Somerville's original independent newspaper

# The Somerville Times

www.thesomervilletimes.com

VOL. 12 NO. 1 | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2024 | SOMERVILLE, MASS.

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# 2023: The year in review

**By The Times Staff**

The past year was an eventful one for many in the city, including further recovery by local businesses after the major threat posed by COVID-19 had been substantially quelled and life moved forward more normally as the weeks and months passed.

Somerville's new mayor, Katjana Ballantyne, settled in her job for another year as the city's chief administrator and held the reins steadily as she took on the issues of interest for the city.

Redevelopment and new construction projects played an important role in shaping events throughout 2023. The Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) reviewed the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) draft to go forward with the redevelopment plans for 90 Washington Street at its December 21, 2022 meeting. Through the RFQ process, interested developers were asked to share *Continued on page 13*

# Museo Inmigrante: Stories of Resilience from Somerville's Padres Latinos

The photographic exhibit, *Museo Inmigrante: Stories of Resilience from Somerville's Padres Latinos*, will be on display at the Somerville Museum from Thursday, January 11, to Thursday, January 18.

Padres Latinos is a mutual aid group of more than 230 Spanish and Portuguese-speaking parents with children in the Somerville Public Schools (SPS).

The group formed during the COVID-19 pandemic to advocate for SPS Latino students and reduce or eliminate the achievement gap between Latino students and their peers. The group also strengthens its community by sharing information about food, education, cultural opportunities, and housing resources.

For this exhibit, Padres Latinos partnered with award-winning photographers Mario Quiroz and Iaritza Menjivar to explore stories *Continued on page 3*

***Museo Inmigrante: Stories of Resilience from Somerville's Padres Latinos*** **will be the featured exhibition at the Somerville Museum January 11–18.**

# NEWSTALK

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

The staff of ***The Somerville Times*** would like to wish everyone a **very happy New Year**. May the year to come bring one and all good health and prosperity and continue through to the following years to come.

**********

Congratulations to all our **local public servants** who were sworn in for new or additional terms this week. Let's wish all of them the best and hope that they serve our interests as fairly and effectively as possible.

**********

**Tonight, January 3**, show off your talents and meet members of your community. **Open Mic night** at the **West Branch Library**, 40 College Ave. Registration is required for both viewers and performers. To register, go to https://tinyurl.com/janmic.

**********

As the holiday season winds down, a reminder that **Christmas tree pick up** began **Tuesday, January 2**. Trees can be placed curbside on your regular trash day after removing all decorations. Do not put trees in a plastic bag. Constituents should contact 311 (617-666-3311) if their tree has been out for over two weeks.

**********

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy birthday to a great guy, **Harry Agritha**. We wish him the very best on this his birthday week. Happy birthday to **Sophia Carafotes**. We wish her the very best. We hope she enjoys her day. *Continued on page 5*

The Somerville Times

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*The Somerville Times is published every Wednesday*

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# Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of January 3 – January 9 as provided by the National Weather Service

| DAY | CONDITIONS | HIGH/LOW | PRECIPITATION | HUMIDITY | WIND |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Wednesday** *January 3* | Partly Cloudy | 45°/30° | 5% | 2% | WNW 10 mph |
| **Thursday** *January 4* | Cloudy | 42°/22° | 7% | 3% | NW 13 mph |
| **Friday** *January 5* | Sunny | 36°/25° | 1% | 0% | NW 11 mph |
| **Saturday** *January 6* | Cloudy | 35°/32° | 6% | 2% | N 7 mph |
| **Sunday** *January 7* | Snow | 34°/24° | 69% | 57% | NNE 13 mph |
| **Monday** *January 8* | Sunny | 36°/25° | 12% | 5% | NW 7 mph |
| **Tuesday** *January 9* | Rain | 43°/40° | 53% | 41% | SE 11 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: *'The Heart Sellers' – A play by Lloyd Suh*

**Renata Brailovsky** says:

lUnfortunately child only understand 1/2 of what was being said. The play was very interesting and concerns all immigrants. Being a white Jewish immigrant having been transplanted twice it was easy to feel their loneliness. Please have the actresses speak slower so the audience does not have to guess what they are saying.

### Response to: *Somerville releases strategic study to help small businesses avoid commercial displacement*

**JM** says:

With the cutback in available parking around local businesses, it makes it much more difficult for residents and former residents to support these businesses.

### Response to: *Somerville American with Disabilities Act Transition Plan Task Force seeks members*

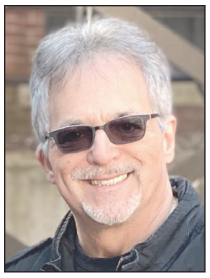
**Disgusted** says:

This is very interesting, considering I had a plied for a residential seat on the committee back in the summer time when I sent that letter. I had an interview in November and two days before Thanksgiving, I was told they would not forward my application. They said they only had two seats on the commission at that time, and would not explain to me why I was declined or whether or not people with my disclosed mental health challenges Were appropriately represented. So how can there be openings when I was told there were only two and that I don't know whether or not people with certain mental health conditions which are covered under the ADA are represented fully on this commission? It reeks of discrimination, if you ask me. I'm currently trying to follow it up with the Massachusetts disability office is to see what I can do next about this.

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

## Life in the Massachusetts VILLE The Spirit of America by Jimmy Del Ponte

# Winter woes



Do you think all those plastic sticks will survive a snow storm with lots of plowing? I asked my Somerville social network friends to chime in with their thoughts on the subject. Each quote is a different person.

"After the first major snowstorm, the city will look normal again no more plastic sticks, till the administration spends about 100 thousand to replace them all."

"The city thinks it is made of money. Each of those poles are $40. and they replace them making the producer of them a fortune. Probably a friend or family of the current administration. Spend the money on the potholes instead of these useless poles."

"The question should be, "Do you really think plow drivers care about those plastic strips?"

"And, if you hit those plastic poles, they will certainly cause damage to your car!"

"I hope not! And what about the stupid speed "humps"? How do the plows get over those?" (they will have to go very slowly)

"I believe the present, some of all administration is trying to make it impossible to drive around the city. Between the speed bumps, which are ridiculous and the white poles everywhere, and the fact that Broadway is now one lane that takes forever to get through."

"They are trying to stop cars from driving. Well, I'm an old lady. I can't do anything but drive. I certainly can't ride a bicycle."

Let's hope we have a mild winter and won't have to worry about snowplows wiping out the plastic sticks.

# Museo Inmigrante CONT. FROM PG 1

from its members about immigration, home, family, memory, community, and finding purpose. Padres Latinos invites all Somerville residents and visitors across the region to the exhibition.

Many thanks to Mass Humanities, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and The Leonian Foundation for their support. For more information about Padres Latinos, please visit www.padreslatinossps.org.

