis.

"At a time when communities are facing severe housing challenges ... we need to use every tool in the toolbox to make sure that we are doing all we can to partner with our community institutions to create housing," said Mbah.

'Start Where We Are Earth Music Festival' brings climate conversations to Somerville

CONT. FROM PG 1

said Villarreal.

Villarreal shared that many environmental scientists have a hard time presenting their findings and information to the general public. They spend their entire lives finding climate solutions. However, they can only communicate them in scientific terms. It is the work of people like local musicians and artists that can reach the public with a new, understandable perspective.

The name of the festival was inspired by the idea of taking action right away, whether or not things may seem impossible.

"All we can really do is start where we are. In my work, it all became so overwhelming. I felt like we were so far behind. As much as I had thoughts of, 'I don't want to do this, and we are doomed,' the idea is that we can start now. We can accept where we are and see what we can do to move forward. We can't get obsessed with the wrong things."

Upstairs at the Bow venue, six musicians volunteered time and energy to the Somerville community after a year of planning. Their kind sponsors make the festival possible and hope to host another event soon.

"Planting mental seeds little by little is just as important as planting literal seeds," said Villarreal. "Us musicians can use our dreams, passion, and talent to play a central role. We can't leave it all up to the scientists. We all have strengths, and by collaborating, we can make a difference."

Villarreal credited a quote that her Berklee professor, Victor Wooten, shared with his class. His mother always told him, "What does the world need with another good musician? What the world needs is good people."

Those who are interested in learning more about the festival can visit swwafestival.com or follow them on Facebook or Instagram @startwherewearefestival.



Visit us online at www.TheSomervilleTimes.com
Facebook at www.facebook.com/somerville.times.1

Building sale notice requirement to take effect

Finding out your home is up for sale shouldn't come as a surprise. A new Somerville ordinance taking effect October 14, 2026, will require rental property owners to notify tenants in writing within 48 hours of putting their residence on the market.

Somerville's Notice of Building Sale Ordinance establishes clear notification requirements, so renters know when their home is being offered for sale and where to turn for housing support.

"Tenants shouldn't be the last to know their home is for sale," said Mayor Jake Wilson. "This ordinance gives renters an earlier opportunity to understand their options, connect with support, and plan for what comes next. More time crucially can mean more options for staying in the community they call home. Keeping Somerville a place where people can put down roots starts with looking out for our neighbors who already live here."

Under the ordinance, property owners

must notify every tenant within 48 hours of putting the residence on the market by taking both of the following steps:

Delivering the city's Notice of Building Sale form either in person with a signed acknowledgment, or by certified mail.

Posting the form in a location where tenants can see it.

The notice must include the owner's intent to sell, contact information, a description of the property, the asking price, and contact information for the city's Office of Housing Stability (OHS).

"This Ordinance is about basic decency and fairness," said Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen. "We've also unfortunately learned through experience that it is necessary so that Somerville residents aren't caught unaware when their building is put up for sale."

The required form and additional information will be available on the OHS website in October at use.somervillema.gov/OHS. Questions about the ordinance can



Property owners will be required to notify tenants within 48 hours of putting their residence on the market. — Photo by Bobbie Toner

be sent to buildingsale@somervillema.gov.

Tenants who learn their building is for sale but have not received a notice should contact OHS. Residents can request housing assistance online, calling OHS directly

at 617-625-6600, ext. 2581, or dialing 311 and asking for OHS.

To view this update and more city news on the city website, visit somervillema.gov/news.

Councilor Wheeler's finance report confirms progress with Arts at the Armory

By The Times Staff

The Finance Committee met on Tuesday, September 22, via remote participation and took up a 10-item agenda, said City Councilor Ben Wheeler.

The committee approved an appropriation of \$350,000 from the city's immigrant legal services stabilization fund for legal services for immigrants and asylum seekers seeking permanent residency.

A grant was approved for approximately \$216,000 for the salary and personnel costs of two health and human services staff members, a shared services coordinator and a clinical community health worker.

Three grant approvals, all related to 911 dispatch, accounted for approximately \$480,000.

"These pay for salaries and certification training overtime," he said. "They are a significant part of why the E911 division, the E stands for enhanced, tends to come in under the amount budgeted in each of the several most recent fiscal years."

Also related to policing, the committee accepted a grant for approximately \$10,000 for body armor vests from the US Bureau of Justice Assistance, which will have a state match.

Approximately, \$255,000 that comes from Somerville's cut of ride share payments was approved for the mobility division's various projects, part of its ongoing work that has resulted in a four-year streak without a single traffic death, according to the committee report.

The Department of Public Works requested to pay a large set of prior-year invoices totaling approximately \$81,000 out of its own accounts, he said.

"...committee members 'expressed hope' that Arts at the Armory will soon see a lease that 'truly works for them'..."

"There were various reasons for these, from clerical errors to difficulty budgeting for a new electric provider," said Wheeler. "But DPW staff seem to be making progress working out these kinks on the literally hundreds of utility accounts that they manage, and they intend to end this fiscal year with fewer surprises."

Finally, the committee spent "quite a



while" discussing and approving five Armory leases that are signed and ready to go as part of the long process of the city making Armory space available to Somerville's many artists, performers, troops, and arts-related businesses, he explained.

Wheeler noted that these leases do not yet include the largest tenant of all, Arts at the Armory. He says that committee members "expressed hope" that Arts at the Armory will soon see a lease that "truly

works for them, perhaps even one that encompasses the considerable other space at the Armory that is yet to be leased."

Furthermore, the committee met newly hired Property & Tenant Relations Manager Josh McCorkle, and the committee encouraged McCorkle and the city's community development team "to minimize the paperwork and obstacles keeping the Armory from being fully used by artists."

