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VOL.1 NO.329-283

SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS

Tuesday October 21st, 2025

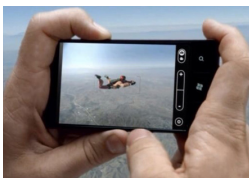
## FIRE CHIEF MUST BE A FORMER FIRE-FIGHTER (H 2646)



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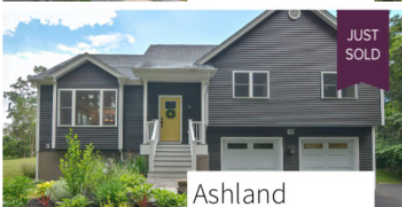
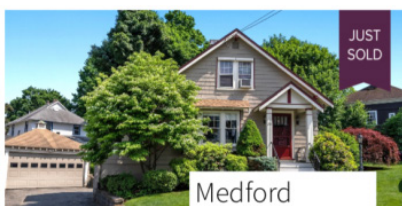
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We have been busy, but never too busy for you! These four properties were sold in one month! If you see something you would like to know more about, have any questions or are thinking about buying or selling a property, please don't hesitate to send us an email or give us call!

Helen Praysman Broker Associate REALTOR®  
(617) 610-5382 [Helen.Praysman@commonmoves.com](mailto:Helen.Praysman@commonmoves.com)

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If you have any questions email us at [MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com](mailto:MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com)  
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Artwork / Logos must be submitted to [MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com](mailto:MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com)  
 Deadline for artwork / logos is March 7th for full season exposure, any late submission banners will be hung starting tournament weekend.

**Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line:  
 Somerville Is Getting Worst Everyday**

Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

Have you seen? The disaster on Broadway. I can't even park my car anywhere on Broadway or top of the side streets.. It was supposed to be starting up 5AM-5PM. They changed it to start at 7PM. I have nowhere to park my car and have to move it at 8AM to go nowhere. You can't make this idiocy up. The sign said until Saturday. You can't even sleep with all the trucks backing up and noise. They should go dig up the Mayor's street at her house.

Sad to say Billy but If we could do the 80s-90s all over again you'd be Mayor.

I'll see it up close in the AM. I haven't seen it. They removed all flex posts in the bike lanes laying down and only putting tar down on one side. So dumb, they should have did this in the Summer.

A lifelong some discouraged resident



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### Somerville/Medford Remembering Grace Antoine



Obituary  
Grace Antoine – Of Malden, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer on September 26, 2025. She was 57 years

young. Born in Port-à-Piment, Haiti, she was the daughter of the late Naecisse and Elphise (Silace) Antoine. Grace loved spending time with her family — being surrounded by loved ones brought her immense joy. Her natural caring nature led her to a rewarding career as a caregiver, where she compassionately served and supported many. Helping others gave her a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Grace also had a passion for singing. Whenever the oppor-

tunity arose, she would share her beautiful, harmonious voice with those around her. She also enjoyed shopping and took delight in life's simple pleasures.

Beloved mother of Graham Antoine Andre and Gaelle Andre of Malden. Devoted sister of Marie Merline Valentin Antoine, Jean Ebert Antoine, and Jean Narol Antoine and his wife Dounia Jean Pierre Antoine. Cherished aunt of Utlie Leila Valenti, Floberlee Antoine, Jerrylee Anoine, Fabrice Antoine, Narlee Julinia Antoine, N'Dee Jeremiah Antoine, Noralie Jilissa Antoine, and Adev Edugue

Anotine. Loving cousins of Jean Samuel Alexis. Also survived by many loving extended family members and friends.

Calling hours will be held on Thursday, October 16th in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville, from 6:00PM to 8:00PM.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend.

A funeral service will be held in the Grace Church of God, 257 Pearl St. Malden at 9:00AM. Please meet directly at church.

Services will conclude with interment at Woodlawn Cemetery, Everett.

If you are unable to attend the wake and would like to pay your respects via zoom on Thursday evening, you may via the following

Meeting ID 259 103 5817

Password: 001087

### Somerville/Medford Remembering Pamela L. (Hill) Hansen



Obituary  
Pamela L. (Hill) Hansen- Of Somerville, formerly of Idaho, passed away peace-

fully at home on Tuesday, October 14, 2025.

Born in Pocatello, Idaho, she was the beloved daughter of the late William and Shirley (Banning) Hill. Pamela cherished every moment spent with her family, especially her adored grandchildren, who were the true light of her life.

In her free time, Pamela

loved movies and crafting. She found joy in drawing, coloring, and creating miniature models and dollhouses with incredible detail. She also had a deep affection for her sweet silver cat, Sterling.