Admission: $5 for exhibition admission; free to Museum members unless otherwise specified; free to visitors 12 years of age or younger

PARKING: There is no dedicated parking lot or parking spots at the Somerville Museum. Visitor parking is availble on Westwood Road, Central Street, and Highland Ave. If you hold a Somerville resident parking permit please park on nearby side streets. Public transportation is also available.

ACCESSIBILITY: The Somerville Museum is now ADA compliant. For more information contact us at info@somervillemuseum.org.

The Somerville Museum, One Westwood Road, Somerville, MA 02143. Exhibition times: 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.


## ANNOUNCEMENT

**315 Broadway, in conjunction with Micozzi Management**
are pleased to announce an

**Affordable Rental Open Waitlist Opportunity**

**The application period for a two-bedroom (2BR) Affordable Rental Waitlist for households earning up to 50% Area Media Income (AMI) and a two-bedroom (2BR) Affordable Rental Waitlist for households earning up to 80% AMI will begin on 12/11/2023 at 2pm and end on 1/10/2024 at 2pm.**

**The Household size must be a minimum of 2 people.**

**315 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145**

*Located in the Winter Hill neighborhood of Somerville, the units offer open- concept floor plans and modern features. Parking is available based on availability and for an additional fee.*

***Eligible households of 2 or more people whose income does not exceed the following:***

**Maximum Annual Income 2BR 50% AMI**

| 50% AMI | 2 Persons | 3 Persons | 4 Persons |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income | $59,400 | $66,800 | $72,300 |

**Maximum Annual Income 2BR 80% AMI**

| 80% AMI | 2 Persons | 3 Persons | 4 Persons |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income | $94,800 | $196,650 | $118,450 |

***Eligibility Requirements***

- The rental unit must be used as the renters' primary residence.
- Income and residency restrictions will apply throughout tenancy. Income eligibility will be reviewed annually.
- Head of households claiming full-time student status are not eligible.
- Total Household Liquid Assets cannot exceed $75,000

**Applications will be available beginning on 12/11/2023 at 2pm.**
To obtain an application, please contact **Micozzi Management** and reference **"315 Broadway 50%"** or **"315 Broadway 80%"**
**Telephone: 617-254-5576 ex 112** or **email:** eburkart@micozzimanagement.com

**Completed applications** must be submitted to Micozzi Management at eburkart@micozzimanagement.com
or mailed to **159 Cambridge Street, Suite 2, Allston, MA 02134 by 1/10/2024 at 2pm.**

Applications received after the deadline will not be added to the waitlist. All qualified applications will be ranked by date and time received. All mailed applications will receive a 7-day grace period.

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

# Somerville Police Department Crime log December 19–25

**Assault**

On 12/19/23 at approximately 10:03 p.m., Somerville Police responded to Grant St. for report of a past assault. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated earlier in the day, he was involved in an altercation with a juvenile male. During the altercation, the juvenile punched the victim in the face.

**Commercial Breaking and Entering**

On 12/21/23 at approximately 5:11 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a business on Medford St. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with an employee who stated when he arrived for work, he observed the glass front door was broken and the alarm system was activated. He then observed cash was missing from the safe.

**Arrest**

On 12/20/23 at approximately 12:09 p.m., Somerville Police responded to Stone Ave. for report of a past assault. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he was involved in a traffic altercation with a male party. During the altercation, the male party exited his vehicle and brandished a knife at the victim. The victim provided officers with a description of the suspect vehicle and it was located shortly after. The male suspect was then placed under arrest.

**Assault**

On 12/25/23 at approximately 11:00 p.m., Somerville Police responded to Artisan Way for report of a past assault. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the Assembly Security officers who stated an altercation broke out in the garage involving multiple individuals. During the altercation, one of the individuals was struck in the face.

**Assault**

On 12/24/23 at approximately 3:47 p.m., Somerville Police responded to Middlesex Ave. for report of a past assault. Upon arrival, officers located a female victim who was bleeding heavily. She stated that while walking to her car, a male party rode by her on a bike and punched her in the face.

**Residential Breaking and Entering**

On 12/21/23 at approximately 10:58 p.m., Somerville Police responded to an apartment complex on Great River Rd. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the reporting party who stated earlier in the day, she went to check on her step-fathers apartment and she heard multiple people inside. She then left the area. Officers entered the apartment and observed it in disarray and damaged furniture.

**Residential Breaking and Entering**

On 12/26/23 at approximately 8:33 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Glen St. for report of an open door. Upon arrival, officers entered the apartment and observed the house in disarray. Entry was believed to have been made via the window.

**Residential Breaking and Entering**

On 12/21/23 at approximately 2:02 p.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Beacon St. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he was sleeping then heard a noise coming from his roommate's room. He checked on the room and observed a male party going through his roommate's belongings. The male then fled out of the house. Nothing was reported missing.

**Assault**

On 12/24/23 at approximately 10:49 a.m., Somerville Police responded to Davis Sq. for report of a past assault. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he was leaving the Somerville Theatre and was approached by a male party asking him for money. The victim stated he didn't have any and the male party punched him causing him to suffer a concussion.

**Residential Breaking and Entering**

On 12/22/23 at approximately 11:18 p.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Holland St. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he was in his room and heard a loud sound in the hallway. A male party then broke his bedroom door and the victim yelled at him. The suspect then fled out of the house. Nothing was reported missing.

**Commercial Breaking and Entering**

On 12/21/23 at approximately 6:19 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a business on Broadway for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke the owner who stated when he arrived for work, he observed a dark colored Jeep nearby take off at a high rate of speed. He then entered the business and observed several items out of place and the rear door left open. Nothing was reported missing.

**Commercial Breaking and Entering**

On 12/23/23 at approximately 11:34 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a business on Webster Ave. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with an employee who stated when she arrived for work, she observed the front door was forced open. A stack of blank business checks was reported missing.

**Commercial Breaking and Entering**

On 12/22/23 at approximately 10:47 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a business on Bow St. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with an employee who stated someone broke in through the back door and stole numerous items as well as cash.

**Commercial Breaking and Entering**

On 12/26/23 at approximately 6:31 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a business on Holland St. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers observed the glass front door was shattered with a rock. Numerous items and cash were reported stolen.

**Arrest**

On 12/22/23 at approximately 9:45 a.m., Somerville Police responded to an apartment complex on Revolution Dr. for an unwanted. Upon arrival, officers were informed by staff that a male party broke into a vacant apartment and was living there. Officers observed the suspect who began to flee on Grand Union Blvd. After a brief pursuit, officers apprehended the suspect and he was placed under arrest.

**Other Crimes:** Car breaks; 3 package thefts; 1 MV vandalism; 2 bike thefts; 1 vandalism; 1 MV theft.

# COMMENTARY

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark

Have a happy and healthy New Year, Somerville!