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 bulldozers are coming to our neighborhood and the mayor is laying out the red carpet – Public Hearing Notice October 1

By Bill White

Former Somerville City Councilor
for 24 years

I have previously written articles about the impact of the City's current zoning ordinances that promote developers to purchase two and three-family homes, demolish them and then construct a luxury three-family condominium.

They can also build a large backyard cottage of 1,500 sq. feet and 1.5 stories tall, only three feet away from the property lines of neighbors. I discussed how this policy was creating the removal of rental units from the market and their replacement by luxury condominiums.

In fact, I introduced zoning amendments to limit these abuses to our residential neighborhoods. These amendments were not voted on so they have expired. The Mayor has now chosen to submit new zoning that will worsen the situation.

Instead of limiting the Backyard Cottage to 1.5 stories, the Mayor wants them to go up to three stories tall only 3 feet away from your property line. Instead of a size of 1,500 square feet, the Mayor now wants to increase the Back-

yard Cottage to 1,750 square feet.

It is now important for Somerville renters and Somerville homeowners in our residential neighborhoods who don't want three story gargantuan monstrosities 3 feet from their property line to join forces and oppose this proposed zoning. **Since the implementation of the new backyard cottage zoning in 2022, the City has lost 470 rental units in two and three family buildings.**

This policy has been a disaster for renters. There are now more luxury condominiums in the City than there are total rental units in all of our three-family buildings. Should the new zoning submitted by the Mayor pass, then it will further incentivize the continuation of the current trend. For renters, it will become even more difficult to find apartments to rent, though I am sure the well-off will be blessed with a multitude of new luxury condominiums to choose from. And for those lucky enough to find an apartment, with the supply of rental units reduced, rent increases will surely exceed the 8.9% increase in rent this year.

As someone who has practiced land use and zoning law in Somerville for decades, I can tell you the Mayor's proposal is among the worst zoning proposals I have ever seen.



An artist's rendering of the future follows. Use your imagination for what will replace it.

If the City Council approves it, then shame on them. But shame will not be the worst outcome. That will be the destruction of the mixed community that elected officials have worked so hard to create over decades.

Renters and home owners in our residential neighborhoods should unite and

let the Mayor and city councilors know that you are against this proposal. The public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, October 1 at 6:30 pm. You can also attend virtually https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_w4XWFI4xSJi-ZyeF2VAG26A

Copper Mill's failure is a huge loss for Somerville

By Ben Orenstein

Founder The Somerville Beacon

The failure of the Copper Mill project – which would have built a large tower in Davis Square – is a tremendous loss to housing affordability, economic well-being, and neighborhood character for the city.

The proposed tower would have been hugely beneficial:

1. It would have added 502 units of housing in a city that has legally declared a housing emergency.

2. 126 of those units would have been permanently price-restricted and offered via lottery to low- to moderate-income people.

3. Davis Square businesses would

have gained approximately 1,000 nearby customers.

4. The city would have received more than \$5 million in one-time permitting and review fees, as well as \$2 million per year in new tax revenue.

5. The developer offered two retail spaces to the city at no cost, for small-business or community uses.

6. The developer pledged to sign a Project Labor Agreement ensuring they used local union labor for the project.

7. The developer agreed to go to substantial lengths to preserve The Burren: not just offering it a new location at its old rent(!), but even preserving and restoring its interior woodwork.

I was pleased to see that the proposed tower was ambitiously tall. Height is one

of the only ways to build a lot of housing all at once. The 2016 Winter Hill Plan estimated we'd need to build 8,000–14,000 units by 2030 to keep up with demand. We have created just 3,500 units since then. If we wish to dig ourselves out of this hole, we will almost certainly have to build farther from the ground.

Yes, the project's market-rate units would likely have been expensive. But newly built units keep people from bidding up the prices of older ones. If you don't want to compete with a well-paid newcomer for part of a triple-decker, you need to build newer units for them to rent instead.

Some worried that the tower would change the character of the square. I agree: for the better! Today's Davis has low foot traffic, many empty storefronts, and 82%

more reported crime than in 2017. I think we all would have come to prefer a Davis with a beautiful tower, newly thriving businesses, and 1,000 prosperous residents.

I am dismayed at our elected officials' lack of public support for the project. I yearn for leaders who would listen to constituents' objections around height or aesthetics and say, "I hear you. There are plenty of things we could complain about here, but this is a huge win for the city and we desperately need more housing, so we're going to try to make it happen."

The next time we are given a chance to add hundreds of units of badly needed housing along with many other adjacent benefits, I hope the first words from City Hall are "How can we help?"

COMMENTARY

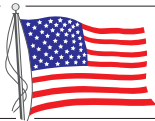
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Somerville celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Our View Of The Times



As a city that has historically embraced peoples and cultures from all over the world, Somerville is no less welcoming of the Hispanic community in all its varied and vibrant forms.

As such, Mayor Jake Wilson, Somerville’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA), with support from the City’s Division of Equity and Belonging and the Somerville Community Corporation

(SCC) are currently busy celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month, now through October 15.

Historically, September 15 marks the independence anniversaries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

A number of special events are scheduled throughout the course of the celebration, including:

Latin American and Caribbean Heritage Month celebration, Sunday, October 25, 2026, from 2 to 5 p.m. at Somerville High School. This special event provides an opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate the rich cultures, histories, and contributions of Latin American and Caribbean communities in Somerville.

This free community event will feature

music, dance, movement, and a wide selection of food and refreshments (such as Brazilian cheese bread and Haitian griot).

Local advocacy organizations and community groups will also be on hand to share resources and connect with residents. Bring your family, meet your neighbors, and celebrate the cultures and communities that help make Somerville home.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

Join **Groundwork Somerville** on **Saturday, October 3**, from 12 to 4 p.m., at **138 South St.**, for their annual **Harvest Festival**, 38 South St. See South St. transform into a vibrant celebration of the growing season and the incredible community that makes Somerville thrive. This free event celebrates the collective work of residents, volunteers, youth, and local organizations who help cultivate a healthier, more connected city.

