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Congratulations are in order

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Superintendent provides focus areas for SPS



Somerville Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ruben Carmona briefed the School Committee on three focus areas for the upcoming school year.

By The Times Staff

A presentation by Superintendent Dr. Ruben Carmona at the School Committee meeting on August 31 provided an update for Somerville Public Schools and highlighted three focus areas for this academic year.

Focus area #1 is that every student learns in every class, every day, explained Carmona. Through strong instruction, students experience meaningful, rigorous learning every day. Educators regularly use evidence of student learning to understand what is working, he explained. And the schools adjust instruction based on student needs to make more progress.

"When we walk into a classroom, what we want to see is that students are engaged" *Continued on page 4*

A closet full of community: Connexion offers free clothing and a helping hand

By Eliot Josti

Somerville, known for its caring community, welcomes another season of generosity thanks to the Connexion Closet, a free indoor space that encourages families, neighbors, friends, and anyone in need.

What started off as a coat drive in the colder season eventually became something bigger once large amounts of donations came rolling in. It was then realized that members of the community didn't just need coats, but clothing for any occasion. Clothes started to be displayed, inviting anyone who needs certain items to come inside and be greeted with care and welcome.

Jordan Harris, pastor and organizer at Connexion, saw the increase in involvement as impactful to those volunteering and taking advantage of the Connexion Closet's accessibility.

Continued on page 4



Free clothes hanging in the Connexion Closet in Somerville, MA, on Nov. 12, 2025.

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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.

PICK UP! Somerville Museum Calling fundraiser, September 10, 6 p.m., Crystal Ballroom at Somerville Theatre. Inspired by Somerville’s role as the site of the world’s first residential telephone call, and the Somerville Museum’s “**Let Freedom Ring**” public art project for America’s 250th, this year’s fundraising event celebrates connection between the past and the future, and among one another. **Jimmy Tingle** (pun intended) will entertain us with his comedy and emcee the program. Sambaviva Brazilian dance ensemble will perform a medley of telephone-themed favorites. TJ the DJ will keep the music going throughout the evening. Mix and mingle over passed appetizers while exploring interactive telephone exhibits! For tickets and more information, visit: <https://www.somervillemuseum.org/>.

On **Thursday, September 10**, from 5 to 7 p.m., over **thirty city departments** will set up on the **City Hall concourse** (93 Highland Ave.) with a range of fun activities that highlight their work. Issue a fake parking ticket with a **Parking Dept.** handheld device, take a tour of **City Hall**, get up close with a **Somerville Fire truck**, meet the **Somerville Police K-9 unit**, sign up for a **library card**, and much more. At 7 p.m., attendees are invited to head to the Council Chamber on the second floor of City Hall to attend the City Council meeting and see civics in action.

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy birthday to **Bob Trane**, who is a lifelong resident and a former *Continued on page 7*

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of September 9 – September 15 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday <i>September 9</i>	Cloudy	80°/69°	8%	3%	NE 11 mph
 Thursday <i>September 10</i>	Partly Cloudy	87°/61°	24%	16%	SE 11 mph
 Friday <i>September 11</i>	Sunny	73°/53°	3%	1%	NW 9 mph
 Saturday <i>September 12</i>	Sunny	76°/61°	4%	1%	ESE 10 mph
 Sunday <i>September 13</i>	Partly Cloudy	79°/63°	25%	12%	SSW 12 mph
 Monday <i>September 14</i>	Partly Cloudy	74°/51°	20%	9%	NW 11 mph
 Tuesday <i>September 15</i>	Partly Cloudy	68°/59°	9%	3%	E 10 mph

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

TheSomervilleTimes.com Comments of the Week

Response to: *Lyrical Somerville – September 2*

Kerri Glover says:

Outstanding poem, I feel like I’m present in these spaces with the author. Vivid work!

Response to: *2026 State Primary Unofficial Election Results*

Daniel M Kimmel says:

Way to go Somerville. You rejected the people who know how to get things done and went with those who will engage in performative virtue. There’ll be lots of empty gestures about things the legislature can’t do, but at least you’ll feel good about yourself.

Log onto *TheSomervilleTimes.com* to leave your own comments

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Pollinator Garden Prizes Ceremony

Attend the Pollinator Garden Prizes Ceremony, at CALA Building’s “Covered Plaza,” at 1060 Broadway, Teele Square, Somerville, on Saturday, Sept. 26, 1:30 – 3 p.m. Free (rain or shine).

Come celebrate and learn more about local pollinator gardens and community growing. Brief remarks by Isabella Stewart Gardner, who awarded annual garden prizes throughout Boston neighborhoods (1904-1919), as part of a nationwide “City Beautiful” movement.

This is a community event with refreshments and activities. Sponsored by a Somerville Arts Lottery grant, in part-nership with the Somerville Community Growing Center and the Somerville Garden Club, plus (5) gift cards to be awarded to “Model Pollinator Gardens” by Winchester Mahoney’s.

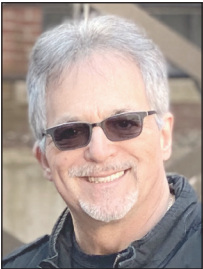
Life in the

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.

A growing tradition



If you have a nice lawn or garden, this summer's weather was memorable. You were out there watering in the muggy heat. It's a labor of love to keep the garden and lawn thriving.

My grandpa had a grape vine and vegetable garden. I asked our Somerville neighbors to share their memories of the old backyard gardens and what people are growing in their gardens today.

"My next-door neighbor was a lovely 90+ Italian woman. She had the grapevines across the driveway and a garden in the back. She would pick her grapes and fruit and tend to it every day. She passed a few years ago, and they took it all down and paved the yard. Sad."

"I was doing tomatoes, peppers, and cherry tomatoes for a few years, but my back won't allow me to do anything in a garden anymore. But it was fun, but a lot

of work."

"When my grandparents moved into my parents' house, I was three years old. My grandfather (Pa) quickly dug up a small patch of ground and started a vegetable garden. Even though it was a small garden, a few select neighbors would get a tomato or two."

"Yellow and purple grapes and six different types of tomatoes, beans, peppers, lettuce, zucchini, and eggplant."

"My grandfather had a huge garden in the backyard and a grapevine. We also had a huge cherry tree we would climb and eat the cherries right off the branches!"

"I have aloe everywhere from my original plant of over 40 years. Basil, rosemary, garlic, onion are it for now."

"The guy next door had Concord grapes. The smell of those grapes throughout the neighborhood was wonderful."

"Tomato, peppers, squash, thyme, mint, cilantro, eggplant, grapes, blueberries, strawberries, apples, peaches, pears, limes, lemons."



"I have beans, tomatoes, peppers, cukes, eggplants, chives, walking onions, kale, lettuce, mustard greens in the back vegetable garden. Apple trees, grape vine, blueberries, elderberries, and Josta berry (courant/gooseberry cross) on the sides and flower gardens with too many types all around." Wow!

I used to love eating the grapes and gooseberries from my grandfather's yard.