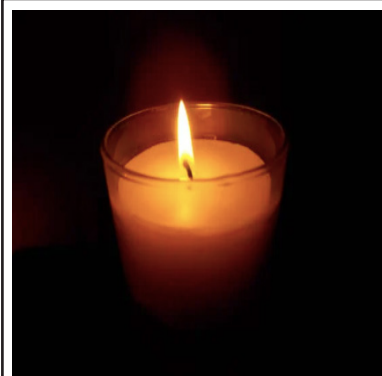
She was the beloved wife of the late Bert Hansen II, devoted mother of Harrison Hansen of Lexington and Katherine Ramaswamy and her husband

Krishna of Lexington, and the loving grandmother of Parker and Dash Ramaswamy. Pamela was the cherished sister of Debbie Fondren and Susie Hoover, both of Idaho, and the late Sandy Vogel. She is also survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers,

donations may be made in Pamela's memory to the Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery (MOAR).

### Somerville/Medford Remembering James A. O'Connell



Obituary  
Mr. James A. O'Connell, of Medford, passed away following a long and hard fought battle against Alzheimer's Disease on October 14, 2025, he was 94.

Complete obituary to be posted.

Calling Hours will be held in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, Monday morning, October 27th from 9:30AM to

10:30AM, followed by a Funeral Mass celebrated at St. Raphael Church, Medford at 11:00AM. Relatives and friends invited to attend. Services will conclude with burial at Oak Grove Cemetery, Medford.

In lieu of flowers, donations in James' name can be made to the Alzheimer's Association at <http://www.alz.org>

### Somerville/Medford Remembering Marie (Pierre) Calixte



Obituary  
Marie (Pierre) Calixte – Of Cambridge, passed away peacefully at home on Saturday, October 18, 2025. She was 90 years young.

Complete obit to be posted.

Calling Hours will be held

in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home on Friday, October 31st from 5:00PM to 8:00PM.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, November 1st at New Covenant Church of Cambridge, 527 Main Street Waltham

at 10:00AM. Family and friends may visit with the family prior to the service from 9:00AM to 10:00AM.

Services will conclude with interment at Cambridge Cemetery, Cambridge.

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### FIRE CHIEF MUST BE A FORMER FIREFIGHTER (H 2646)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would require that any candidates for appointment to the position of Fire Chief, Fire Commissioner or head of a fire department in any city or town, must have been a uniformed member of the Massachusetts firefighting force of a Massachusetts Fire Department for a minimum of five years.

Supporters said this would ensure that anyone appointed to one of these high positions has some firsthand experience as a firefighter and has come up through the ranks.

Rep. Dan Hunt (D-Boston), the sponsor of the measure, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call to comment on his bill and its passage.



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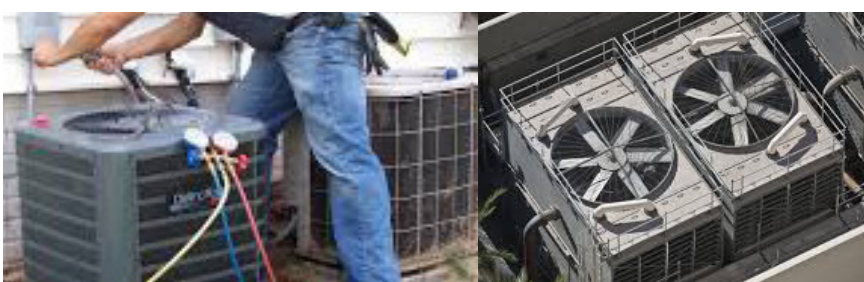
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If there is anything in particular you would like to see from us or if you need help preparing food at home for your families please reach out and we will do

our best to help. Whether it be recipe ideas with random things you might have purchased or if you run out of something that you need that we can help with please don't hesitate to ask.

A Tavola Restaurant Winchester outdoor patio dining is open for business & takeout orders: (781)729-1040 34 Church St Winchester

Thank you for your continued support.



### REQUIRE UNIFORM BALLOTS (H 832)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would require all election ballots to be uniform in size.

“[My bill] requires all

ballots be uniform in size, material and content for all voters, whether marked by hand or using a ballot-marking device,” said sponsor Rep. Sean Garballey (D-Arlington).

“It also prohibits tabulating votes from barcodes, QR codes or any non-human-readable marks, mandating that votes be counted only from the se-

lections visibly marked by the voter, except in limited cases where non-uniform ballots are necessary to comply with federal law or specific counting methods.”

### BAN EMPLOYERS FROM ASKING FOR CREDIT REPORTS (H 4450)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would prohibit employers from obtaining the credit reports of existing or potential employees except in certain circumstances including hiring for a position that requires national security clearance; a

position for which a person is required by federal or state law to obtain a consumer report; and some executive or managerial positions at a financial institution.

“The [bill] reduces barriers to employment by limiting the use of personal

credit reports in the hiring process,” said the original sponsor of the bill in 2024, former Duxbury representative Josh Cutler, who is now Gov. Maura Healey’s Undersecretary of Apprenticeship, Work-based Learning and Policy in the Executive Office of Labor and Work-

force Development. “Credit scores were never intended to be used for employment purposes and pre-employment credit checks can create needless barriers for otherwise qualified workers. Eleven other states already taken similar steps.”