Somerville Recreation’s Fall Festival re-

turns. A free festival welcomes fall with bounce houses, pumpkin decorating, a magician, and more. **October 3**, from 1 to 4 p.m. at **Founders Memorial Rink** (8 Garden Court). Costumes and cozy sweaters are welcome but not required. To learn about more programming from Somerville Recreation, be sure to sign up for the Parks and Recreation newsletter at www.somervillema.gov/subscribe.

Visit the **Holiday Craft Fair**, **Saturday, October 17**, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the **Somerville Community Baptist Church**, 31 College Ave. in Davis Square. In addition to a variety of craft tables

offering Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas gifts and other items, the Fair will also feature raffles, food gift baskets, and a Meatball Contest.

Registration for **SHC’s Somerville 5k** is open. Every step taken on **October 3** supports the community’s most vulnerable, helping raise the critical funds needed to tackle housing and food insecurity. Register today to run and claim your race t-shirt. For more information, visit <https://somervillehomelesscoalition.org/>.

Somerville’s Community Collections exhibit series continues this October

with **Looking Back at 20 Years of HONK! Festival of Activist Street Bands**, a photo and poster retrospective celebrating the homegrown festival and the worldwide movement it helped inspire. All are invited to an opening reception on **Thursday, October 8**, from 5 to 7 p.m. on the second floor of **Somerville City Hall** (93 Highland Ave). The reception is free, and light refreshments will be served.

HONK! Festival 21st Annual Festival of Activist Street Bands will take place **October 9-11**, throughout Somerville, Cambridge. Rain or shine. Free and open to all; if interested in

Continued on page 13

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's
Olio
#1040

Olio - (noun) A miscella-
neous mixture, hodgepodge

1. When is World Vegetarian Day?

2. Which pink ribbon is associated with October?

3. Which poet wrote *The October Night*?

4. What New Jersey town is home to a statue of Frank Sinatra?

5. The "Hollywood" sign originally spelled out what word?

6. Born Robert Weston Smith, this famous radio disc jockey in the 1970s was more commonly known by what name?

7. Which astronomer
- is called out in Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*?

8. What is the fear of flowers called?

9. Who was Elton John's *Candle in the Wind* written for?

10. Which author wrote the apocalyptic novel *The Stand*?

11. The classic 1877 novel *Black Beauty* is about what kind of animal?

12. Dubbed the "Black Death," what plague swept through Europe in the 1300s?

Answers on page 11

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. In ancient Egypt, priests plucked every hair from their bodies.
2. Your body contains about 100,000 miles of blood vessels.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

- ACROSS
1. Trampled

5. Dashboard unit, acr.

8. "Be quiet," onomatopoeically speaking

11. Clean the whiteboard, e.g.

12. Morally wicked

13. Former anesthetic

15. Bad luck precursor

16. Banned apple spray

17. Ringo Starr's instrument, pl.

18. Home of the bagpipes

20. Big one, at 7-Eleven

21. Contemplate

22. Jewelry stone

23. Hindu queens

26. Something earned

30. Tokyo, formerly

31. Riddim pair music genre

34. Spock's famous body parts

35. Animal, source of violin bow strings

37. Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf ____"

38. Away from port (2 words)

39. Not much (2 words)

40. Post-graduate journey?

42. Always, to a poet

43. Baby bear (2 words)

45. Beach-comber's collection

47. Cholera

48. Popular pie nut

50. Glazier's unit

52. Flute player

55. Pointy teeth

56. 36 inches

57. Sticky stuff

59. Hot ____ buns

60. Code word for K

61. Mauritania's Eastern neighbor

62. Soda pop container

63. Ems follower

64. Highest point

- DOWN
1. Piano has at least ____ pedals

2. Part of a glass, pl.

3. Leading oil-producers' grp.

4. Indicate

CROSSWORD														
1	2	3	4			5	6	7			8	9	10	
11					12					13	14			
15					16					17				
	18			19						20				
			21					22						
23	24	25						26				27	28	29
30				31		32	33				34			
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	50	51				52						53	54	
55						56					57			58
59						60					61			
62						63					64			

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

5. Home to Teatro alla Scala

6. Popular core exercise

7. Deer social group

8. Synagogue

9. Cannabis plant

10. Store posting, abbr.

12. Old-fashioned carry-on bag

13. Straight ones in drafter's toolbox

14. Louis Armstrong's instrument

19. "And Then ____ Were None"

22. "Wow!"

23. User's "getaway"

24. Sun-dried brick

25. Water wheel

26. Intense anger

27. Painter's prop

28. Angler's basket

29. Former Russian leaders
32. Snatch

33. Toothy fish

36. Lute family instruments

38. "Perfect" Buddhist

40. Theatrical prompt

41. Former Portuguese money

44. Edible herb

46. Brain teaser

48. Like average Jane

49. British peers

50. Prefix for "beyond"

51. Any minute, arch.

52. Type of fish net

53. Daytime TV program

54. Enameled metalware

55. Federal Communications Commission

58. Standard number of strings on guitar
- Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Somerville Brings 20 Years of HONK! to City Hall



Honk if you like art! Somerville's Community Collections exhibit series continues this October with Looking Back at 20 Years of HONK! Festival of Activist Street Bands, a photo and poster retrospective celebrating the homegrown festival and the worldwide movement it helped inspire. All are invited to an opening reception on Thursday, October 8, from 5 to 7 p.m. on the second floor of Somerville City Hall (93 Highland Ave). The reception is free, and light refreshments will be served.