Growing a productive garden is a great way to honor family traditions. Passing on the passion for growing things is a great way to keep family memories alive and thriving. Seems like anything can grow in Somerville.

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JOIN OUR COMMUNITY MEETING ON ONE UNION SQUARE

You're invited to share your ideas for creating vibrant new housing and green space in the Union Square neighborhood.

Wednesday
September 9, 2026

6:00 - 8:00 PM

Urban Axes: 2
Union Square,
Somerville, MA

- Learn about the One Union Square site
- Share ideas for the space
- Connect with community members on the future of housing in Somerville

RSVP at oneunionsquare.com/community-meeting

Meeting is not being held as a requirement of any regulatory process. Redevelopment plans have not yet been filed.

Money Map Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

Q: How did last year's tax law change the deduction for charitable contributions—and how could it help me on my taxes?

A: Beginning in 2026, you may be able to deduct certain charitable contributions even if you take the standard deduction.

• **Beginning in 2026, you don't have to itemize to potentially receive a tax benefit.**

Taxpayers who take the standard deduction can deduct up to \$1,000 of qualifying charitable contributions, or up to \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly. This deduction is available in addition to the stan-

dard deduction.

• **The contribution generally must be made in cash to a qualified organization.**

For purposes of this deduction, qualifying contributions generally include monetary donations such as cash, checks, and certain electronic payments made to eligible charitable organizations. Donations to individuals do not qualify.

• **Keep records of the donations you make this year.**

For cash or other monetary contributions, keep a bank record or written communication from the charity showing the organization's name, date, and amount of the contribution. For any single contribution

of \$250 or more, you generally need a written acknowledgment from the charitable organization that also addresses whether you received anything of value in return.

Bottom Line: If you make charitable contributions in 2026, keep records of your qualifying cash donations so you don't miss a deduction at tax time. If you itemize deductions instead, different rules apply to charitable contributions—which we'll cover in a future Money Map Tip.

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.

Superintendent provides focus areas for SPS

CONT. FROM PG 1

and that they're doing the talking, they're doing the writing, they're doing what they call the productive struggle," said Carmona.

Focus area #2 is building a stronger culture of data. The superintendent says that data should be a tool for action. Teachers now will analyze data at the end of a literacy cycle to determine ways of improvement.

"Everyone has the intention of doing the work, but the work needs to be also measured through the actions that we already have throughout the system," he said.

Focus area #3 is strengthening inclusive practices for students with disabilities.

For all students to learn, teachers need the tools to support that effort.

"We made a significant investment around the work of inclusive practices," said Carmona.

The slideshow continued with some information about preliminary data from the 2026 MCAS, which points to an upward trajectory. There has been improvement in math for students in grades 3-8, notably for students with disabilities and multilingual learners, according to SPS.

Carmona said the superintendent's office has devised six instructional strategies moving forward. The first strategy contin-

ues professional development districtwide on inclusive practices. The second strategy repeats data cycles with all instructional leaders. The third strategy strengthens the use of X-Block. The fourth strategy leverages external partners to support instructional practices. The fifth strategy uses dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills (DIBELS) to identify students in need and accelerate student reading at the K3 grade level.

"Those are the five areas in which we are making sure that we are consistent, that we are predictable, and that we also have a strong presence from both the central

office as well as our building leaders," said Carmona.

Following the presentation, Vice Chair School Committee Member Leiran Biton said the first focus area resonated with him.

"I just think it's so important...every student learns every class, every day, and just recognizing that, and emphasizing the importance of that priority area," said Biton. "I think every one of our families knows how important it is when they send their children to school, like today, the first day of school, that we're focused on their child."

A closet full of community: Connexion offers free clothing and a helping hand

CONT. FROM PG 1

"People need access to clothes all-year-round. One small coat drive became an all-year-round source. The unhoused community really appreciates the access to these clothes. It feels great to have that available for members in need," said Harris.

The Connexion Closet also offers a variety of children's clothing, making the stress of growing children easier on a parent's wallet.

"We have a lot of families because children grow out of their clothes quickly. Children's and baby clothing is a wonderful need. It is cool to see the parents be able to lessen the burden on their pockets and be able to get nice clothing for their kids," said Harris.

Not only does the Connexion Closet benefit members receiving the clothes, but

it also gives the opportunity for people to give unwanted clothing away to give back to Somerville.

"There are so many folks that move in and out of Somerville and are looking for a good place to donate. This time of year there are a whole lot of donations for people trying to clean their closet," said Harris.

In order to make the Connexion Closet possible, volunteers selflessly take time out of their day to keep the program running. All clothes are washed, sorted, processed, put on hangers, and displayed daily to keep the volume of clothing organized and accessible. Anyone is welcome to volunteer.

In addition to offering a wide selection of clothing, Connexion packages and distributes 120 meals to members of the community. The "Come to the Table" event works

with local East Somerville restaurants to cater meals, benefiting not only locals but the small businesses that contribute to the neighborhood.

On Friday, October 2, from 5-8 p.m., Connexion will host a large fundraising event called "La Mesa" benefiting the cause in partnership with Community Cooks, Michette, Mudflat, and Somerville High School Culinary Arts.

"Guests will enjoy soup and conversation with their community and a handmade bowl to keep," said Harris.

This season, the Connexion Closet is open Wednesdays from 3–6 p.m. and Fridays from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. As a special opportunity, Connexion will host a Connexion Closet Free Store on Friday, September 25, from 3–7 p.m. in order for

families to stop in on their way home from school commutes.

The Connexion Closet accepts donations on Tuesdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to noon, as well as by appointment. Volunteers help collect donations, sort and organize items, and staff the closet during open hours. Volunteer shifts are available Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. People looking to donate or volunteer can email the closet at closet@connexionumc.org.

"This is the point of community. It is not about money, housing, or immigration status. It is simply about people coming together and sharing what they have. There is more than enough for everyone. It is a gift to run a space to provide for people and build community," said Harris.

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Redevelopment Authority meeting for 90 Washington Street

By Keith Foster

A redevelopment meeting for 90 Washington Street, hosted by the City of Somerville, took place on September 2 via Zoom.

The City of Somerville and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) are currently undertaking a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to select a development team capable of delivering a transformative, mixed-use development project at 90 Washington Street.

This is a nearly four-acre, transit-served site at the intersection of the Union Square, Brick Bottom, and East Somerville neighborhoods, and steps away from the East Somerville MBTA Green Line Station.

City staff reported on progress with Wood Partners, the path to a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA), related City Council timing, and ratified an escrow arrangement for a \$50,000 deposit tied to the Developer Designation Agreement (DDA). All votes were conducted by roll call.

The Chair executed the Developer Des-

ignation Agreement (DDA) with Wood Partners on behalf of the SRA, initiating a 90-day window to negotiate a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA).

City staff is currently negotiating the LDA on behalf of the Authority and plans to return to the SRA's next meeting with a draft negotiated LDA. Due to City Council timing, the next regular SRA meeting is planned for September 30; an additional SRA meeting may be scheduled earlier the same month. Upon SRA approval, the LDA would also require City Council approval.