Rep. Kenneth Gordon (D-Bedford), the sponsor of the proposal, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking him to comment on his bill and its approval.

### ABSENTEE BALLOTS (H 830)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would require that early voting and absentee ballots be identical to a regular ballot that vot-

ers use on Election Day.

Supporters said that current law only requires the ballots to be “similar.” They argued that it makes

no sense for any of these three ballots to be different from each other.

Rep. Richard Haggerty (D-Woburn), the sponsor

of the measure, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call to comment on his bill and its passage.

### Safely Dispose of Old Medications at Somerville’s Take Back Events on 10/25



Somerville to host two drop-off sites for National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

SOMERVILLE— Keeping unused or expired medications

at home can be unsafe for children, pets, and adults.

Whether accidental poisoning or intentional misuse, you can prevent these potential harms by safely disposing of prescription drugs you no longer need. To provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, Somerville is hosting two staffed drop-off events for National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

On Saturday, October 25, Mayor Ballantyne invites

Somerville residents to participate by stopping at the drop-off locations. City staff will be on-site at both locations to collect medications as well as provide overdose prevention information and resources. Each location will distribute free Narcan and fentanyl test strips for any residents interested.

Both locations will be staffed 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.:

Public Safety Headquarters at 220 Washington Street  
Teale Square Fire Station at 6 Newbury St.

The event is hosted in partnership by the City of Somerville’s Community, Help, Outreach, and Recovery (COHR) unit of Somerville Police Department and the Somerville Prevention Services division of Health and Human Services.

For bottled medications, residents should remove or scratch out any personal information while leaving the name of the medication visible before disposing. Please make sure caps to liquid medications are secure.

Year-round drop-off location: In addition to this event, Somerville offers 24/7, year-round disposal at the Somerville Public Safety Building (220 Washington Street) in addition to a sharps disposal kiosk.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Korn at [jkorn@police.somerville.ma.us](mailto:jkorn@police.somerville.ma.us) or Prevention Services Director, Tina Los at [tlos@somervillema.gov](mailto:tlos@somervillema.gov).

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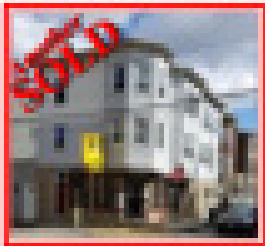


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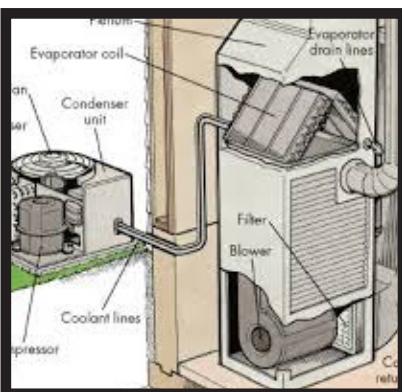
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The Somerville/Medford News Weekly

Here's your weekly News Talk Shout Out dosage continued from page 2



Heres Your Weekly Dosage of Somerville News Weeklys Newstalk Shoutout/Speakup Loud

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## EXPAND THE “MOVE OVER” LAW (S 2653)

By Bob Katzen

The Senate 39-0, approved and sent to the Senate legislation that would require motorists to slow down if they are approaching a stationary utility truck or a stopped vehicle with flashing lights on the shoulder of a road or breakdown lane of a highway.

Drivers on a highway with multiple lanes in each direction would also be required, if practicable, to change lanes to ensure greater safety for vehicles and individuals

als in the breakdown lane. The bill expands the state’s existing Move Over Law which provides this protection for emergency response vehicles, highway maintenance vehicles and tow trucks.

“This essential legislation is a critical upgrade to our Move Over Law, expanding its life-saving protections to everyone who must work or wait on the side of a busy highway,” said sponsor Sen. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn), Senate Chair of the Committee on Transportation. “By including disabled vehicles and

utility workers and implementing stronger penalties, we are making everyone on our roads safer.”

“National Grid employees perform critical repairs and maintenance to ensure safe, reliable energy service across Massachusetts every day when customers need it most,” said Shaun Vacher, Vice-President of Electric Operations for National Grid. “We thank the Senate for passing this important legislation to provide essential protections for roadside utility crews, helping ensure they can do this vital work

safely and without unnecessary risk.”

“The Massachusetts State Police shares the Healey-Driscoll Administration’s support for this bill, which provides important additions to the commonwealth’s existing Move Over Law,” said Col. Geoffrey Noble, a spokesperson for the Massachusetts State Police. “While these expanded provisions support our ability to address dangerous behavior through enforcement, above all else, we want drivers to slow down and change

lanes away from stationary vehicles when it’s safe to do so. Taking these common-sense steps will prevent the serious injuries and fatal outcomes that change lives forever.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the bill.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

## SALES TAX ON DIGITAL ADVERTISING SERVICES (H 3208)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would impose a 6.25 percent sales tax on digital advertising services that target users in Massachusetts, using tools like IP address or geo-

location. The tax would only apply to companies that make more than \$2.5 million a year from digital ads aimed at Bay State residents.