Looking Back at 20 Years of HONK! Festival of Activist Street Bands

Curated by the HONK! organizing committee, the exhibit captures two decades of music, community, and activism. Now in its 21st year, HONK! brings bands from across the country and around the world to Somerville, turning streets and public spaces into places to gather, dance, and speak up. Through photographs, posters, quotes of musicians and participants, and a playlist, visitors can revisit favorite festival memories and explore how a celebration rooted in Davis Square grew into an international movement.

All are invited to the free opening reception of the exhibit on Thursday, October 8.

About City Hall Community Collections

Community Collections turns the halls and walls of City Hall into a mini-gallery showcasing community art and creativity. The HONK! exhibit will be on view beginning October 8 during regular City Hall business hours.

Notice to Readers

Political endorsements: 250 words or less will be printed as space allows. All endorsements submitted will appear online on the main page or under our Campaign Releases tab on our website.

Letters to the Editor: The Somerville Times encourages all residents to comment publicly on local issues. We will print letters sent to us that adhere to guidelines for taste, accuracy, fairness, and public interest. Letters are limited to 500 words. Letters will run only if there is an author's name and city/town or residence. Letters can be sent to news@thesomervilletimes.com.

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and speak to the Assignment Editor

The Somerville Times Historical Fact of the Week



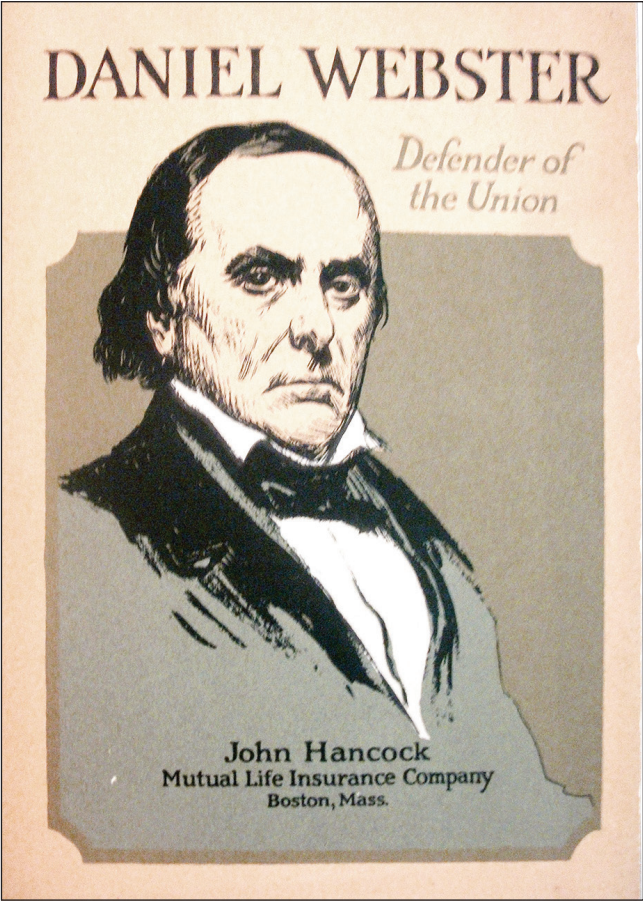
Eagle feathers #364

This article first appeared in the June 25, 2014, edition of The Somerville Times.

Crossroads

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

The fastest way to get from Cambridge to the heart of Union Square is to take Webster Avenue. Beginning at 19 Union Square, the street is an arrow shot to the Cambridge line and beyond.



Named after statesman Daniel Webster, both cities honored him with that street name. On Webster Avenue, when leaving the square, the first corner you approach is Everett Street, named after another statesman, Edward Everett. The street names of this intersection are interesting. The fact that both national icons have namesakes in Union Square is appropriate. They both loved America and, for years before the Civil War, worked to keep her united. Both men had known each other since their youth and continued their friendship until the end of their lives. They were both educators and politicians, as well as nationally acclaimed orators.

Edward Everett was born in what is now Edward Everett Square in Dorchester and led an amazingly colorful life. Admitted to Harvard University at age 13 and graduated at age 17, he was the youngest in his class and won its highest honors. He then went on to divinity school and

Continued on page 11



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City of Somerville
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a virtual public hearing on **Tuesday, October 20, 2026**, at 6:45pm through Zoom.

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

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ai05_HwSQ5a_Mee8w-0h7Q

TO CALL IN

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

The Historic Preservation Commission will consider the following pursuant to the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties

- 23 Chester Street**

Applicant: Rebel Builders LLC - Juan Barrios
Owner: Brown Jason & Tamara A Trustees
The applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter an LHD property by replacing three windows.
- 15 Adams Street**

Applicant: Justin Santolucito - Just Woodcraft Inc.
Owner: Catherine and Eric Haines
The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter an LHD property by demolishing and reducing the size of the deck.

Determinations of Historic Significance (STEP 1 IN THE DEMO REVIEW PROCESS)

- 65 DerbyStreet (Carriage Barn)**

Applicant: Sal Queruo - Tradition Construction Inc.
Owner: 65 Derby St Somerville LLC
The Applicant seeks to demolish a building constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

Determinations of Preferably Preserved (STEP 2 IN THE DEMO REVIEW PROCESS)

- 333 Highland Avenue**

Applicant: Fan Wang
Owner: Fan Wang
The Applicant seeks to demolish a building constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases>. Interested persons may provide comments to the Historic Preservation Commission at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to historic@somervillema.gov. Persons with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication (i.e., CART, ASL), written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures in order to access the programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville should contact the ADA Coordinator in advance at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or ADA@somervillema.gov.

9/30/26 The Somerville Times

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SOMERVILLE RETIREMENT BOARD
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Pension Administration Software for the Somerville Retirement Board
The Somerville Retirement Board invites sealed bids for Pension Administration Software for the Somerville Retirement Board.