Target: first City Council meeting in October ("on the 8th, the second Thursday of the month") to enable committee referral and recommendation to the full Council. If the LDA parties approve the LDA, the development team would begin due diligence immediately and proceed with rezoning the property.

There is a tight timeline for zoning actions; items not completed by the end of December must restart the public process in January. If scheduling aligns, zoning could occur this year; if not, it would likely push to January.



A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been initiated to facilitate the search for a development team for the 90 Washington Street site.

Overall pace: Staff characterized the timeline as "ambitious," with the intent to keep the process moving toward a potential sale schedule in early 2027. Process inquiries: Questions about the process were directed to staff member Benjamin Demers at BDEMERS@SomervilleMA.gov.

Next steps include staff presenting a draft negotiated LDA at the next SRA meeting. Planned next regular SRA

meeting: September 30 (final week of September), with a possible additional meeting earlier that month. Target City Council schedule: Place the LDA before the City Council at its first October meeting ("on the 8th") for referral to committee. Post-approval actions: If LDA is approved by all parties, the developer begins due diligence, and the City proceeds with rezoning.

SomerStreets: Gilman Square Arts & Music Festival

From kid's music and a Honk band to interactive circus activities and pumpkin painting, there's free fun for the whole family at the upcoming SomerStreets: Gilman Square Arts & Music Festival.

Held on Saturday, September 12, from noon to 5 p.m. (rain date Sunday, September 13), this edition of the city's SomerStreets series is co-hosted by the Gilman Square Neighborhood Council and the City of Somerville Arts and Culture Division. All events will take place at Edward Leathers Park (108 Walnut St.).

The event is free and open to all. For updates and the complete entertainment schedule, visit somervilleartscouncil.org/events/gilman-sq-fest.

Festival highlights:

- Interactive performances by Esh Circus
- Entertainment from Cate the Great
- Pumpkin painting with Neighborhood Produce
- Local artists and makers
- Food from Nibble Kitchen vendors and local favorites
- A beer garden hosted by Winter Hill



Brewing Company

- Family-friendly activities and more

Music Lineup:

- 12-12:45 p.m.: Matt Heaton (kid's music)
- 1- 1:45 p.m.: Pink Slip (ska punk)
- 2- 2:45 p.m.: Dom the Composer (R&B, gospel, folk)
- 3- 3:45 p.m.: Emperor Norton's Stationary Marching Band (Balkan-Klezmer-funk-Honk)
- 4- 4:45 p.m.: FM Collective (Latin, hip-hop, jazz)

Due to ongoing construction along Pearl Street, this year's festival will temporarily move to Edward L. Leathers Community Park and portions of Walnut Street. To make room for the festivities, Walnut Street will be closed between Pearl and Medford Streets, and Skilton Avenue will also be closed.

PUBLIC AUCTION

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Somerville hosting annual 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony

The City of Somerville's Veterans' Services Department invites community members to a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony on Friday, September 11, at 6 p.m. in Davis Square to mark the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and honor all victims as well as first responders, workers, and volunteers who rushed to the scene to save lives or to later help carry out the dangerous cleanup.

"On this solemn day we remember the lives lost, honor the bravery of first responders, and offer support to their families and communities as we continue to heal as a country from the trauma of that day," said Mayor Jake Wilson. "Unity is our strength, so may we also honor their memory by continuing to look out for each other."

The observance will feature a moment of silence, invocation, and benediction by Father Paul Coughlin, as well as remarks by Mayor Wilson and Veterans Director Jerome Thomas. A bagpipe tribute will follow, and attendees will be given individual roses to place on the 9/11 Memorial. The ceremony will include a presentation of and retiring of the colors (national, state, and unit flags) by the Honor Guards of the Somerville Police and Somerville Fire Department.

"As we reflect on the 25th anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, we owe it to those we lost on that day to remember not only the horror we experienced as a nation, but also the compassion, unity, and sense of community that followed. It truly reflected the best of the American spirit," said Ward 4 Councilor Jesse Clingan.



31st Annual Somerville 5K Road Race

The Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC) will host its 31st annual Somerville 5k Road Race on October 3rd in Davis Square, continuing a tradition that has united runners, volunteers, and supporters for more than 30 years in our mission to support our neighbors, striving for stable housing and food security in Somerville and beyond.

This Road Race has deep roots in the Coalition's history and in the surrounding community. What began three decades ago as a grassroots fundraising effort has grown into one of the region's most anticipated races, drawing hundreds of participants each year. Last year more than 500 friends, family members, and supporters took to the streets to help tackle housing and food and housing insecurity. Over the years, the race has seen record turnouts and has been voted one of New England's top 75 races.

The 31st Annual Somerville 5K Road Race will take place on Saturday, October 3rd, beginning at 9:00 AM in Davis Square, rain or shine. Registration is open to individuals and teams, and volunteer opportunities are available for those who prefer to cheer from the sidelines.

Tiered fundraising prizes are offered, with rewards scaling as participants raise more in support of the coalition's mission of finding everyone a home. To register, volunteer, donate, or for more info visit shcinc.org or contact the Somerville Homeless Coalition directly. Contributions to the road race directly support SHC's programs, resources, and services that benefit homeless and nearly homeless families and individuals.

About the Somerville Homeless Coalition

The Somerville Homeless Coalition was founded in 1985 as a grassroots response to the social crisis of homelessness, uniting neighbors, community activists, university students, faith-based leaders, business supporters, and city officials. The Somerville Homeless Coalition transforms lives by providing services, support, and housing to well over 4,800 men, women, and children. Offering individualized assistance to homeless and near-homeless individuals and families, helping them obtain and maintain affordable housing. With a mission rooted in community action, SHC serves thousands of residents each year across Somerville and surrounding communities.