The funds would be used to

support three key areas: local access TV stations; mental health and safe social media use; and research on artificial intelligence in education.

“Digital advertising brings in

billions of dollars from Massachusetts each year, yet not a single cent is going back to the communities being targeted,” said sponsor Rep. Francisco Paulino (D-Methuen). “Local media outlets, especially com-

munity stations, are struggling to survive while Big Tech keeps growing. This bill is about fairness. If you’re profiting from our residents, you should help fund the programs that serve them.”



## MUST PROVIDE CUSTOMERS INSURANCE FOR HEATING OIL SPILLS (H 1302)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would require insurance companies that provide homeowners insurance to include insurance for heating oil releases to their customers. The measure also raises the required minimum coverage provided.

Supporters said that some 100 homeowners experience an oil leak in Massachusetts every year. They noted that leaks can incur costly damage to the residence itself, but

under Massachusetts law, owners are responsible for environmental cleanup, which can rise to \$100,000 or more, to dispose of contaminated soil and mitigate the spread in surrounding areas.

“Under current law, insurers are not mandated to provide coverage for heating oil releases but are only required to make it available to customers that explicitly request it,” said sponsor Rep. Jeff Roy (D-Franklin). “However, most homeowners are unaware that an

oil spill is excluded from their base coverage. Most only discover this after they experience a catastrophic spill. In contrast, residential catastrophes stemming from other common forms of energy [like] natural gas and electricity, etc. are covered under typical homeowners’ policies.”

Roy continued, “This means that all insurance payers contribute to paying such claims, regardless of whether they use that form of energy or not including those using

home heating oil. My bill addresses this inequity by requiring that coverage be provided automatically to all homeowners and raising coverage limits to keep pace with rising cleanup costs. This small affirmative change will help prevent homeowners from going bankrupt or funding environmental cleanups with their retirement funds, children’s college funds or their life’s savings.”

“This legislation is about ensuring that no family loses their home

or savings because of an accident they never saw coming,” said the Senate sponsor of the bill, Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow). “[My bill] will work to help prevent homeowners from going bankrupt or funding environmental cleanups by requiring that coverage automatically be provided to all homeowners and raising coverage limits to keep pace with rising cleanup costs.”

## GOVERNOR’S COUNCILOR (H 805)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would require that when candidates for Governor’s Council are listed on a voter ballot, the office they are seeking be listed as Governor’s Council. Under current law, the listing says simply “Council.”

Supporters said that using the word “Council” is too vague and many voters have no idea about the office for which they are voting. They note that the Governor’s Council is a very important and powerful 8-member board which according to its

website “meets weekly to record advice and consent on warrants for the state treasury, pardons and commutations, and recording advice and consent to gubernatorial appointments such as judges, clerk-magistrates, public administrators, members of the Parole

Board, Appellate Tax Board, Industrial Accident Board and Industrial Accident Reviewing Board, notaries and justices of the peace.”

Reps. Simon Cataldo (D-Concord) and Carmine Gentile (D-Sudbury), the co-sponsors of the pro-

posal, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking them to comment on their bill and its approval.

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\$2.25 BILLION FISCAL 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET (H 4601)

By Bob Katzen

House 141-14, approved and sent to the Senate a \$2.25 billion fiscal 2025 supplemental budget designed to close out the books on fiscal year 2025.

The measure provides \$1.67 billion to MassHealth and \$374 million to former Steward Health Care hospitals at a time when state officials say they are feeling budget pressures associated with rising health care costs. The proposal would also increase hospital contributions by \$50 million to support the Health Safety Net and stabilize funding for MassHealth and safety net hospitals.

Other provisions include \$10 million for Health Care for All to conduct a public awareness campaign, and to conduct health coverage enrollment assistance for communities at risk of losing health care coverage as a result of the new

Medicaid reporting requirements; \$10 million for the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center; \$5 million in grants to reproductive health care providers; \$60.7 million for snow and ice removal; \$12.5 million for prisoners to make free phone calls; \$12 million for Universal School Meals; \$6.8 million for the Clean Water Trust Fund; \$3.5 million for State Police operations; \$15 million for a new Sports and Entertainment Fund grant program, for which \$10 million will be set aside for the events related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup; and withholding most of a \$162 million funding request from county sheriffs, until the state Inspector General investigates sheriffs' finances.

“This supplemental budget closes the books on fiscal year 2025, and aims to fortify the commonwealth's finances, bolster economic development and ensure continued access to critical health care services,” said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-

Quincy). “In the face of unrelenting attacks from the Trump Administration that will strip health insurance coverage from millions of Americans and deny access to lifesaving vaccinations, this supplemental budget will help vulnerable residents prepare for, and avoid, a lapse in coverage and ensure continued access to vaccines for every child in Massachusetts.”