## Our View Of The Times

Looking back on the year just passed is an interesting thing to do. Sometimes sobering, at other times amusing, yet always somewhat inspiring if one considers what has been accomplished and what else is left to be done.

The advance of progress and renewal marches on as we in turn continue the pursuit of our individual hope and dreams.

Observing and participating in the machinations of political goings on, even at the lowest level, is something of a civic duty that we all should share a sense of responsibility for. It's what makes democracy great, that every man and woman can make a difference in what transpires, mainly when they express their viewpoints at the polls.

Looking ahead to what may come in 2024, we can't help but feel optimistic about the days to come. It will take some hard work and serious planning, but an improving economy is within sight, as is better civic infrastructure, community resources, and a plethora of other important quality of life issues.

As always, it's up to us to push things in the right direction. To send the proper signals to our city officials. To back them up when they get it right, and to call them on it when they seem to go astray. They have their duties and we have ours. Let each one carry on in the best fashion possible.

It is the way of our community. We enjoy a uniquely favorable reputation as those who can.

We wish each and every one of our readers the best in the year to come. May peace, prosperity, and good health bless you and yours.

## Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Happy Birthday to **Kevin O'Donovan**. We wish him a great birthday. Happy birthday to everyone here and from the city who is celebrating this week. We wish all our Facebook friends, such as **Jon Curtis, Jimmy Deoliveira, Marie Miele, Matthew Martino, Gale Mahan, Steven Anthony, George Allen** and **Linda M. Alves** 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.

**********

The mayor's **Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development** is working to update the city's **Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)**. This plan will guide the next seven years of city work on parks, sports fields, open space, conservation land, and recreational programming, and it needs your input. Attend an upcoming in-person or virtual community meeting to share your thoughts on open space. First up is on **Wednesday, January 10**, at **Somerville Public Library West Branch** (40 College Ave.) from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Give feedback now through the OSRP survey or visit the project page https://voice.somervillema.gov/open-space-and-recreation-plan-update to learn more.

**********

Registration for **Winter Swim Lessons** will begin on **January 8** at 10:00 a.m. for Somerville residents and on **January 15** at 10:00 a.m. for non-Somerville residents. For more information contact the **Assistant Pool Manager**: agalanek@somervillema.gov.

**********

On **Tuesday, January 9**, at 6:30 p.m., at **Arts at the Armory**, 191 Highland Ave, company members from **Music From the Sole** will lead a community music (body percussion) and movement workshop. Music From The Sole is a tap dance and live music company celebrating tap's connections to Afro Brazilian music and dance, and other influences across the African Diaspora, with connections to house, samba, Brazilian funk and jazz. No dance experience required. Open to all ages, and Admission is free (no tap shoes, sneakers fine). Pre-registration required, register here: https://donate2.app/9B67Xn

**********

Did you get a **new device** that you're not sure how to use? Book a free one-on-one tech appointment with a **skilled librarian** who can help. To book an appointment or ask any questions, email spltech@somervillema.gov or call the **Central reference desk** at (617) 623-5000 x2955.

*Continued on page 15*

# FUN & GAMES

## Ms. Cam's Olio #904

**Olio** - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

1. When did the New Year's Eve Ball first drop in Times Square?

2. What materials made up the first-ever Times Square New Year's Eve Ball?

3. Which animal can be seen on the Porsche logo?

4. Who starred in *Ally McBeal*?

5. In which country was ice hockey invented?

6. What is Maxwell Coffee named after?

7. What college did Reese Witherspoon attend in the movie *Legally Blonde*?

8. Where were the first winter Olympics held?

9. What is the sum of all numbers in a roulette wheel?

10. Who named the Pacific Ocean?

11. Which TV show was set at the Sterling Cooper advertising agency?

12. Which bird's nest is known as an aerie?

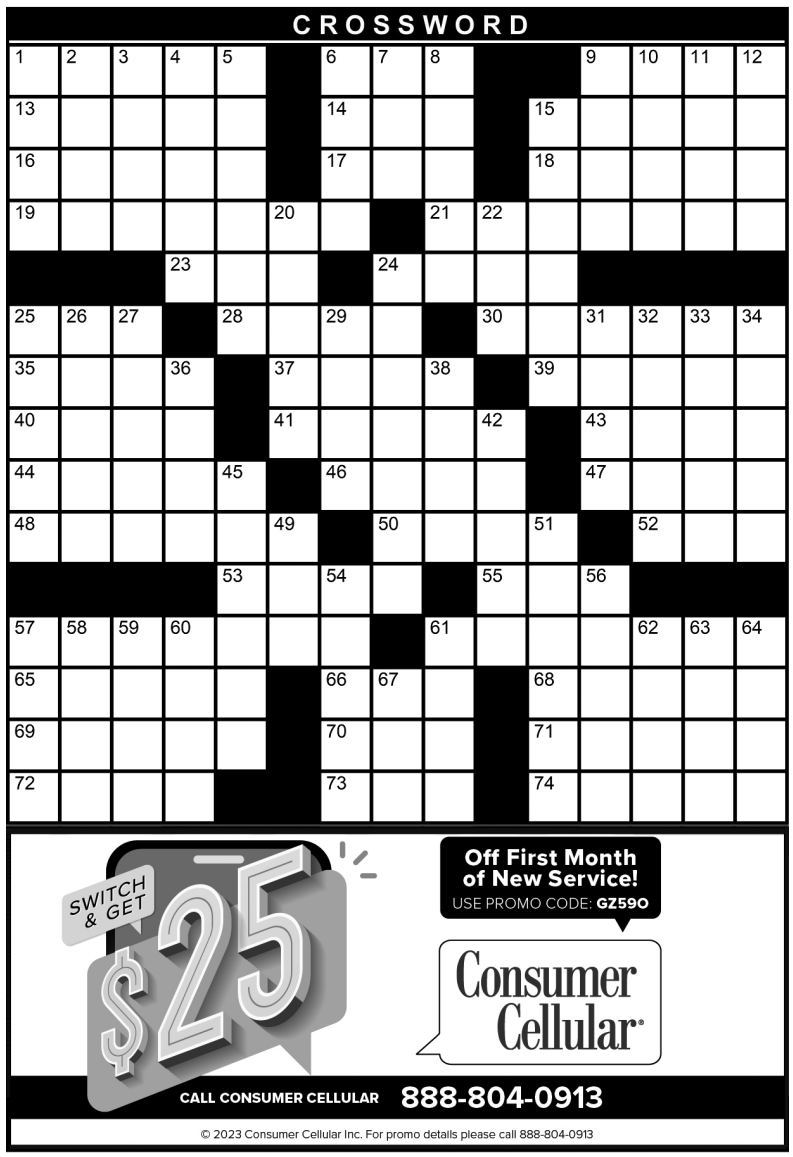
*Answers on page 15*

## The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. The average person falls asleep in seven minutes.
2. The most common name in the world is Mohammed.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