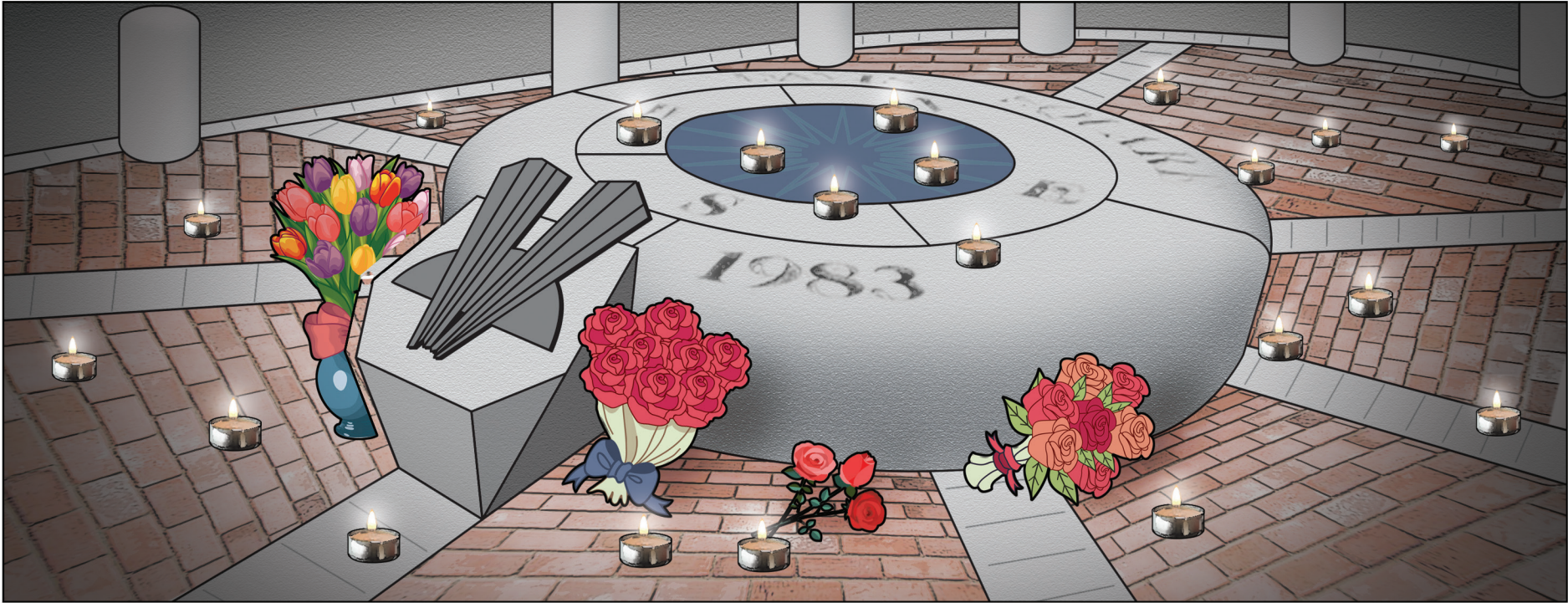


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COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Somerville remembers the victims and heroes of September 11, 2001.

Our View Of The Times



Although 25 years will have passed since the terrible and tragic events of September 11, 2001, took place, for many of us the shock and horror remain fresh in our memories. And since we, as New Englanders, were relatively close to the sites of destruction and loss of life, we can perhaps feel those sensations of sadness and even anger a little deeper than some others might, especially since our own Logan

Airport played a role in the perpetrators' deadly scheme. It all felt so close. The Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and then the anthrax threats. It seemed like the world had gone mad, and we wondered where we could go to be safer. More than a few spoke of heading for remote locations until things calmed down. This week, we join the rest of the nation

in remembering those who were injured and killed during this horrendous event, including the brave first responders who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Those who were there and survived the ordeal are also remembered and honored on this occasion. On Friday, September 11, the city will hold a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at 6 p.m. in Davis Square to mark the 25th an-

niversary of the 9/11 attacks and honor all victims as well as first responders, workers, and volunteers who rushed to the scene to save lives or to later help carry out the dangerous cleanup. The observance will feature a moment of silence, invocation, and benediction by Father Paul Coughlin, as well as remarks by Mayor Wilson and Veterans Director Jerome Thomas.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Somerville Alderman. We wish him a very happy birthday. Also celebrating is Maureen Cuff Bastardi. We wish her a very special day. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as David C. Roberts, Stephen J. Bremis, Maureen McCole, Richard Keller, Felicia Dalelio, Dan Johnson, Alexa Trefonides-Mase, Jeff Meese, Judy Calvey, Cheryl Tucker, Mary Ann Beaton, Jessica O'Brien, Jane Becker, and Gary DiZoglio, a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

On September 3, Ward 2 City Councilor JT Scott announced he will resign as of December 31, 2026. Also on September 3, Ward 3 City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen announced he will be resigning from the City Council at the end of the year in order to take up his new role as State Representative. You can find both announcements on their Facebook pages and on our website. In May, City Councilor Will Mbah announced that if elected as Representative for the 34th Middlesex District, he also intends to resign his seat on the Somerville City Council. A special election will be held to fill the City Council vacancies.

Join Mayor Jake Wilson and Somerville's Council on Aging for the annual Mayor's Senior Picnic at 11 a.m. at Trum Field on September 10. Call Connie Lorenti at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319 with any questions. Enjoy good food, music, meeting new people, and catching up with old friends.

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony, September 11. To mark the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, community members are invited to join in as the city honors all victims of 9/11, including first responders, workers, and volunteers who

rushed to the scene to save lives or to later help carry out the dangerous cleanup. Friday, September 11, at the 9/11 Memorial in Davis Square at 6 p.m.

This year's Gilman Square Arts & Music Festival is Saturday, September 12. This annual neighborhood celebration will feature local art, food vendors, acrobatic performances, children's activities, plus live music and a beer garden. The festival will take place at Ed Leathers Park, from 12 to 5 p.m., and it's completely free to attend. Bring a lawn chair or blanket, hang out, and enjoy some tunes.

Continued on page 13

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's
Olio
#1038

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

1. Which actor plays Ken in the 2023 movie *Barbie*?

2. What is the name of the dog in *The Simpsons*?

3. Which U.S. state is known as the "Sunshine State"?

4. What is the capital of Japan?

5. Which planet has the most moons?

6. What is the smallest unit of life?

7. What is the only planet in our solar system to rotate clockwise?
8. Which superhero lives by the motto, "With great power comes great responsibility"?

9. Which film features the quote, "Here's looking at you, kid"?

10. What does "USB" stand for?

11. What was first TV show to use a laugh track?

12. Which three zodiac signs are water signs?

Answers on page 10

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Slinkies are 82 feet long.
2. Most car horns are in the key of F.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD
MOVIE QUOTES

- ACROSS
1. Give benediction

6. World's oldest broadcasting company, acr.

9. Hoodwink

13. H, spelled out

14. Have a cold, e.g.

15. Dogma

16. Raja's wife

17. Shel Silverstein's constrictor

18. Extreme, prefix

19. "____, my dear, I don't give a damn"

21. "Why so ____?"

23. "High" beverage

24. Fairytale's second word

25. "Swan Lake" step, e.g.

28. Potassium hydroxide solution, pl.

30. Nincompoop

35. Month of Purim

37. At any time

39. Coastal town in southern England

40. Flick part

41. 4 x 4 race

43. Like most Brothers Grimm stories

44. "Peer Gynt" playwright

46. Actress Campbell

47. Please do not delay, acr.

48. Experienced sailor (2 words)

50. Dispatched

52. a.k.a. Tokyo

53. Window guards

55. Beer faucet

57. "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it ____"

61. "What we've got here is ____ to communicate"

65. Like United States Capitol

66. Food safety org.

68. Ritual basin

69. Tooth trouble

70. Husk of corn

71. Sharks' domain

72. Fence board

73. Pastrami partner

74. Paper quantities

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

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

4. "I can smell the ____ of a woman... Honey oil, lavender, soap"

5. Israeli monetary unit

6. "Hasta la vista, ____"

7. Life story, for short

8. Fastener

9. Hero shop

10. "Do ____ others..."