“This supplemental budget will close the books on fiscal year 2025 in a balanced and fiscally responsible manner,” said Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston), Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means. “By making critical investments into much needed programs in healthcare, education and housing to name a few, the commonwealth will be in a strong fiscal position for fiscal year 2026 and beyond.”

“There has been little information on why there are exorbitant

runaway costs in the MassHealth program,” said Rep. Ken Sweezy (R-Hanson). “I cannot continue to support writing blank checks without accountability and a strategy to reel in the spending. I also see a need for some serious reforms to the HomeBase program and the no-cost calls program within our correctional facilities before we continue to supplement their budgets.”

“I believe we need proper oversight of these medical expenditures before committing more funding,” said Rep. Mike Soter (R-Bellingham). “The governor should provide a detailed report outlining what's driving these rising costs before requesting additional taxpayer dollars. We can't claim to have a revenue problem in one breath and then spend significant public funds without accountability in the next.”

“The Democrats have once again blamed President Trump for their

failures,” said Rep. Nick Boldyga (R-Southwick). “But the reality is they've bankrupted our healthcare system by flooding it with illegal aliens. They had to spend another \$2.5 billion dollars to bailout our hospitals.”

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

Rep. Christine Barber Yes Rep. Mike Connolly Yes Rep. Paul Donato Yes Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes



### Medford VFW #1012 Karaoke Night

Medford VFW #1012 located at 114 Mystic Avenue in Medford is having karaoke on 7/24 and 8/21, 8:00 PM till 12:00 PM!

Somerville's own Scotty Lombardo will be the DJ so don't miss it!



### Make Your Voting Plan: Somerville Municipal Election on 11/4



SOMERVILLE- On Tuesday, November 4, 2025, the City of Somerville will hold its Municipal Election. Offices on the ballot include Mayor, Councilor At Large, Ward Councilors, and School Committee members. Local ballot questions also include a question asking

voters to accept or reject the proposed new City Charter and a question on whether to extend the Mayoral term from 2 to 4 years starting no earlier than 2028.

The municipal election is open to all registered voters in Somerville. Somerville voters can vote early in person or by mail or on Election Day. Below are reminders as you prepare for November 4.

Register to Vote in the Municipal Election by Friday, October 24

You can register one of three ways:

Online at [somervillema.gov/register2vote](http://somervillema.gov/register2vote)

In-person at Somerville City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)

By phone by calling the Elections Department (617-625-6600 ext. 4200) and requesting a voter registration form. Or by calling 311 (617-666-3311) and they will connect you to Elections.

The registration deadline is Friday, October 24, at midnight online or in person by 5 p.m. You also may mail in your form, but it must be postmarked by October 24.

Vote Early at City Hall, October 28-30

Vote early in the Municipal Election in the lower level of City Hall from Tuesday, October 28, through Thursday, October 30. The schedule is as follows:

October 28 – Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

October 29 – Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

October 30 – Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

How to Vote in the Municipal Election by Mail

Vote by Mail application deadline:

Applications to vote by mail must be received by 5 p.m. by Tuesday, November 4

A postmark alone is not sufficient; it must arrive at the Elections Office by the deadline.

Where to get an application:

Download an application or fill it out online at [somervillema.gov/votembymail](http://somervillema.gov/votembymail),

pick one up in the Elections office at City Hall, or

request one be mailed to you by calling 311 or calling Elections at 617-625-6600 ext. 4200.

Eligible voters who submit valid applications will receive their ballot in the mail.

Vote by Mail deadline:

Ballots must be completed, signed, sealed, and received by 8 p.m., Tuesday, November 4.

A postmark alone is not sufficient; it must arrive at the Elections Office by the deadline.

Voters can check the status of their ballot on the state's website.

How to return your application and ballot:

Elections Office: Return directly to the Elections Department at City Hall

Mail: Send to the Elections Department, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143

Email or fax (for applications only): Completed applications can be emailed to [vote@somervillema.gov](mailto:vote@somervillema.gov) or faxed to 617-625-5643. Ballots cannot be returned by email or fax.

Drop boxes: Leave it in a drop box at one of the following locations:

City Hall Concourse, 93 Highland Ave.

East Somerville Community School, across from 68 Glen St.

In front of the Argenziano School, 290 Washington St.

In front of the Somerville Community Baptist Church, 31 College Ave.

Behind the Mystic Activity

Center, 530 Mystic Ave.

In front of Saint Catherine of Genoa Church parking lot, 182 Summer St.

In front of the Armory, 191 Highland Ave.

In front of Dilboy Post, 351 Summer St.

In front of the Tufts Administrative Building, 167 Holland St.

In front of the West Somerville Neighborhood School at 177 Powder House Blvd.