*WINTER FUN*







© StatePoint Media

**ACROSS**

1. Mulligatawny and gazpacho, e.g.
6. Half of NFL
9. "Oscar" of sports
13. Relating to sight
14. Sargasso ____
15. Dugout glider
16. Not fresh
17. First H in HRH
18. Face-to-face exams
19. Ice fishing shelter
21. "Polar" activity
23. Type of Christmas tree
24. Diagonal
25. Tax return professional, acr.
28. Kind of cola
30. Diaphragm spasm
35. Scepters' partners
37. Of two minds
39. ____ Jean Baker
40. Rabbit's winter one is white
41. Sheik's bevy?
43. Type of dam
44. Butcher's refuse
46. Etna's emission
47. Secret disclosure
48. Stellar
50. Chap or fella
52. Diabetic ketoacidosis, acr.
53. A or O, to blood
55. Unit of electrical resistance
57. Finger warmers
60. Certain sleigh ride
63. Courtroom excuse
64. Gobbled up
66. Train runners
68. Land of taekwondo
69. "Caroline in the City" Thompson
70. Relating to Scandinavia
71. Not home
72. Last winter mo.
73. Klondike river

**DOWN**

1. Acronym in a bottle
2. Chooses
3. Colorado's neighbor
4. a.k.a. pilau
5. Like a longer route?
6. Grayish
7. ATM extra
8. Carpus, pl.
9. Bring home the bacon
10. Unforeseen obstacle
11. Skier's aid
12. Da or oui
15. Jenny McCarthy to Melissa McCarthy
20. Engagement, archaic
22. ____-di-dah
24. Onslaught
25. Warming drink
26. Faculty members, for short
27. Behind a stern
29. Frosty's eyes
31. Type of hood
32. Apollo of "Rocky"
33. Inuit skin boat
34. *a.k.a. anorak
36. *Betelgeuse, e.g.
38. Snow, in Italy
42. Lord's estate
45. Lithuania's neighbor
49. NaOH
51. Like a rosebush
54. Church song
56. Meow, alt. sp.
57. ___-in-the-dark
58. Milano moolah
59. Toe the line
60. Product of lacrimation
61. Michael Douglas' dad
62. "The Sun ____ Rises"
63. What clues #4 and #34 Down have in common
65. High affair
67. Barack Obama, pre-pres.

*Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.*

## Soulution to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

# MBTA changes in January

Following the successful completion of recent work along the Green Line D branch, the MBTA announced service changes in January on the Green Line to give MBTA riders a smoother, faster, more reliable trip.

Here are local changes, for a complete list of changes visit MBTA.com:

Green Line trains on both Green Line Extension (GLX) branches between North Station and Union Square Station as well as Medford/Tufts station will be suspended during the periods listed below. This service change is in place while crews from GLXC, the design-build contractor, continue critical track work that alleviates current tight gauge conditions.

From start to end of service during the weekend of January 6-7;

- Beginning at approximately 8:45 p.m. through the end of service every day from January 8-11;
- Beginning at approximately 8:45 p.m. through the end of service every day from January 16-18;
- From start to end of service during the weekend of January 20-21;
- Beginning at approximately 8:45 p.m. through the end of service every day from January 22-25.
- Accessible shuttle bus service will replace trains between North Station and Medford/Tufts station.

Train service between Lechmere and Union Square Stations will be suspended. Green Line Union Square branch riders are instead encouraged to consider alternative routes, including the 86, 91, and CT2 bus routes between Union Square and East Somerville Station on the Medford Branch. These bus routes also travel to Sullivan Square Station on the Orange Line. In addition, Route 87 travels between Union Square and Lechmere Station.

During this service change and through close collaboration with the MBTA, MassDOT will also minimize impacts to the public by performing bridge inspection work during this outage in service.

Riders can find more information on service changes through in-station signage, in-station public announcements, and at mbta.com/alerts. Transit Ambassadors and MBTA staff will be available on-site to offer information and assistance during these service changes. Riders are encouraged to subscribe to T-Alerts (https://www.mbta.com/alerts/subway) or to follow the MBTA on X (the site formerly known as Twitter) @MBTA for up-to-date service information.

The MBTA previously announced service changes in December. More information is available at https://www.mbta.com/news/2023-11-16/december-service-changes-will-allow-crews-continue-improvement-work-across-mbta.

The MBTA apologizes for the inconvenience of these scheduled service changes and appreciates the understanding and patience of riders as this critical and necessary work to maintain, upgrade, and modernize the system takes place.

*— MBTA*

# Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO

## Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

This is a perfect dinner for a meatless Monday or any other day. This hearty and filling dish is so satisfying that you'll find yourself wanting to add it to your meal rotation. I make it every other week. It hits all the taste buds. It's sweet, it's savory, it's smoky, and has a hint of heat. It also has great texture from the vegetables and beans along with the creamy sauce.

4 sweet potatoes (medium sized)
1 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 red onion, small diced
1 celery Stalk, small diced
1 carrot, small diced
1/2 jalapeño, finely minced, or pinch of cayenne pepper
2 garlic cloves, finely minced
1 15.5 oz. can black beans, drained and rinsed
Salt and pepper

1/2 cup raw cashews
1 lemon zested and juiced
2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
1-1/2 teaspoons smoked paprika
1 teaspoon yellow mustard
Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 400°. Soak the cashews in water, enough to completely cover them and set aside. Thoroughly wash the sweet potatoes and prick with a fork before placing in the oven. They will take about an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes to roast.

In a sauté pan, add the olive oil, onion, celery, carrot, jalapeño, along with a pinch of salt and pepper. Cook vegetables for about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for about 30 seconds, then add the black beans and cook for an additional 10-15 minutes. Taste and add more salt and pepper if needed. Set aside.

Once the sweet potatoes are fully cooked and cool enough to handle, cut in half, and scoop out, leaving about 1/2" of the potato around the bottom and edges. Add the scooped sweet potato to a blender along with the cashews and liquid, zest and juice of the lemon, nutritional yeast, paprika, and mustard. Blend until smooth. You may have to add additional water to thin it out a little, but it should be thick and pourable.

Taste and season with salt and pepper. Now scoop the bean and vegetable filling evenly into the eight halves of the sweet potatoes, 2 per serving. Now pour the sauce over the sweet pota-toes and enjoy!

Makes 4 servings.