11. Paddington Bear's homeland

12. Airport postings, acr.

15. Rutabaga cousin

20. Extra sweatshirt, e.g.

22. Long period of time

24. No-good

25. "We'll always have ____"

26. Hacienda brick

27. Mexican cuisine staple

29. "She doesn't ____ go here"

31. Party garb?

32. Not better
33. Homer's famous poem, with The

34. "Not quite my ____"

36. Donna or Lou

38. Techno dance party

42. Busybody, in Yiddish

45. "____ puts Baby in a corner"

49. Toothy fish

51. Alterations specialist

54. Mention something

56. "There's no ____ like home"

57. Contributes

58. Season to be jolly

59. Village People hit

60. Source of protein

61. Cab payment

62. Eye layer

63. #74 Across, sing.

64. Sea eagles

67. "Go ahead, make my ____"

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Somerville community art installation gives voice to immigrants

By Mina Rose Morales

Leddy Saenz sits quietly on a community picnic table in Somerville, Massachusetts, drawing, coloring, and communicating with a friend. On a peaceful Saturday morning of August 22, surrounded by trees and greenery, she points to her art installation not far away: a quipu.

The Somerville Community Growing Center installed Saenz’s “Somerville Quipus: The Stories of Padres Latinos” in June 2026. The ancient Incas used the quipu as a mathematical way to count harvests and population. Saenz, however, used it as a means for immigrants to tell their life stories despite the prevailing political climate. Initially, the center intended to run it until the end of August. Now, organizers have extended the display until the end

of September.

The quipu begins at the top with four knots representing the year they came to the U.S. The highest knots symbolize the thousands tier, followed in descending order by hundreds, tens, and single units, according to Saenz.

“They’re basically sharing when they arrived [in] the U.S. and then the different color ribbons are different milestones within their lives,” says Saenz. The ribbons also stand for the personal losses experienced in their past.

“We feel the gardens themselves are a creative experience,” says Lisa Brukilacchio, the Growing Center’s board vice president. The center welcomes art as a way for people to share their stories, histories, cultures, and food.

For Saenz, creating art is inseparable from her identity. Through

her work, Saenz explores hybrid identity, immigration, and community storytelling. When referring to hybrid identity, she explores her Peruvian culture and her American experience. Despite the many art pieces she has created, Saenz is proudest of the quipu.

“I would say Padres Latinos, the quipus, because it’s a community project. In terms of bringing the community together, it’s meaningful. Also, the time that we’re in right now politically,” says Saenz.

Since President Donald Trump’s second inauguration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has arrested more than 6,000 people in Massachusetts, according to figures from the Deportation Data Project. This rate is higher than the numbers recorded

Continued on page 15



Leddy Saenz next to her art installation, “Somerville Quipus: The Stories of Padres Latinos.” — Photo by Mina Rose Morales

Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Pork Fried Rice

I make this dish quite often. It’s usually at the end of the week when I want to clean out the refrigerator of leftover items, especially when I don’t quite have enough of an ingredient for a serving. It’s easy enough to add items you like, there are no rules!

- 1 Tablespoon Vegetable Oil
- 1 Teaspoon Minced Garlic
- 1 Teaspoon Minced Ginger
- 3 Cups Leftover Rice
- 2 Eggs Beaten
- 3 Scallions, Whites and Greens Separated
- 2 Tablespoons Tamari Low Sodium Soy Sauce
- 1/4 Cup Hoisin Sauce
- 1-1/2 Cups Frozen Peas and Carrots
- 4-6 oz. Leftover Pork Tenderloin, Cut into 1/4” Cubes
- 2 Teaspoons Toasted Sesame Oil

This dish comes together quickly.

Prepare all the ingredients before starting to cook. Once all the ingredients are ready to go, preheat a 12” fry pan over medium heat. Add the oil, garlic, and ginger to the pan and constantly stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the rice to the pan and break it all up and stir until even. Make a well in the middle of the rice and add the eggs, and stir continuously.

As the egg cooks, pull it into the rice stirring constantly. Add the scallion whites, soy sauce, and hoisin, combine well until all the rice soaks up the sauce. Add the pork, and the peas and carrots. Once all combined and heated through, about 2-3 minutes, turn off the heat and garnish with the scallion greens and drizzle the toasted sesame oil all around the top. 4-5 servings.

As a side note, this dish can be made vegetarian. I would add a variety of sautéed mushrooms as a substitute for the meat. To spice it up a bit, kimchi would make a great addition.



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

LEGAL NOTICES

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

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by **PEDRO F. JIMENEZ to CENTURY BANK AND TRUST COMPANY** dated August 19, 2013 and recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds (the "Registry") in Book 62509, Page 503 (the "Mortgage"), of which Mortgage the undersigned (the "Mortgagee") is the present holder, for breach of the conditions of the Mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction at 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 24, 2026 at the mortgaged premises located on or near Unit 12B, 12-14 Knowlton Street, Somerville, Massachusetts (the "Premises"), all and singular the premises described in the Mortgage, to wit: "Unit No. 12B of 12-14 Knowlton Street Condominium created by Master Deed dated June 6, 2006 and recorded on June 7, 2006 at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds in Book 47583, Page 375.

The Post Office address of the Condominium is: Unit #12B, 12-14 Knowlton Street, Somerville, MA 02145.

The Unit conveyed is laid out as shown on a plan filed with said Master Deed and to which is affixed a verified statement in the form provided in G.L.C. 183A, Section 9. It is subject to and with the benefit of the obligations, restrictions, rights and liabilities contained in G.L.C. 183A, the Master Deed and the By-Laws filed therewith.

The Condominium and each of the Units is intended for residential purposes and other uses permitted by the applicable Zoning Ordinances and as set forth in the Master Deed.

The undivided percentage interest of the Unit conveyed hereunder in the common areas and facilities is 33.33% and is conveyed together with and subject to easements of record, so far as same may by [sic.] in force and effect, including without limitation, an exclusion easement to use Two (2) parking spaces as designated from time to time by the Condominium Trustees.

Being all and the same premises conveyed to Pedro F. Jimenez by Deed of Cristiane Bastos date March 1, 2010 and recorded in Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds 54425, Page 575 [sic.]."

The description of the Premises contained in the Mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

The Premises, together with all improvements encumbered by the Mortgage, are to be sold and conveyed subject to (i) all leases, tenancies, occupancies, mortgages, restrictions, covenants, orders of conditions, easements, outstanding tax titles, municipal or other public taxes, assessments or liens, federal and state tax liens, other liens or claims in the nature of liens and existing encumbrances recorded prior to the Mortgage and/or otherwise having priority over the Mortgage, if there be any, (ii) the conditions, covenants, restrictions, easements, limitations, terms, lien rights and provisions and charges as set forth in (a) the Master Deed of 12-14 Knowlton Street Condominiums, as amended, and (b) the Declaration of Trust of 12-14 Knowlton Streets Condominiums dated June 6, 2006 and recorded with the Registry in Book 47583, Page 388, as amended; and (iii) the terms and provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 183A, as amended.