Sample Ballots and Ballot Questions Information

Once ready, closer to the election, Sample ballots will be available on [somervillema.gov/elections](http://somervillema.gov/elections)

The text of all local ballot questions will be included on the sample ballots when available

Information on the ballot questions on the proposed charter and mayoral term can be found at [somervillema.gov/charterreview](http://somervillema.gov/charterreview)

For more information about voting in Somerville, go to [somervillema.gov/elections](http://somervillema.gov/elections).

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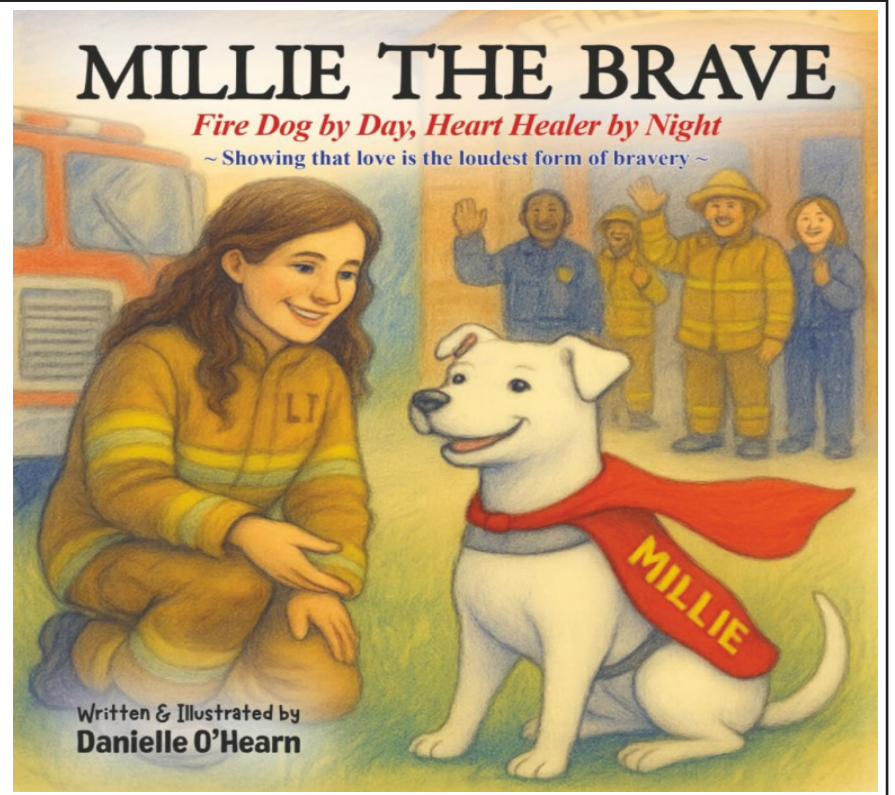
Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

Hey Billy My name is Danielle we've met a few times before, I'm a firefighter in Somerville. I just came out with a children's book.

It's about my dog Millie it was a real life, first responder therapy, dog and rescue and her adventures in firefighting and being a therapy dog. I know you have a huge following. Any shout out about the book would be greatly appreciated. It's available currently on Amazon and hopefully in bookstore soon. Thanks Billy!

Here's the link the title is Millie the brave

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EXEMPT RESIDENTIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS FROM THE SALES TAX (S 1982)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would exempt home security systems from the state's 6.25 percent sales tax.

"[The] bill provides a sales tax exemption for residential security systems and related equipment, such as wiring devices and appliances used for access control, surveillance and alarm

systems," said sponsor Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton). "This bill incentivizes and encourages homeowners to more affordably protect their most valuable investment—their homes."

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### COMPANIES MUST DISCLOSE INGREDIENTS OF MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS (S 1483)

By Bob Katzen

The Senate 39-0, approved and sent to the House a proposal that would require manufacturers of menstrual health products to clearly disclose and display a list of ingredients. The ingredients would have to be easily

accessible on both retail packages and manufacturers' websites.

"A person who menstruates will use, on average, over 10,000 menstrual products in their lifetime," said sponsor Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton). "Yet, menstrual

products have increasingly been found to contain harmful substances such as PFAS, heavy metals and other toxic chemicals."

"Menstrual equity is not only about making products free—it's about ensuring those products are safe,

high quality and labeled with full ingredient disclosure," said Sasha Goodfriend, Executive Director of Mass NOW. "We are deeply grateful that the Senate understands that dignity requires both access and accountability. Today's vote sends a powerful message: menstruators

in Massachusetts deserve not just products, but the ability to make informed choices about what products they use for their menstrual health."

(A "Yes" vote is for the bill.)  
Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

### This Week's QUOTABLE QUOTES on Beacon Hill

## Quotable Quotes



By Bob Katzen

"The Trump Administration's portrayal of Portland as 'war ravaged' and 'under attack' is inaccurate and inflammatory. By sending in the National Guard, the President is provoking

disorder where it otherwise does not exist. These actions attempt to instill fear in our communities and silence dissent. I stand firmly with Oregon in resisting this egregious abuse of power."