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*Visit Dorothy's website at http://ddimarzo2002.wix.com/thymethief.*

The Somerville Times

# ‘Grand Union’ flag-raising ceremony 2024

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the Somerville Museum kicked off the New Year on Monday, January 1, with a ceremony for the anniversary of the "Grand Union" flag-raising ceremony at Prospect Hill Park. Members of the public were invited to participate and were encouraged to wear traditional colonial clothing. The Tower was open briefly to the public following the ceremony.

Photos on this page by Bobbie Toner

Photos on this page by Jeanine Farley

# LEGAL NOTICES

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

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**
**PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT**
**INVITATION FOR BIDS**
**IFB #24-32**

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

**Dilboy Auxiliary Field Improvements**

A bid package may be obtained online at https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress on or after: **Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **2:00 pm, Thursday, January 18th, 2024**. 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 Sonia Castro scastro@somervillema.gov for more information.

**Sonia Castro**
**Procurement Manager**
**617-625-6600 x3407**

1/3/24 The Somerville Times

**ANNUAL MEETING LEGAL NOTICE**

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF MIDDLESEX FEDERAL M.H.C. The Annual Meeting of Middlesex Federal M.H.C will be held on **Wednesday, January 17, 2024** at 3:30 PM at its home office; One College Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts, for the purpose of electing Directors and for the transaction of any other business that may legally come before the meeting. Daniel F. Wiseman, Secretary.

1/3/24 The Somerville Times

**City of Somerville**
**PLANNING BOARD**
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

The **Somerville Planning Board (PB)** will hold a virtual public hearing on **Thursday, January 18, 2024**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting of the Planning Board will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available by using the registration link once the meeting has concluded.

**TO USE A COMPUTER**

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_d7JJTsniSTW8kl6-NE8LLw
Webinar ID: 861 4272 6802

**TO CALL IN**

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

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

**620 Broadway** — 620 Broadway, LLC proposes to establish a Cannabis Retail Sales use in the Commercial Core 5 (CC-5) district, which requires a Special Permit.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions. Interested persons may provide comments to the Planning Board at the hearing or by submitting written comments by mail to Planning & Zoning Division, 3rd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143; or by email to planning@somervillema.gov.

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**NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS**
**OF**
**WINTER HILL BANK, FSB**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Members of the Winter Hill Bank, FSB will be held at its office located at 337 Broadway, Somerville, Massachusetts, on the 17th day of January, 2024 at the hour of 2:00 P.M. of said day. The business to be taken up at said Annual Meeting shall be;

(1) Considering and voting upon approval of the minutes of the last members' meeting;

(2) Considering and voting upon reports of Officers and Committees of the Bank;

(3) Considering and acting upon ratifications of the acts of the Directors and Officers of the Bank;

(4) Election of Directors to fill the offices of the terms of which are then expiring; and

(5) New business.

Dated this 2nd day of January, 2024 at Somerville, Massachusetts.

*Per Order of the Board of Directors*

Marie A. Danieli
Corporate Secretary

1/3/24 The Somerville Times

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**
**LICENSING COMMISSION**

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s):

Application of an All Forms Alcohol License, Common Victualer, Entertainment by Devices & Performers Indoors, and a Sunday Hours License to 181 Bonfire Corporation d/b/a Bonfire Boston at 282 McGrath Highway.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YTYR3hjYQw6e7xcsBtG2bQ You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
3. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may send written comments by US mail to the Executive Secretary at 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143, or by email to licensing@somervillema.gov. 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 Commission.

**THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.**

**ANDREA R. TORRES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**
**LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV**

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**
**LICENSING COMMISSION**

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s):

Application of an All Forms Alcohol License, Common Victualer, Entertainment by Devices Indoors and a Sunday Hours License for Tulum Mexican Cuisine Co. d/b/a Tulum Mexican Cuisine, 3 Washington Street.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YTYR3hjYQw6e7xcsBtG2bQ You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**
**LICENSING COMMISSION**

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s):

Application of an All Forms Alcohol License, Common Victualer, Entertainment by Devices and Performers Indoors, and a Sunday Hours License to Duck Duck Goofs LLC d/b/a Duck Duck Comedy Show at 434 McGrath Highway.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YTYR3hjYQw6e7xcsBtG2bQ You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.
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**LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV**

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# LEGAL NOTICES

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**
**LICENSING COMMISSION**

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s):

Application of a Common Victualer and Entertainment by Devices Indoors License to Marios Takos d/b/a Opa Greek Yeeros at 378 Highland Avenue.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YTYR3hjYQw6e7xcsBtG2bQ You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**
**LICENSING COMMISSION**

There will be a Public Hearing before the **Licensing Commission** on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024**, at 6:00 PM, on the following Application(s):

Application of Change of Stock Interest, Change of Manager, and Change of Officers/Directors to Joe's Liquor Inc d/b/a Joe at 168-172 Broadway.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be conducted via remote participation, online in a webinar hosted on the Zoom platform.

You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform. Enter this link exactly as it appears into your internet browser anytime before the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YTYR3hjYQw6e7xcsBtG2bQ You can also find this link on the city website's calendar. You will then be asked to register, and after registering, you will receive an email with instructions to join the webinar.

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**LICENSING@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV**

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**BLESSING OF THE BAY LINEAR PARK IMPROVEMENT**
**REQUEST FOR CONSULTANTS PROPOSALS**

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), with consultation from the City of Somerville is seeking proposals from qualified landscape architecture and engineering firms for the completion of a design that will provide linear park and shoreline improvements for Blessing of the Bay Park in Somerville.

Blessing of the Bay Park is an important open space in Somerville and part of the Mystic River Reservation– a 10 mile, 370-acre linear park system. Community feedback has revealed that this park is underutilized due to limited views and access to the river's edge, deteriorating infrastructure and a lack of amenities. The City and MyRWA have been engaging residents and making improvements to the park since 2018—and we are excited for this next phase of work—which will focus on the path, access to the water and invasive species removal.

The scope of work for the consultant consists of five Phases: Site Analysis & Schematic Design, Design Development & Construction Documents, Vegetative Management, Construction Bid Support and Negotiation, and Construction Administration. The budget for this scope of work, including all costs and contingencies, is approximately $350,000. The resulting linear park and shoreline improvements, all of which will be fully ADA-Accessible, will support open space and outdoor recreation priorities set out in the City's FY2023 Community Preservation Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, Urban Forest Management Plan, SomerVision 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Climate Forward Plan.

The RFP for proposal plus more information on the park can be found at https://mysticriver.org/blessingofthebay.

Electronic Proposals are invited for submission to the MyRWA by **5 PM EST on Wednesday, January 24, 2024**.

1/3/24 The Somerville Times

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

# 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.*

# Hundreds from Somerville urge Sen. Warren and Sen. Markey to call for ceasefire

Last month, our group delivered a letter signed by nearly 250 Somerville community members, to Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey demanding they call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, rush in humanitarian aid, end of unconditional military funding to Israel, and to hold Israel accountable to international law.