TERMS OF SALE: A non-refundable deposit of TEN THOUSAND (\$10,000.00) DOLLARS is to be paid by certified or bank cashier's check by the purchaser at the time and place of sale, the balance to be paid by certified or bank cashier's check and deed to be taken by purchaser within thirty (30) days of the sale at the offices of Seder & Chandler, LLP, 339 Main Street, Worcester, Massachusetts, attorneys for the Mortgagee.

The Mortgagee reserves the right to postpone the sale to a later date by public proclamation on the date and at the time and place appointed for the sale and to further postpone at any adjourned sale date by public proclamation on the date and at the time and place appointed for the adjourned sale.

In the event of the failure or inability of the purchaser to perform and to purchase the Premises in accordance herewith, the Mortgagee reserves the right (but is not obligated) to accept, subject to the Memorandum of Sale, the second highest bid for the Premises, without further advertisement and without further notice to other bidders or persons.

In the event that the Mortgagee offers the Premises to the second highest bidder and such person declines either to purchase the Premises at the second highest bid price or to sign the Memorandum of Sale, then the Mortgagee may elect (but is not obligated) to exercise the rights of the second highest bidder under this paragraph and to purchase the Premises at the second highest bid price, without further advertisement and without further notice to other bidders or persons.

Other terms to be announced at the time and place of sale.

EASTERN BANK, successor by merger to Century Bank and Trust Company Present holder of said Mortgage

Jennifer L. Conrad, Esq.
SEDER & CHANDLER, LLP
339 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(774)243-9958
Attorneys for the Mortgagee

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9/2/26, 9/9/26 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB #27-15

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department, Invites Sealed Bids For:

On-Call Repairs for Overhead Doors for Municipal Buildings

A bid package may be obtained online at:
<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/procurement-and-contracting-services>
or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at
<http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, September 9th, 2026**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2pm, Wednesday, September 23rd, 2026**. 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 email Logan Carroll lcarroll@somervillema.gov for more info.

Logan Carroll
Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3407

9/9/26 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
RFP # 27-14

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

The Green and Cool Somerville: Sustainable Sidewalks and Trees Project

A request for proposals (RFP) 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 **Wednesday, September 9, 2026**. Sealed proposals will be received at the above office until: **3:00 pm, Wednesday, September 23, 2026**. 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 email Felisa Gárate at fgarate@somervillema.gov for more information.

Felisa Gárate
Senior Procurement Manager
617-625-6600 x3406

9/9/26 The Somerville Times

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Ms. Cam's
Olio
Answers

From on page 8

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Ryan Gosling | 8. Spider-Man |
| 2. Santa's Little Helper | 9. Casablanca |
| 3. Florida | 10. Universal Serial Bus |
| 4. Tokyo | 11. I Love Lucy |
| 5. Jupiter | 12. Cancer, Pisces and Scorpio |
| 6. Cell | |
| 7. Venus | |

FOODIE CRAWL

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Tickets & Information:



September 15,
6:00-8:30pm

Rain Date: Wednesday
September 16

RESTAURANTS

Lotus Xpress, Rei Da Picanha, Rincón Mexicano, Taqueria Montecristo, Gauchao Brazilian, Vinny's Ristorante, La Cosecha, Los Paisanos, Caseys, Michette... and more!

A benefit for:



Congratulations to Claude and Margie Barsotti!

On September 4, 2026, Claude and Margie Barsotti were married at the Dilboy Post in Davis Square. Reverend David Lee officiated the ceremony. Adding a special touch to the celebration, the couple's beloved dog, Winnie, served as the flower dog and took part in the festivities. City Councilor Kristen Strezo joined the couple, along with many family members and friends, to celebrate their marriage. Family members provided a wonderful feast for the wedding guests, making the occasion especially warm and memorable. Somerville DJ Hank Davidson kept the reception lively with a wide range of music, providing something for everyone to enjoy as family and friends celebrated the newlyweds. Congratulations and best wishes to Claude and Margie for a lifetime of happiness together!

— Photos by Claudia Ferro





Somerville Fair Housing Commission *Question of the week*

Q: I've been impressed with what the Fair Housing Commission is doing. How do I get involved

A: Attend any meetings. They're usually on the fourth Thursday of the month, online. Call 617-625-6600 ext. 2569 for the login information.

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

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

To donate visit:

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

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BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



Why shouldn't you tell secrets in a cornfield?
Too many ears.

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Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Guardian Lion... — Photo by Denise Provost

On This Day in History

September 9

1776 – The term "United States" is adopted by the Continental Congress to be used instead of the "United Colonies."

1786 – George Washington calls for the abolition of slavery.

1850 – California, in the midst of a gold rush, enters the Union as the 31st state.

1886 – The Berne International Copyright Convention takes place.

1926 – The Radio Corporation of America creates the National Broadcasting Co.

1948 – Kim Il-sung declares the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

1956 – Elvis Presley makes his first appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

1969 – Canada's Official Languages Act takes effect, making French equal to English as a language within the nation's government.

1971 – Attica Prison Riot; the 4-day riot leaves 39 dead.

1993 – The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) officially recognizes Israel as a legitimate state.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

Local veterans, first responders, and community members are invited for a day of movement, fun, and connection. Enjoy fitness classes like **yoga and ZUMBA, chair massages, and activities for children**. Community partners will also be on-site with resources. Join us on **Saturday, September 12**, at **Lincoln Park** (290 Washington St.) from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The **Somerville Garden Club** is holding its annual **plant sale** on **Sunday, September 20**, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (rain or shine), at 331 Summer Street, Somerville. Discover the perfect plant to enliven your garden or windowsill at this popular yearly sale. Perennials for sun and shade, herbs, shrubs, groundcovers, plus a wide variety of house plants will be featured. Choose from hundreds of plants donated by Somerville Garden Club members and friends – there's something for everyone. Horticultural books, decorative containers, and garden tools will also be for sale. Experienced gardeners will be available to answer questions and assist with plant selections. Proceeds benefit the all-volunteer, non-profit Somerville Garden Club.

The **Brazilian Flag Raising ceremony** takes place on **September 10**. The **Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA)**, in proud partnership with the **Brazilian Women's Group**, invites community members to celebrate 204 years of Brazilian independence at the fourth annual Brazilian flag raising. Attendees will enjoy live music and performances of the national anthems of Brazil and the United States, a speaking program, and a ceremonial raising of the Brazilian flag. City Hall concourse (93 Highland Ave.) from 3 to 4 p.m.