A Request For Proposal (RFP) and specifications may be obtained at the Somerville Retirement Board, 323 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145 on or after Monday, September 28, 2026 or electronically via e-mail request at mpasquariello@somervillema.gov

Sealed proposals will be accepted at the above office until **October 20, 2026 at 11:30 A.M.** The sealed proposals will be opened on **October 21, 2026 at 2:30 P.M.** The Somerville Retirement Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the Somerville Retirement Board would be served by so doing. Late proposals will be rejected.

Proposals should be submitted to:

mpasquariello@somervillema.gov

Michael Pasquariello, Executive Director
Somerville Retirement Board
323 Broadway
Somerville, MA 02145

The ideal proposer will have at least 3 years of pension database software support services to at least 5 other Massachusetts public employee retirement boards. The desired contract term is seven years. The start date shall be January 1, 2027.

Any questions related to this proposal, please call the Retirement Office at (617) 764-3807 or email at mpasquariello@somervillema.gov

Michael Pasquariello
Executive Director
(617) 764- 3807
mpasquariello@somervillema.gov

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
IFB #27-19

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

Inspection, Maintenance & Repairs to Fire Detection Systems

An Invitation for Bid may be obtained online at www.bidexpress.com, <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or from the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **09/30/2026**. Sealed bids will be received at the above office until: **10/14/2026 by 2PM EST**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please contact Logan Carroll at Lcarroll@somervillema.gov for more information.

5% Bid Deposit required. Massachusetts Prevailing Wages apply. DCAMM Certification Required.

Logan Carroll
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

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SOMERVILLE CITY COUNCIL
TRAFFIC AND PARKING
PUBLIC HEARING

There will be a Public Hearing before the City Council's Committee on Licenses and Permits on **Wednesday, October 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM**, by order of Councilor Scott, Councilor Mbah, Councilor Wheeler, Councilor Sait, and Councilor Link

That this Council schedule a Public Hearing regarding construction parking permits and the impact of current enforcement policy on neighborhood residents.

This meeting will be held by remote participation, using the Zoom Webinar platform.

You have two ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. To attend and be heard, enter the link exactly as it appears below into your internet browser. You will then be asked to register for the meeting.
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Vi0iv6xGRS-H26M9lYkplA
2. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may email your comments to publiccomments@somervillema.gov, or send them by US mail to the City Clerk, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA, 02143. Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Council.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.

COURTNEY HENDERSON
CITY CLERK

9/30/26 The Somerville Times



SOMERVILLE CITY COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE MATTERS
PUBLIC HEARING

There will be a Public Hearing before the City Council's Committee on Legislative Matters on **Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 6:00 PM**. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this hearing will be conducted via remote participation.

REGISTER ONLINE

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VgGSh3w-Q-G0AipVJA2VKg

You have two ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. To attend and be heard, enter the link exactly as it appears into your internet browser. You will then be asked to register for the meeting.
2. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may email your comments to publiccomments@somervillema.gov, or send them by US mail to the City Clerk, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA, 02143. Your comments must arrive no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing, in order to be sure they are conveyed to the Council.

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

- A Mayor's Communication conveying an update on the Civilian Oversight policy development process.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.

COURTNEY HENDERSON
CITY CLERK

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
IFB #27-20

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

Inspection, Maintenance & Repairs to Fire Suppression System

An Invitation for Bid may be obtained online at www.bidexpress.com, <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or from the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **09/30/2026**. Sealed bids will be received at the above office until: **10/14/2026 by 3PM EST**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please contact Logan Carroll at Lcarroll@somervillema.gov for more information.

5% Bid Deposit required. Massachusetts Prevailing Wages apply.

Logan Carroll
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

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Ms. Cam's
Olio
Answers

From on page 8

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. October 1 | 7. Galileo |
| 2. Breast Cancer Awareness | 8. Anthophobia |
| 3. Robert Frost | 9. Marilyn Monroe |
| 4. Hoboken | 10. Stephen King |
| 5. Hollywoodland | 11. Horse |
| 6. Wolfman Jack | 12. The bubonic plague |

Somerville farmers markets provide fresh produce to all parts of the city

By Eliot Josti

As the fall season approaches in Somerville, the cooler weather welcomes many outdoor activities for the community. In partnership with small businesses, Somerville offers three different farmers markets, selling unique goods made by locals.

Though Union Square was recently taken over for Fluff Fest, the Union Square Farmers Market is open to the public every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., all the way until October 31.

Fresh fruit and vegetables, hand-pressed juices, coffees, and crafts can be found in every corner. Each week, a map is released displaying the vendors and specialty food available.

"If you have SNAP, Massachusetts automatically gives you extra money to spend on fruits and vegetables from farmers' markets and farm stands through the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)," mentioned on the Somerville Food Coalition site.

Also in partnership with SNAP, the Davis Square Farmers Market invites families and friends to come shop using the match program.

Something unique to the Davis Square Farmers Market is the POP Club, standing for the Power of Produce Club.

"POP Club is a free program for kids ages 5 – 12 that gives them the chance to explore the market, make their own choices, and learn about fresh, local food, all while having a great time!" said the Mass Farmers Markets site.

This program gets children excited about making healthy choices by giving them independence to shop around and choose an item that interests them. Each week, the POP Club gives the members three dollars to spend on local produce offered by the vendors.

The Davis Square Farmers Market also has a variety of ready-to-eat meals, meats, and baked goods coming from over two dozen Massachusetts vendors. The list of vendors and sellers is available at <https://www.massfarmersmarkets.org/davis>, as well as details to join the POP Club. It is open every Wednesday from 12 to 6 p.m. until November 25.

One creative way to promote locally grown fresh produce is the Somer-



ville Mobile Farmers Market.

"The Somerville Mobile Farmers Market is committed to supporting local residents and Massachusetts farmers by bringing healthy, farm-fresh produce directly to multiple locations in Somerville," according to their website.