—Attorney General Andrea Campbell joining a coalition of 24 attorneys general and governors in submitting a brief in support of Oregon's challenge to the Trump Administration's attempt to use the military for civil law enforcement.

"Today's event showed just how prevalent PFAS is in many products we use in our daily lives, from cookware to kid's car seats. But we also showed that there are alternatives. Thank-

fully, more information on the harmful impacts of these chemicals, combined with the passage of state laws banning or restricting them, means that PFAS-free versions of many products are now available."

—Deirdre Cummings, Legislative Director for MASSPIRG, at a Statehouse rally against dangerous per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The event included a "show and tell" of common products containing PFAS, such as cookware and child car seats, make-up and personal care products, fabric sprays, paint, outdoor gear and clothing; and similar products that do not.

"Boston Logan Airport is often the first and last

impression that millions of travelers have of Massachusetts, and now, thanks to this new program, it's also one of the most welcoming. We want everyone who travels through Logan to know that we prioritize mental health here in Massachusetts."

—Gov. Healey announcing that passengers at Logan can look forward to meeting some furry friends, thanks to a new program called "BOS PAWS." In partnership with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Massport is introducing trained therapy dogs to the airport to help reduce stress and enhance the overall travel experience.

"Beyond acknowledging the world-class education UMass Lowell provides,

these rankings speak to the university's impressive return on investment, which reflects academics as well a commitment to giving students opportunities for meaningful career-connected experiences that serve as a launchpad for their professional lives."

—UMass Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen on the Wall Street Journal rating UMass Lowell the best public higher-ed institution in Massachusetts, the state's number 1 best value school and Number 1 among all colleges and universities in Massachusetts in fostering social mobility among students.

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## MAKE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS MORE AVAILABLE AT NO COST (S 2640)

By Bob Katzen

The Senate 39-0, approved and sent to the House a bill that would require all prisons, homeless shelters and public elementary and secondary schools to maintain free menstrual products, including sanitary napkins, tampons and underwear liners in private and public restrooms; and to make them available in a “convenient manner that does not stigmatize any persons seeking the products.”

Supporters said that according to the Massachusetts Menstrual Equity Coalition, approximately one in seven children in Massachusetts is living in poverty and struggles to pay for menstrual products. They argued that research shows that the inability to access menstrual products affects students’ class attendance. They also noted that women facing homelessness or who are incarcerated face high barriers to access, with Massachusetts shelters reporting that menstrual products are among the least donated items. They argued that restricted access in shelters and correctional facilities means that products can be used as bargaining chips and tools of control for people in vulnerable circumstances.

“Equitable access to free disposable menstrual products is a necessity for menstruators everywhere,” said sponsor Sen. Pat Jehlen (D-Somerville). “This bill has the ability to ensure menstruators in public schools, shelters and prisons no longer have to experience anxiety, shame or fear around periods. Students in my

district were the first to meet with me and speak out about their concerns in school of not knowing if they would have access to menstrual products when they needed them. I am so glad to see this bill passed in the Senate which honors the work and courage of these students who have inspired so many more to break through the stigma and advocate for their peers.”

“Tampons and pads are a basic hygiene necessity,” said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). “Ensuring their availability—safely and without stigma—is key to advancing equity for women’s health. Menstruating people have always shouldered the burden of carrying their own tampons and pads into the restroom, leading to a quiet struggle all too real for the girls and women who have difficulty making ends meet.”

The Senate approved the same bill in the 2023-2024 session on October 26, 2023 and sent it to the House Ways and Means Committee where no further action was taken for more than a year and the bill died from inaction on December 31, 2024. Any individual representative in the 2023-2024 session could have acted to try to force the bill out of the Ways and Means Committee but none of the 160 House members did so. Any House member can still do the same anytime during the current 2025-2026 session.

Under House rules, any individual representative can move to discharge any and all bills from the Ways and Means Com-

mittee. There is a 7-day waiting period prior to the House considering the motion to discharge. The discharge motion must receive a majority vote of the members present. If the measure is discharged from the committee, the committee has four days within which to report out the measure for placement on the House’s agenda for action.

A bill may also be discharged from the Ways and Means Committee by any representative by filing a petition signed by a majority of the House. The bill would then be discharged seven days later and go onto the House agenda for the next session.

However, the Ways and Means Committee is often a burial ground for bills that will never again see the light of day.

“Rarely, if ever, does a member go either of those two routes against the wishes of the leadership and the committee chair,” said a state representative who requested anonymity. They told Beacon Hill Roll Call, “It’s no secret that Speaker Mariano controls the flow of legislation and a bill makes progress in the House only when he wants it to. Every member knows that one of the biggest sins is to publicly make a motion to discharge a bill from a committee. The leadership frowns upon that.”

House Ways and Means Committee chair Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston); Margaret Ann Ferrnate (D-Gloucester), vice chair of House Ways and Means; Todd Smola (R-Warren), the ranking Republican on

the committee; and House Speaker Ron Mariano did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking them to comment on the committee bottling up the bill and killing it.