Craft Vendors Wanted! Do you make or sell crafty items? The **Somerville Community Baptist Church** in Davis Square is holding a **"Spooky-Thankful-Merry Craft Fair,"** featuring items for Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, on **Saturday, October 17**, from 9 am to 2 pm. To reserve a table at the Fair, please mail your check for \$35 by October 3 to "Somerville Community Baptist Church," 31 College Ave., Somerville, MA 02144. Or you can bring your check or cash directly to the Church, any Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Somerville's **Nepali Street Food Festival** has been postponed. A new date will be shared at somerville-ma.gov/news. Eleven

food vendors are coming to the Somerville Nepali Street Food Festival. Enjoy your meal while watching live music and dance performances celebrating the best of Nepali culture. Learn more: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/events/nepali-food-fest/>

Somerville Arts and Culture invites community members to apply as panelists for the **2027 LCC Grant cycle**. Panelists review grant applications, learn how the local funding process works, and help support artists and cultural projects across our community. Whether you're an artist, educator, cultural organizer, or community member who cares about arts and culture, they'd love to hear from you. Apply by **October 1**. <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/lcc/lcc-panelist-application/>.

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>.

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/>.

SFD Collector's Playing Cards Are Here! September is **Leukemia and Lymphoma Awareness Month**, making it the perfect time to launch our once-every-two-years fundraiser benefiting the **Leukemia and Lymphoma Society**. Each custom deck features the 54 most senior firefighters currently in the Somerville Fire Department, including two jokers, and serves as a unique piece of SFD history. Decks are \$20 each, with a portion of every sale being donated to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society to support the fight against blood cancers. Quantities are limited. Contact Antonio Cicolini <https://www.facebook.com/antonio.cicolini> to reserve your deck while supplies last.

ESMS's biggest fundraising event of the year is almost here. **East Somerville's Foodie Crawl 2026, Tuesday, September 15** (rain date: September 16),

6 – 8:30 p.m. Join them for an evening of delicious food, local discoveries, live music, and community connection while supporting the work of **East Somerville Main Streets**. For more information, visit: <https://www.eastsomervillemainstreets.org/foodie-crawl-2026>.

The **Mission Church of Christ**, 130 Highland Ave., will be hosting a **free health fair** for the community on September 19, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. with many vendors. Contact **MC Allied Health & Professionals Group** at mcahpg130@gmail.com.

All **SPS Kindergarten students** can sign up for a **library card and get a FREE BOOK!** Just bring an adult photo ID and proof of residency to your nearby library branch, and your child will be able to borrow books, movies, CDs, and more. Visit any of the Somerville branches: Central - 79 Highland Ave, East - 115 Broadway, West - 40 College Ave

Raise a glass to Union Square as **What the Fluff? turns 21!** This year's theme – **Legally Fluff: A Toast to Union Square** – is an ode to 21 years of fluff-filled fun for all ages. Put on the party hats, blow up the balloons, grab a bubbly beverage, and celebrate Somerville's signature sweet spread in style. The **21st Annual What the Fluff? Festival, Saturday, September 19**, 1 – 5 p.m. in Union Square.

The **Powder House, Milk Row Cemetery and Prospect Hill Tower** will be open to the public on select dates and times **through October**, as part of **History on the Line**, a series of exhibitions and programs organized by the **Somerville Museum** and funded by the **Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism's MA250 initiative** and the **City of Somerville**. History unlocked: Drop-in chat on **select Thursdays**, 6 – 8 p.m., and **select Saturdays**, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. For dates and more information, visit <https://www.somervillemuseum.org/>.

The **Somerville Mobile Farmers Market** has returned for the 2026 season. The market brings fresh, affordable, local produce to four city locations **Thursdays through Saturdays** and runs **through October 31**. All produce is sourced from local farms and priced affordably to make healthy, fresh food accessible to all. The mobile market accepts cash, debit and credit cards, SNAP, Fresh Connect,

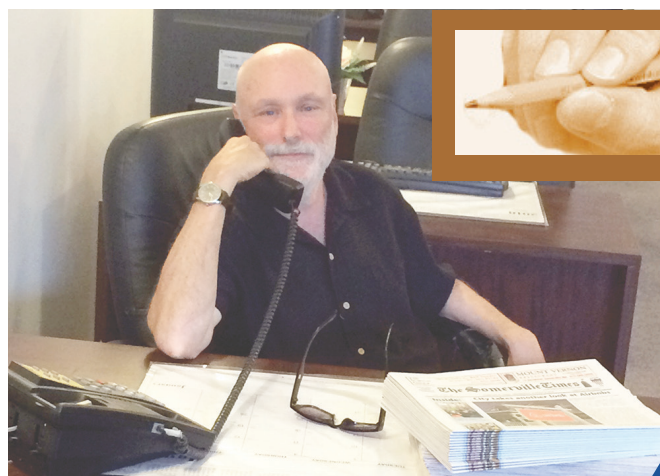
WIC Farmers Market Coupons, and Senior Farmers Market Coupons. For the full schedule, weekly produce updates, and more information about programs and events, visit the market's website at somervillemobilefarmers-market.org.

Assembly Row Farmers Market is being held at **375 Assembly Row**, Somerville, on **Fridays**, 3 – 7 p.m. The market will run **from June 12 to October 9**. Each week, you'll be able to find goods from nearly 30 New England-based farmers and producers. Expect a great mix of seasonal produce, baked goods, dairy and eggs, meats and seafood, honey, jams, specialty foods, and more. It's the perfect place to stock up for the weekend, discover local favorites, or simply enjoy a fresh Friday visit to Assembly Row. <https://marketspread.com/market/37299/assembly-row-farmers-market/>.

The **Davis Square Market** has opened for the 2026 Season. The market will run **every Wednesday** from 12 noon to 6 p.m., **through November 25**, at **44 Day St.**, Somerville. This long-running market features over two dozen Massachusetts farmers and food producers offering a vibrant selection of delicious produce, protein, baked goods, and ready-to-eat meals. The market accepts cash, credit/debit cards, WIC/Senior coupons, and EBT cards and offers a weekly \$15 SNAP Match. Visit <https://www.mass-farmersmarkets.org/davis>.

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

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



OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Poet Michael Minassian: Having a pint with Christopher Marlowe

I caught up with Michael Minassian about his latest poetry collection, *1,000 Pieces of Time*. From his website:

Michael Minassian, a graduate of Dumont High School, Fairleigh Dickinson University (BA), and California State University at Dominguez Hills (MA) was born in New York and has lived in New Jersey, California, Florida, North Carolina, and Texas. A professor of English for 30 years at Broward College in South Florida, he also taught in Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Jamaica, England, and served as a consultant in Spain and Ecuador.

Doug Holder: What was the spark that led you to become a poet?

Michael Minassian: There were two things, really, that sparked my interest in poetry. The first was my sophomore High School English class. The teacher, Mr. Meade, assigned the class to write a rhyming poem. He gave me an A and had me read the poem in front of the entire class. Throughout the term, he encouraged me to write more poetry. The second spark occurred in the senior year of HS when we took a class trip to Stratford, CT, to see Hamlet. It was my first time seeing a live performance of Shakespeare, and I was struck by the musicality of his language.