From the Council on Aging to the Mystic Housing Development, the Mobile Farmers Market makes sure to provide accessible produce around the city. On Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, you can catch the pop-up.

Not only does shopping from local farmers provide fresh produce, homemade items, and baked goods to your home, but it directly benefits small businesses and the Somerville community.

For more information, visit: <https://somervillefoodcoalition.org/find-food/farmers-markets/>.

Historical Fact

CONT. FROM PG 9

became pastor of Boston's famous Brattle Street Church at age 21. He returned to Harvard and accepted a Professorship in Greek Literature. He then travelled to Europe to prepare for that position and was awarded a Ph.D. from Göttingen University in Germany, the first American to do so. His political rise began in 1825, when he enjoyed a panoramic view of South Malden while living in his mansion-like home on the summit of Winter Hill. After his death, this area took Everett's name in his honor.

1825-1835: Congressman from Massachusetts

1836-1840: Governor of Massachusetts

1841-1845: Minister to England

1846-1849: President of Harvard University

1852-1853: Secretary of State

1853-1854: Senator from Massachusetts

1860: Presidential Candidate

As an orator, he spoke throughout the North during the Civil War and was the keynote speaker at Gettysburg, being eclipsed by President Lincoln's address.

He also canvassed the country, giving free speeches to save Washington's home, Mt. Vernon. It's not surprising that Everett's nickname was "Ever at it."

Webster Avenue begins at the site of St. Joseph's Church and is across Union Square from Barristers Hall. This is the building adorned with the Washington gateway to Somerville mural.

During Webster's professional life, four years as a Massachusetts Congressman and fourteen years as a Senator, he was considered America's foremost lawyer and one of the country's best orators. Among his most famous public speeches were the 200th anniversary of the

Pilgrims' Landing and the Bunker Hill cornerstone-laying ceremony of 1825. Somerville was still part of Charlestown at this time.

Union Square honors these two men with the intersection of Webster Avenue and Everett Street. East Somerville honored them with the intersection of Webster Street and Everett Avenue until the building of the East Somerville Community School separated these streets.

Both men were at times on Presidential tickets, but never against each other. Webster's death generated the largest expression of sympathy in this country since Washington's death. Webster was Secretary of State, and Everett was Under Secretary of State. They worked together trying to save the Union. Somerville has kept the memory of these two great men together ever since.



Somerville Fair Housing Commission *Question of the week*

Q: Is a real estate brokerage firm in violation of the fair housing laws if one of its employees or agents unlawfully discriminates?

A: Yes. Under the Fair Housing Act (FHA), a real estate brokerage firm can be held liable if one of its employees or agents unlawfully discriminates in the sale, rental, or brokerage of housing, even if the discrimination was not authorized by the firm itself.

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

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

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BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



What is the best thing about October? All the cobwebs and dust in your house just become Halloween decorations

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Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Enchanted garden... — Photo by Denise Provost

On This Day in History September 30

- 1630 – John Billington becomes the first man executed in the English colonies.
- 1791 – Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute* is performed for the first time in Vienna
- 1846 – The first anesthetized tooth extraction is performed in Charleston, MA.
- 1927 – Babe Ruth hits his 60th home run of the season in Yankee Stadium.
- 1935 – Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess* opens at the Colonial Theatre in Boston.
- 1943 – The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps becomes the Women's Army Corps.
- 1949 – The Berlin Airlift is officially halted after 277,264 flights.
- 1954 – The first atomic-powered submarine, the Nautilus, is commissioned.
- 1955 – Actor and teen idol James Dean is killed in a car crash while driving his Porsche on his way to enter it into a race in Salinas, California.
- 1965 – President Lyndon Johnson signs legislation that establishes the National Foundation for the Arts and the Humanities.
- 1999 – Japan's second-worst nuclear accident occurs at a uranium processing facility in Tokaimura, killing two technicians.

DSNC formally recognized by City Council

By The Times Staff

The Somerville City Council voted unanimously on September 24 to formally recognize the Davis Square Neighborhood Council.

The non-profit organization works to provide the community with “a direct seat at the table with private developers and city officials looking to reshape the square,” according to its website.

City Council President Lance Davis said at the City Council meeting that legitimate questions were raised during the process regarding “technical legality” and “conceptual appropriateness,” but that in his view and the view of the law department, the legal issues were “settled.”

Davis added, “The intent is to give these

organizations broad leeway and really allow them to determine what’s appropriate.”

“...legitimate questions were raised during the process regarding “technical legality” and “conceptual appropriateness...”

Several City Councilors expressed concerns at the September 15 Legislative Matters Committee with regard to the catchment area that is within a half-mile of the neighborhood boundary and includes neighboring cities.



City Council President Lance Davis said at the latest City Council meeting that the legal issues concerning recognition of the DSNC have been settled.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

volunteering, contact volunteer@honkfest.org. If interested in hosting visiting musicians in your home, please contact housing@honkfest.org. For HONK! updates: honkfest.org, facebook.com/honk-festival, instagram.com/honkfest/. Contact info: honkfest.org/contact/, info@honkfest.org, (617) 702-2977.

The Shared Palette, a pop-up studio classroom, opens **October 1** at **Bow Market** in Somerville and runs **through November 2026**. It is a collaboration between Somerville ceramicist **Amanda Bentley** and watercolor illustrator **Kaitlyn Ripaldi**, who share a love of celebrating the everyday through functional pottery, custom illustrations and more.

Somerville neighbors need your help. On **Tuesday, September 8**, a fire on **Dartmouth Street** left four households — including multiple vulnerable residents and their pets — without homes. Please consider donating whatever you can to the **Somerville Homeless Coalition’s Emergency Displacement Fund** developed in partnership with the city. <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/emerfun>.