The list of signatories was interfaith, interracial, and intergenerational; included several city counselors (Willie Burnley Jr., Naima Sait, JT Scott, Jake Wilson, Charlotte Kelly, Ben Ewen-Campen, and Beatriz Gomez-Mouakad); and contained two state legislators (Sen. Pat Jehlen and Rep. Uyterhoeven). On Wednesday, January 3rd, our group will redeliver the Somerville letter now with close to 450 signatures and be joined by neighbors from Arlington letter echoing the demands. Following the delivery of the letters, we will hold a stand-out in Union Sq. at 5 pm to further raise awareness of the atrocities the Israeli military is committing against Palestinian civilians trapped in Gaza.

As we write this statement, the Israeli government's devastating assault continues. The death toll for Gazans now stands over 20,000; around half of whom are children. More children have been killed in the past two months by Israel in Gaza than attend Somerville Public Schools. Right now — more so than ever before — the need is great and urgent for an immediate (and permanent) ceasefire, humanitarian aid, the end of unconditional military aid to Israel, and accountability of the Israeli government in accordance with international law.

One can find the contents and signatories of the letter

at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hvg6FFQvg3q-YLv-o165FN9Og0EPbbIe1E-jq5C3j7s10/edit

Given the scale and severity of the violence in Gaza right now, we feel that it is imperative for the two Senators to vocally join the public calls for a permanent ceasefire, immediate humanitarian aid, and the end of the U.S. government's support for Israel's actions.

— *Somerville For Palestine*

# January Asian Tea Party: Digital Bridge Initiative

The City of Somerville wants to help people get online. It wants to hear about your experiences with the internet, computers, and whether you are interested in computer classes. Your input will help create a Digital Equity Plan which aims to make internet and computers accessible to all people in Somerville.

The event will be held on Monday, January 8, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. at 42 Cross St., Somerville. To be held in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English.

# Somerville through the eyes of Denise

After Solstice, more daylight… — *Photo by Denise Provost*

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## Bobby's Dad Jokes Corner

By Bobbygeorge Potaris

I was going to quit all my bad habits for the new year, but then I remembered that nobody likes a quitter.

## On This Day in History

### January 3

***1521*** – Martin Luther is excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church.

***1777*** – General George Washington defeats the British led by British General Lord Charles Cornwallis, at Princeton, New Jersey.

***1861*** – Delaware rejects a proposal that it join the South in seceding from the Union.

***1912*** – Plans are announced for a new $150,000 Brooklyn stadium for the Trolley Dodgers baseball team.

***1924*** – King Tutankhamen's sarcophagus is uncovered near Luxor, Egypt.

***1931*** – Hundreds of farmers storm a small town in depression-plagued Arkansas demanding food.

***1959*** – Fidel Castro takes command of the Cuban army.

***1977*** – Apple Computers incorporates.

***1985*** – President Ronald Reagan condemns arson attacks on abortion clinics.

***2000*** – The last original weekday Peanuts comic strip is published after a 50-year run, following the death of the strip's creator, Charles Schultz.

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# 2023: The year in review CONT. FROM PG 1

their qualifications, past project experience, how they will secure financing for the project, experience promoting the participation of minorities and women, and the inclusion of minority-owned and women-owned businesses in past projects.

The public weighed in on the project, questioning several of the proposed plans for the building.

The Green Line Extension (GLX) finally opened in late 2002, with all stations becoming fully operational as the ensuing months passed by. Temporary shutdowns of certain sections of the system for repairs were a sometime vexing problem for commuters, but on the whole it ran fairly smoothly throughout most of the year.

Some controversy arose in January when the city demanded that the Somerville Media Center relocate its operations, as had been requested months earlier. Many on the City Council and in the community strongly objected to the order and voiced their disapproval of the plan in kind.

The Somerville Building Commissioner, in consultation with the Somerville Fire Chief, ordered that the City's 90-92 Union Square building close to the public on August 31 due to public safety risk.

The Somerville Media Center secured a temporary site in Somerville effective September 1, at Somernova, a 7.4-acre innovation campus and community located just outside Union Square.

In February, Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the Department of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) announced the launch of the RSJ Community Engagement Ambassadors program. The newly onboarded Community Ambassadors would actively work with the city to expand engagement with the Public Safety for All Initiative with the aim of building new avenues for participation and empowering community voices.

A search for a new Chief of Police for Somerville was launched after Chief David Fallon retired from the Somerville Police force in December 2020 after 21 years of service. Chief Charles Femino accepted the role of Acting Chief at that time taking on pandemic public safety emergency response duties as well as the ongoing work of the department.

Similarly, the Somerville School Committee voted to reopen the application process for a new Superintendent of Schools. The School Committee hoped to select a new Superintendent by July 2023, in advance of the new school year. The Committee ultimately selected Dr. Rubén Carmona to serve as the next Superintendent of the Somerville Public Schools. Dr. Carmona was one of four finalists who participated in site visits and public interviews during the week of March 27.

In early March, the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) hosted a public hearing on a proposed plan designed to tackle access to affordable housing in the city. The HOME Investment Partnership American Rescue Plan Program (HOME ARP) Allocation Plan was in need to be spent by April 2030.

According to figures from the meeting, $1.2 million dollars are proposed to be allocated for supportive services with the rest of the funds given to non-profit organizations designed to tackle homelessness in Somerville.

Also in March, a Home Rule petition to establish rent control to combat the rising rent costs across the city was introduced by the City Council.

In addition to the petition, there was also resounding support for the protection of Somerville tenants. Massachusetts State Rep. Mike Connolly filed the Tenant Protection Act in 2021 and said he believes tenants who are at risk of eviction are the ones who are disproportionately affected by wealth and social inequalities.

Towards the end of March, the Somerville City Council made history by passing groundbreaking non-discrimination ordinances protecting polyamorous families and relationships. The ordinances make Somerville the first city in the United States to extend explicit legal protections to polyamorous and other non-nuclear families and relationships.

A Community Safety Meeting was held to discuss the March 21 gunfire incident in Winter Hill, with cars and storefronts damaged by stray bullets in Somerville, and gun activity in Somerville in general. An overview on understanding violence-related trauma and where to find mental health resources were also be provided.

On April 11, the city announced that it has adopted a plan for a bicycle network. A public statement was released stating that after more than a year of engagement, research, and analysis, the city of had released Somerville's first-ever citywide Bicycle Network Plan.

The Plan documents Somerville's community-based vision for an 88-mile network of connected streets and paths where people of all ages and abilities will be able to bike safely and comfortably.