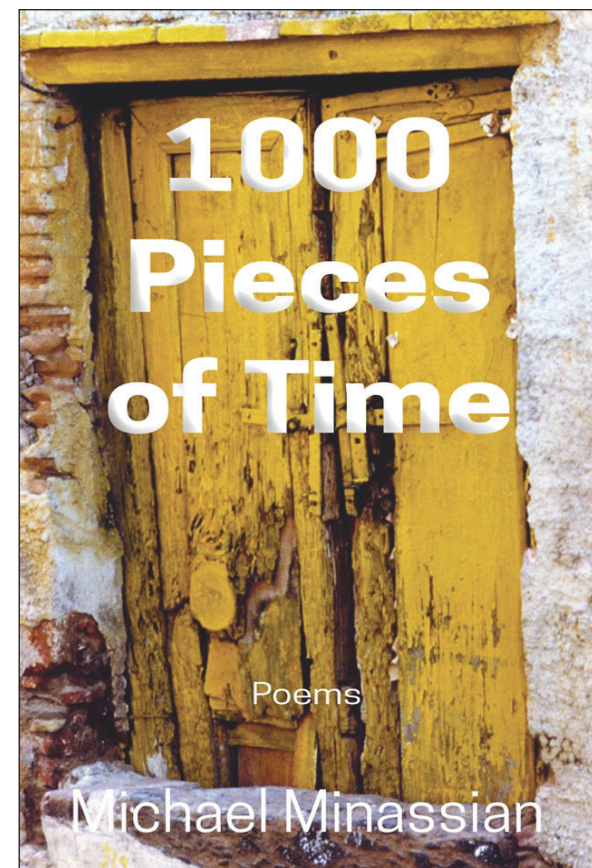
DH: You bring a wide range of historical and mythological figures in your poetry. I like your poem *Christopher Marlowe Buys Me a Drink*. Marlowe would be a good drinking partner as he was a rogue and a raconteur. How did you come up with this conceit?

MM: What better place to meet Marlowe than in a tavern or a bar? Marlowe is a fascinating character. Two months older than Shakespeare, he was an influence on Elizabethan theatre, including Shakespeare, and is credited with refining the use of blank verse. Suspected of being a spy for Queen Elizabeth, accused and arrested for heresy (for being an atheist), Marlowe was allegedly killed in a brawl over a bill in a tavern in Deptford on the South Bank of the Thames. Here is the poem:

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE BUYS ME A DRINK

At first, I don't recognize
the person sitting
on the next bar stool.

His hat pulled down low
over his forehead,
I hear him order an ale
in a clipped British accent,
& realize his clothing
has a distinct



16th century look.

Christopher Marlowe? I ask.

Call me Kit, he replies,
fingering his wispy moustache,
and winking at me
with his one good eye.

We talk for a while
about theatre, exotic birds,
and the British monarchy,
but he makes no mention
of Ben Jonson or Shakespeare.

When I get up to leave,
he offers to buy me a drink.
These vagabond seasons
are out of balance,
he complains,
and somehow, I know
just what he means,
our hearts full,
dense as time.

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DH: In *Darwin's Beard* you bring facial hair to the high holy. The white beard grows with the breadth of the great man's experience. The *Continued on page 15*

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Michael Todd Steffen helps coordinate The Hastings Room Reading Series and frequently publishes articles about new and established poets on the Boston Area Small Press, and Poetry Scene website. His poems have appeared recently in *The Exacting Clam*, *Ibbetson Street*, *The Red Letters* and *spoKe*. Boris Dralyuk (managing editor for *Nimrod Journal*) writes, I have read [Steffen's] poems with enormous satisfaction. His lines are supple and wear their unmistakable wisdom lightly.



Sunday Evening

Even the criminal in me feels
unwanted on a Sunday evening
with the neighbors and their families
circling in the houses' windows.

And it's not the pizza they're eating
in the blue light around the television.
I only want to crouch there with them,
small and blind in the service of an ideal

which would lose its beauty the moment
it were spoken. That's why we hate
time for bed. Why mom turns her head
to kiss us goodnight. Why I'm here instead.

— Michael Todd Steffen

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

Somerville community art installation gives voice to immigrants

CONT. FROM PG 9

during the last months of former President Joe Biden’s administration.

Saenz asked Yumi Izuyama if she could display her art installation at the Festa Junina, a traditional Brazilian harvest festival that honors rural culture. Saenz wanted the last part of her project to be a celebration at the Festa. The center hosted the festival on June 13, 2026. This year’s theme was the Three Sisters, with the intent to celebrate the Americas—North, Central, and South America.

“[The] Festa Junina has a history in Brazil of resistance to oppression,” says Izuyama, the event’s lead organizer.

The quipu has received a positive reaction from most who come into the community garden. It even glows at night.

“What I’ve seen is especially children and youth of different ages interacting physically with the art. The art can be touched. It has texture to it. It has movement in the wind,” says Paula Jordan, the site and children in nature initiative coordinator.

“When it’s gone, it’s going to be missed,” says Jordan.

The quipu was a highly sophisticated way the Inca Empire used to track data. Saenz’s artistic interpretation reclaims this system as a tool for immigrants to record their stories. In a period where records are used to monitor displaced people, this project empowers them to use this ancient data tracker to say: I’m here. I’m human. This is my story.

Off The Shelf

CONT. FROM PG 14

beard becomes a metaphor for the life of a man. What is your take on this?

MM: Darwin’s influence on science and evolution is huge, and his beard grows along with his reputation. Since God is often depicted with a white beard (think Michelangelo’s “Creation of Adam”) and because of the way the theory of evolution is often pitted against creationism, I felt the beard was the best metaphor to talk about Darwin’s life. Since he lived and worked in the 19th Century, the pressures on him (and his family) must have been enormous, especially from the Church of England.

DH: You seem to have a lot of fun with your poetry. Billy Collins thought, when he was starting out, that all poets had to be miserable. Do you think that is a popular misconception?

MM: Yes, the idea that poets (and other writers) have to be miserable is a popular misconception. The stereotype of the depressed and derelict artist persists in popular culture. Poe is often used as an example of the poet with a dark cloud over his head. It’s true that he abused alcohol, but stories of his drug use are greatly exaggerated.

It is true that many poets have died by suicide (Berryman, Sexton, Plath, Hemingway, Woolf, for example) so perhaps that’s where some of this misconception comes from, but they are in the minority.

I like to include humor in my poems. I think Collins, Charles Simic, and many other poets do the same. And I think it is great fun to take historical, mythical, or literary characters from the past and drop them into the 21st Century to see how they react and how others react to them.

DH: Why should we read this book?

MM: Using plain and direct language, *1000 Pieces of Time* explores time’s myriad possibilities as a vast array of characters come to terms with the past and the future. The poems are entertaining and designed to make the reader think about time itself. What is time? Does the past matter? How can we write our own personal narratives? Many of the poems have appeared online and in print in, among other publications, *Baltimore Review*, *Comstock Review*, *Glimpse*, *Slant*, *The Somerville Times*, *Third Wednesday*, and *Verse-Virtual*. My hope is that anyone can read these poems and come away richer for the experience.

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