The **Center for Arabic Culture (CAC)** and **Somerville’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA)** invite all community members to the CAC’s **12th annual festival and book fair** on **Saturday, Octo-**

ber 10, from 3 to 8 p.m. at **Somerville High School** (81 Highland Ave.). Explore a book fair, shop local vendors, and hear readings from Arabic authors while enjoying Arabic food, music, and art. Local advocacy organizations and community groups will also be on hand to share resources and connect with residents.

SomerStreets: Monster Mash transforms **Somerville Avenue** into a festive **Halloween celebration** for all ages on **Sunday, October 18**, from 1 to 5 p.m. (severe weather date: Sunday, October 25). Enjoy live music, interactive art activities, family fun, local food vendors, and more. If you are interested in volunteering at Monster Mash, please sign up here: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/somerstreets/monster-mash-volunteer/>.

Calling all local musicians! The interest form for the **Somerville Winter Farmer’s Market 2026-27 season** is now live on the website. Share your talents with the community this winter by filling out the form and getting on stage at the Winter Market. You can find the sign-up form at: <https://www.somwintermarket.org/musicians>.

Are you a **food truck owner? Market coordinator? Performance group? Have a business and a great idea or know somebody who does?** The city wants to

hear from you. Fill out the survey at bit.ly/gsqac and let them know how your business or organization could make **350 Medford St.** a vibrant place for the community to spend time. If you don’t have a business or concept ready to launch, please keep an eye out for other opportunities to share your ideas for the space.

Celebrate the transformation of **Tufts Street** into Somerville’s newest “**Neighborhood**.” On **Tuesday, October 6**, at 11 a.m., the **City of Somerville** will host a ribbon-cutting to mark the completion of the street’s recent redesign and reconstruction to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The event will be held at **Leonard Grimes Park**, located at the corner of Tufts Street and Glen Street.

Somerville PorchFest feedback is sought via a community survey. As planning for 2027 gets underway, community members are invited to complete the **PorchFest survey** to give input on what’s working and identify areas for improvement as the event continues to evolve. Take the survey now **through Sunday, October 25**, at bit.ly/somporchsurvey.

The **Somerville Museum** presents **Common Ground: Photography, Place, and Community**, **September 17 - December 5**, One Westwood Rd. This exhibition features 15 photographers who have cho-

sen Somerville as their home. The works on view range from documentary to conceptual and are united by the perspective of artists living and working within this evolving urban environment. “Common Ground” explores how artists navigate and contribute to Somerville’s shifting identity, examining the relationship between place, community, and creative practice. Visit <https://www.somerville-museum.org/>.

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

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OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Interview with author
Joyce Wilson

Recently, I had the pleasure of interviewing New England Poetry Club advisory board member Joyce Wilson about her new book of poetry, *The Morning After Burns Night*.

Joyce Wilson is editor of *The Poetry Porch* (www.poetryporch.com), a literary magazine on the Internet since 1997. She has taught English at Boston University and Suffolk University, about ten years each. Her poems have appeared in many literary journals, among them *Alabama Literary Review*, *Classical Outlook*, and *The Hudson Review*. She has published four books of poetry: *The Etymology of Spruce*, *The Springhouse 3*, *The Need for a Bridge*, and *Take and Receive*. Her most recent poetry collection is *The Morning after Burns Night*, appearing in summer 2026.

Doug Holder: The title of this book, *The Morning after Burns Night*, is intriguing. It seems that when we experience the 3 a.m. dark night of the soul—the morning sun burns through our malaise ... with a new perspective. Do you feel your poetry collection is hopeful?

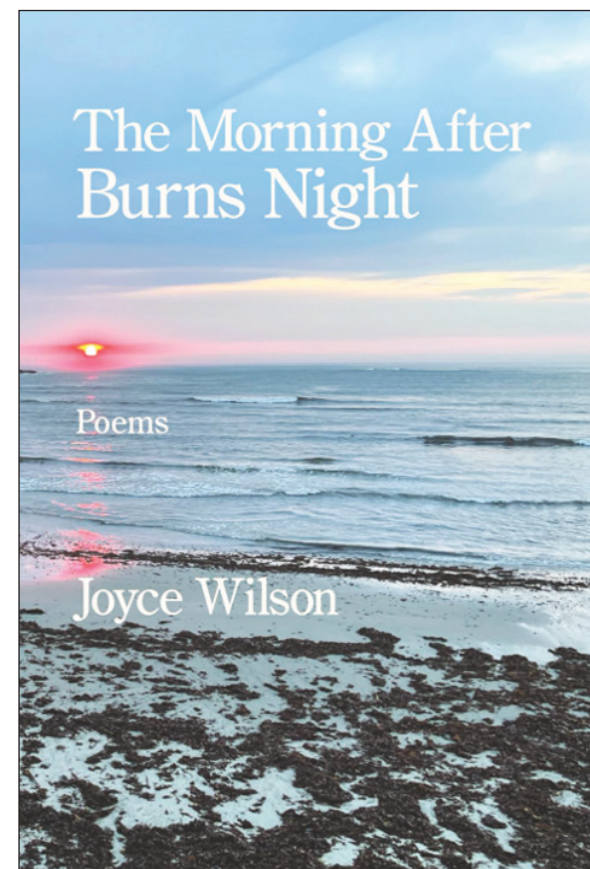
Joyce Wilson: About the creation of *The Morning after Burns Night*: The first poem sets the scene of a party for Robert Burns, whose birthday falls on January 25, and is a traditional winter date for dinners and celebrations. My husband and I hosted such a gathering a few years ago with a potluck buffet, readings of poetry, and performances of songs. It was a memorable evening and left me with a feeling of fondness for all my friends and a sense of connection to our place in a sometimes crazy world.