In 2022, the city announced its first ever Participatory Budget, an initiative that would let residents decide how it would spend $1 million of its fiscal 2023 budget. Since March 20, 2023, residents had been able to add ideas to a map on the official website, pbsomervillema.poepublic.com, or submit suggestions via telephone.

In May, the City Council's Land Use Committee, put forward an order requesting that the Director of Economic Development update the Council on the implementation of the Union Square Covenant, which includes local and veterans preference in hiring.

Also in May, mayors from Somerville, Cambridge, Lynn, and Salem joined with leaders from the City of Boston and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll to sign the Common-Wealth Development Compact, committing to historic 25 percent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) evaluation criteria in public real estate development projects within their municipalities, as well as groundbreaking DEI considerations in private real estate projects.

Later in May, Mayor Katjana Ballantyne joined Greystar and Consigli to celebrate the topping out of 74M, a 17-story, 465,000 square foot purpose-built lab office building in the Assembly Square district of Somerville, which is redefining itself as a hub for research and development.

The Somerville Homeless Coalition opened a new Engagement Center in May to support Somerville's unhoused residents.

The Engagement Center has been operating with federal American Rescue Plan Act funding provided by the city. This facility, open during the day when shelters frequently are not, allows clients to drop in on an as-needed basis and also enables Homeless Coalition staff to invite unsheltered clients to meet privately indoors.

In June, Somerville Schools officials and city administrators began looking for ways to safely and efficiently reassign students at Winter Hill Community School to alternative classrooms to finish out the school year after a piece of concrete fell onto a stairwell inside of the school last week.

While no one was inside the building at the time of the incident, the alarming event became a cause for immediate concern and the school was closed down permanently for the duration of the school term while structural engineering crews began the process of inspecting the building to assess the extent of the damage and deterioration present.

The Green Line Extension (GLX) Community Path opened to the public on Saturday, June 10.

In July, the City Council discussed the de-prioritization of enforcement against cyclists who view stop signs as yield signs and red lights as stop signs. It was noted that in recent months the police department had accepted a grant and was engaging in targeted enforcement with warnings and tickets to cyclists who continue to travel through red lights. According to one council member, the federal government has concluded that the Idaho stop actually leads to increased safety and reduced injuries.

On August 1, a virtual public meeting was held to discuss the future of the historic Somerville Armory building. The Somerville Arts Council members were present to discuss the different approaches to the future of the historic building's management. They said that creating a sense of belonging is essential for the artists currently involved in the space, and that for visitors the space needs to be inviting and inspiring. The Arts Council stated that the city currently owns the Armory and plans to remain the owner.

Also in August, parents of students attending the summer session at the Edgerly Education Center were notified that classes would end three days early due to disruptions caused by construction crews working in and around the building. The school had been undergoing renovations in preparation of accepting students from Winter Hill Community Innovation School in the fall.

Somerville City Council members requested that the mayor declare homelessness a public state of emergency at the Somerville City Council meeting on August 24.

In October, a federal jury in Boston convicted Sean O'Donovan of two counts of honest services wire fraud and one count of bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds.

The citywide election for the City of Somerville took place on November 7. A number of City Council seats were contested, along with a challenge for the Office of Mayor. In the race for mayor, incumbent Katjana Ballantyne prevailed to win her second term.

2023 was a year characterized by the usual accomplishments and controversies that are to be expected in this dynamic City of Somerville. May 2024 bring even more of the best that the city has to offer.

# Lyrical SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Most recently, Sandra Kolankiewicz's poems have appeared in *New World Writing, Prole Literary Review, Southword Editions,* and *New Welsh Review*. Her most recent chapbook, *Even the Cracks,* is available from Finishing Line Press.

**Something To Be Done**

Now I see your back gate swinging,
recycling piling up by the side door,
pale lights flickering behind the blinds at all hours,
children absent from the gang playing at the corner,
instead walking straight from school past my
house to yours and disappearing behind
the click of a locked front door. The dog is gone,
your cat on my front porch, crying to be fed.
Your mother pulled out of your driveway with a
twisted red face. We have all stopped knocking,
don't call, have ceased inviting you and yours to
cook outs since the day you sat at a picnic table
during the block party and picked your skin,
bummed cigarettes though no one smokes,
your daughter's eyes wary, judging the distance
between her and the next person waiting for a
hot dog, yours the house on the block we're all
aware of, waiting for consequences to catch up,
something to be done, for the other shoe to fall.

— *Sandra Kolankiewicz*

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

OFF THE SHELF
by Doug Holder

# Somerville: Mysteries of the Grand Union Flag

*By J. L. Bell: Correspondent for Off the Shelf*

The raising of the "Grand Union Flag" on Prospect Hill in January 1776 is a proud historic moment for Somerville. But a lot of mysteries still surround that event.

The standard story is that after the Continental Congress established a navy in October 1775, it also approved a flag for that navy. Under the rules of war, a ship had to fly its country's flag as it went into battle (though it could maneuver under a "false flag" until that moment). Some American warships were sailing under banners produced by individual states, but the Congress's fleet needed its own ensign.

The design provided for the Continental Navy had the Union Jack in the upper left corner with thirteen red and white stripes below. Ships in the Chesapeake Bay flew this emblem by December. Britain's Royal Navy fought under a similar flag: a Union Jack over a solid red field.

Meanwhile, up in Massachusetts, most Continental Army soldiers' enlistments were running out. The New England men who had begun the siege of Boston in April 1775 had promised to serve only through December. Working from his headquarters in Cambridge, General George Washington oversaw a tense process of convincing some troops to reenlist, recruiting more, and reorganizing the regiments that remained.

To celebrate the relaunch of the Continental Army, Washington wrote, "we had hoisted the Union Flag in compliment to the United Colonies." This banner appeared above Prospect Hill, center of one of the besieging army's largest camps. A couple of days later, the general heard that British officials in Boston had interpreted this new flag, so like their own, "as a signal of Submission." But they soon learned the Continentals would fight on.

Here are questions about this event with no definite answers in the surviving historical records.

Who designed the new Continental Navy flag? The Congress's papers don't say. We therefore don't know what the delegates meant by authorizing a flag so similar to the British navy's banner. We can guess it symbolized how they weren't yet ready for a complete break with Britain. The thirteen stripes surely represented the thirteen colonies at that Congress, though delegates hoped to add Canada to the mix.

Was the Continental Navy flag the same as Washington's "Union Flag"? For decades, the phrase "Union flag" had referred to the British flag, symbolizing the union of England and Scotland. Washington saw his "Union Flag" as honoring the thirteen united colonies. Two British witnesses inside Boston, a ship captain and a marine officer, wrote of seeing a new "Union flag" over the Americans' camp, but they left no clear description of that banner. Most historians, but not all, conclude that this was the Continental Navy flag.