So when I had enough poems to fill a book, I thought I might lead with a poem about our winter celebration. I grouped the incidental poems, in a variety of forms (sonnets, blank verse, limericks, prose poems) and on a variety of topics (winter, the behavior of animals, states of mind) that the partygoers might have shared in verse to entertain themselves that night. Like the speakers, some poems address singles, some pairs, the morning after, and the night before. That introductory poem ends this way:

We introduced our poems and our verses
about our friends, the ones both here and gone,
and pairs of things, like lovers' vows and curses,
without regret, from now, and from now on.

Not reflective and soul-searching, but communal and commemorative, and hopeful, yes, that we will remember these times and the people close to us for auld lange syne, or for old time's sake.

There are two other sections in the book. One, a sonnet crown sequence, *The Remnant of His Life*, is



about a woman who bathes her husband's body after death as a way of saying good-bye. This idea is based on the D. H. Lawrence story *Odor of Chrysanthemums*, which is about the death of a miner in a village in the Midlands of Great Britain, and how the wife and mother prepare his body for burial.

And there is the final section about travelling through the Middle Eastern country of Lebanon, where we explored my husband's roots, and where our daughter ended up living, working, marrying, and starting a family. I got obsessed with the cedars of Lebanon and the phrase "The Cedars know the history of the earth better than history itself."

DH: In your new collection, your connection to nature is very profound. You live on a farm—so you have a certain intimacy with it that many folks don't have. You interact with it, glean meaning, and can interpret its silence. Do you feel you are one with nature?

JW: Live on a farm? Ha! We occupy one acre. Our daughter always called it a mini-farm, as if we were pretending to be farmers and only succeeded in a small way. That is somewhat accurate. Our home is in the suburban coastal town of Scituate, on the South Shore of Boston, where the property came with a chicken coop and a lot attached with space for a big vegetable garden (the size of a tennis court). We have maintained those original fixtures. And part of me is devoted to farming activities and living close to nature after I grew up in a similar setting in Pennsylvania, south of Philadelphia. So I

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Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Somerville poet Angelo D'Amato has earned MFAs in fiction and poetry from Lesley University and Albertus Magnus College, respectively. His Doctor (Who) is Peter Capaldi.



Midnight on the Charles

Windows glowing
on the ice. Blue light
of strangers, dancing
to the riot of
Bebop. Hunger
strains the land. I
press a rose petal
to your sodden
cheek and wonder
if this was ever love,
at all. Marionettes
dangle from robittussin
windows. This
is the Fun-Land, where
dreams are delivered
to your door. Take
your serum now, and
sway to the saxophone's
hum. Thrust against
the creamy cymbal
bop. Ragtime drool,
upon your ashen scars.
Frozen dewdrops lounging
beneath the stars.

— Angelo D'Amato

To have your work considered for the Lyrical send it to:

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Off The Shelf

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prefer living in close proximity to nature, rather than in urban environments. But I am an observer. To be one with nature is impossible: the weather is always changing, the animals passing through are adorable one minute, and then they're killing each other the next. It's hot and then cold, one day a delight to be outside and then the next a real danger when a storm comes up unexpectedly.

DH: Some of your poems have turkeys in them. You paint these awkward birds as having a sense of nobility about them. There is grandeur in this "...top-heavy, self-respecting..." bird. It makes me think of the concept of ugly beauty. Your take?

JW: Yes, ugly beauty is exactly right. I wrote two poems about turkeys, and these are wild turkeys, not domestic, and I was struggling not to rant about their intrusiveness, when one morning we found sixty in our front yard! Still, I kept thinking of the phrase "The poor will always be with us," in which we are repulsed by the vision of indig-nity and need. Do our feelings come from their lack of beauty or our ignorance of it? In the poem *Wild Turkeys Return*, I address their awkwardness as a sign of renewal.

Wild Turkeys Return

High-shouldered and bony, they venture near.

Their awkwardness apparent in their walk,
They stand too big to hide, too shy to talk
Yet chirrup to dissuade us of our fear.
As they survey this wind-swept acre's lawn,
We ask ourselves what messages they bear
And what our duties are, if we should dare
To shoo them back to woods, their rightful home,
If we should seek the lessons they might teach,
That once exiled they now return in force
To take their place and reclaim what was theirs.
We watch them slowly draggle out of reach.
We want to love them, on whom much depends—
Our gratitude for nature, sunlight's jewel,
The notion that their coming means renewal—
A second chance for us, their awkward friends.

In another poem, I was fascinated by the male Tom tur-key in particular, how, when he fans his tail, he appears "top-heavy, self-respecting," much like Benjamin Franklin, who wanted to make the wild turkey the national bird, rather than the eagle, which he deemed too warlike.

DH: You write of harvesting grapes ... the "temporary of this world" – You trace the grapes' growth, then harvest them, cook, and consume them. This seems to follow our trajectory of life, death, and infinity. You make the com-

mon grape a sacred sage of sorts. Your thoughts?

JW: In that poem, *A Recipe for Gratitude*, I wanted to describe the process of making jelly from grapes, tending the vines, and living in a neighborhood, and observing the changing seasons as a way to give thanks to the natural world by playing a part in it. Must we relate to nature by assuming these roles of sowing and harvesting? Emerson found much in nature to be divine. I'm still working out that kind of devotion.

DH: Why should we read this book?

JW: I hope readers will come to this book with a cu-riosity about the subjects of the poems: Burns Night and yearly celebration, the need to connect with the reality of death and dying, the state of affairs in Leb-anon and the Middle East. I hope they will come away with an appreciation of poetic forms, the tradition of poetry and song, and our need to maintain connections with one another. I dedicate the book "for the unre-quired" with the notion in mind that we are all seeking responses from the ones we love, some of whom are out of reach, or are otherwise repulsive and unreachable. Some we barely know because of the distances between us. We cannot hope to complete the circle of our bond in its implied perfection in this world but must contin-ue to seek its embrace.

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