How did Washington receive the new flag? The Congress never voted to send its naval flag to its army commander. No document shows a flag being transported from Philadelphia to Cambridge. The most likely candidate for sending the banner is Joseph Reed, a Philadelphia lawyer who had been Washington's military secretary in the summer and early fall. Washington wrote to Reed on January 4 describing how the army had flown the new flag. Unfortunately, Reed's letters to Washington in this period went missing after the two men had a falling-out in late 1776.

Who reported on the new flag in the January 15 Pennsylvania Packet newspaper? A compilation of news from the Continental Army camp described how "the great Union flag was hoisted on Prospect-Hill." This is the evidence locating the flag at that site since Washington's letter and the British observations did not specify a place. However, that article also stated that event occurred on January 2, not January 1. Again, Reed seems like the best candidate for writing this report since he adapted some of the general's other letters for the newspapers. But he should have known the right date.

Did British officials really think the flag meant the rebels were ready to surrender? No source from inside Boston suggests that. Instead, the ship captain and marine officer both described the new flag as a signal of defiance. Washington said he heard about the expectations of surrender from "a person out of Boston last Night." Also on January 4, the general reported information he had recently received from "a very Intelligent Gentleman, a Mr Hutchinson from Boston" – perhaps merchant Shrimpton Hutchinson. He may have told a different story about reactions to the flag.

Where did the label "Grand Union Flag" come from? Washington called the new *Continued on page 15*

## Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 5

Because this winter begins in an **odd-numbered year**, snow emergency parking will be on the o**dd side of the street all winter**, unless posted signage says differently. Check street signs in your neighborhood so you know where you can park ahead of winter weather. You can also learn more about the city's snow policies at somervillema.gov/snow.

**********

Give feedback on Somerville's **Climate Forward Plan Update**. Launched in 2018, Climate Forward established 13 top strategies to reduce **Somerville's contribution to climate change** and create a more climate-resilient community. It's updated every five years to meet changing needs and seize new strategies to meet our goals. Now at the five-year mark, the city has released the latest draft goals, strategies, and actions for the Climate Forward plan update. Review the plan and submit comments on what's proposed and prioritized: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m_EGwkHa7mGJ9xxj5crnZeLVbCV3W3yW/edit Comments will be accepted until **Wednesday, January 31**.

**********

Enrolling a **prekindergarten or kindergarten student**? The next **PK-8 School Open House events** are **January 9**, and the online enrollment portal opens on **January 3**. Watch a video about enrolling your student in prekindergarten or kindergarten. https://youtu.be/HgdlsI8IapM. The video is also available in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole on the **Enrollment Office website**, where you can find many more resources: https://somerville.k12.ma.us/enrollment.

**********

Is your child interested in **coding**? Sign them up for the library's **Girls Who Code club**. The club is open to grades 3-5 and is run by Girls Who Code, an international nonprofit organization with the goal of increasing the number of women in computer science. Students of any gender can participate, though we highly encourage girls, those who identify as girls, and nonbinary kids to join. This event will take place on **Monday, January 8**, at **Somerville Public Library Central Branch** (79 Highland Ave.) from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Learn more and register. www.somervillepubliclibrary.org.

**********

The **Fuel Assistance Program**, also known as the **Home Energy Assistance Program**, helps low-income households pay their winter heating bills **between November 1 and April 30**. Renters and homeowners in Somerville are eligible to apply if they meet federal income guidelines. Learn more at somervillema.gov/heatingassistance.

**********

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

**********

Is your teen looking to **make some extra money**? The city's **Snow Shoveling Program** is hiring youth to assist shoveling seniors and homeowners with disabilities out after snowstorms this winter. Teens and homeowners are paired for the season. After each storm, the homeowner will contact their assigned youth to request shoveling services. Somerville teens ages 14 to 19 are welcome to apply. Learn more and apply at somervillema.gov/shoveling. Looking for snow shoveling services? Contact **Debby Higgins** at dhiggings@somervillema.gov.

**********

Take steps to **protect yourself and loved ones** against COVID-19. Somerville's **Health and Human Services Department** is hosting a series of **COVID-19 booster (Moderna) vaccine clinics** in November and throughout December at locations across the city. Vaccines are available for community members age 6 months and older. Register for a vaccine clinic at somerville-ma.gov/vaccines.

**********

In preparation for the cold months ahead, the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** is in urgent need of **winter clothing and apparel** to keep their clients warm and safe. Donations of socks, hats, jackets, hand warmers, sweatpants, and more will go a long way towards keeping the most vulnerable clients protected against the unpredictable New England weather. All donations can be dropped off at their **Engagement Center** located at 1 Davis Square, Somerville between and Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., closed each day from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. for lunch. Help keep our neighbors safe this winter.

**********

Help keep our waterways clean in your neighborhood by joining Somerville's **Adopt-a-Drain program**. A storm drain clear of leaves, trash or other debris allows water to flow into the catch basin sump and can prevent flooding. When you adopt a drain (or drains), you commit to caring for a local storm drain of your choice by checking on it before and after heavy rain, wind, or snow. Bonus perk: you can also give it a name. Claim your drain at somerville.mysticdrains.org.

**********

The **Center for the Arts at the Armory** offers a weekly winter market with 71+ local food vendors with the best locally grown and regionally produced foods, including fresh produce, cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, tamales, pastries, chocolate, skincare products, and more. The market accepts SNAP/EBT and HIP benefits. They also offer a $15 SNAP match to customers each week. Visit the **Somerville Winter Farmers Market** on **Saturdays**, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., 191 Highland Ave. **Through April 6**. For a list of weekly events visit www.somwintermarket.org

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## Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 14

banner "the Union Flag." The Pennsylvania Packet called it "the great Union flag," as did other newspapers reprinting the same article. So where did the present term come from? In 1852 the Philadelphia journalist Thompson Westcott wrote to the London magazine Notes and Queries with information about early American flags. Among other things, he quoted the Pennsylvania Gazette as reporting, "The grand union flag was raised on the 2nd." This was an error for the phrase that had appeared in newspapers in 1776, but the word "grand" was repeated by other magazines and eventually the flag historian George Henry Preble.

Thus, we probably owe the resonant phrase "Grand Union Flag" to a transcription error seventy-six years later.

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*J. L. Bell is the author of The Road to Concord: How Four Stolen Cannon Ignited the Revolutionary War (Westholme, 2016). He maintains the Boston1775.net website, dedicated to history, analysis, and unabashed gossip about the start of the American Revolution in New England.*

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*From on page 6*

## Ms. Cam's Olio Answers

1. 1907
2. Iron and wood
3. Horse
4. Calista Flockhart
5. Canada
6. Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville
7. Harvard Law School
8. Chamonix, France, 1924
9. 666
10. Ferdinand Magellan
11. *Mad Men*
12. Eagle

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