Beacon Hill Roll Call asked Sen. Pat Jehlen (D-Somerville), the bill’s sponsor and Sen. Patrick O’Connor (R-Weymouth), a strong supporter of the bill, to comment on the killing of the bill.

“I support our House colleagues’ efforts this session, and in prior ones, to advance this important legislation,” Jehlen responded.

O’Connor responded, “Unfortunately, all too often within the legislative process we see bills that would benefit individuals across the commonwealth not make it across the finish line with the other priority bills the House and Senate both have on the docket. With the overwhelming support of [this bill] this session, I am confident now more than ever that we will finally be able to get this through the House and I will continue to urge my colleagues in both chambers to get this done.”

Spokespersons for two groups that are lobbying for House rules changes, including preventing bills from being unilaterally being killed by a committee chair, did not mince words when asked to respond to the death of the bill.

“As long as representatives forfeit their power, Michlewitz and a few unknown

staffers will keep sorting bills into yes/no piles behind closed doors,” said Aaron Singer, the producer and director of “Shadows on the Hill,” an upcoming documentary that he says asks why commonsense bills don’t pass the Massachusetts Legislature. “We don’t even know if there are women in that room. The real question is which representative will rally a coalition to rewrite House rules and reclaim the lawmaking process. Without reform, even small disagreements with leadership demand an outsized, conflict-heavy push.”

Scotia Hille, Executive Director of Act on Mass said, “Every session, our elected representatives in the Statehouse allow popular, commonsense legislation like this bill to die without a vote. Unfortunately, they would rather leave our state’s neediest without adequate menstrual care than defy leadership by using their own power to initiate a vote. So long as we allow chamber leaders to control member’s salaries, I fear we will continue to see this pattern unfold. Our legislators should be empowered to act independently and organize their peers behind legislation their constituents need. This situation and unfortunately many others like it motivate Act on Mass to support a reform to legislative stipends.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the bill.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

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Check us out Somerville Blessing Boxes on Facebook and please join the group!  
The outpour of support of donations that have been coming in of much needed supplies of foods, hygienic items and warm clothing from the generous people of Somerville is overwhelming.  
Its up to all of us to help when we can to make a difference in the lives of others especially in those of the

homeless and less fortunate.  
A “Somerville Blessing Boxes” Facebook page has been established keep everyone updated on donations and the Blessing Boxes inventory status. Please feel free to join the page and follow all the good that is being done everyday by the good people of Somerville.  
One blessing box is located at Statue Park in Davis Square and the other is located at Union Square, Plaza in Union Square.  
“Give what you can, Take what you need.”  
Much thanks and appreciation,  
Frank Santangelo

### Blessing Backpack Checklist

<p><b>BASICS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wool beanie (hat)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Smart wool socks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gloves</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scarf</li> </ul> <p><b>FOOD &amp; DRINK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quality instant coffee</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tea</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Energy drink</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Beef jerky</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fruit leathers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trail mix</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nuts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Granola bars</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Protein powder packets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant gift cards</li> </ul> <p><b>HELP THEM CONNECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Journal &amp; pen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stationary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stamps</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pre-paid phone card</li> </ul>	<p><b>TOILETRIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose wipes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chapstick</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facial wipes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Moisturizer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comb</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush &amp; tooth paste</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grooming kit</li> </ul> <p><b>SURVIVAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle with built in filter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Heat-pack</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose tool</li> </ul> <p><b>TREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chocolates</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fruit snacks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cookie snack packs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Candy (individually wrapped)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mints</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chewing gum</li> </ul> <p><b>SPLURGE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Starbucks gift card</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Compact reusable bag</li> </ul>
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## Somerville Expands Free Vaccine Clinics, Shares Updated Flu & COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance

SOMERVILLE – The Somerville Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is expanding access to free vaccination clinics to help residents stay healthy through the fall and winter. They are also sharing updated flu and COVID-19 vaccine guidance for the 2025–26 season. Clinics will be held throughout the city from October 2025 through April 2026.

This year, Somerville is following the latest recommendations from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH): [bit.ly/MassVaccineInfo](https://bit.ly/MassVaccineInfo)

**Vaccines Offered:**

Influenza (flu) (for anyone age 6 months and older)  
 High-Dose Influenza (for ages 65+)  
 COVID-19 (ages 6 months and older)

Somerville's free vaccine clinics are open to all residents regardless of insurance or immigration status, and no one will be turned away. Pre-registration is strongly recommended, but limited walk-ins are welcome while supplies last. Please note that clinics held at the Council on Aging are limited to residents ages 18+. All ages are welcome at all other clinics.

**Upcoming clinics in October**

and November are listed below. Additional clinics planned for December and January can be found on [somervillema.gov/vaccinations](https://somervillema.gov/vaccinations). More clinics are expected to be added to the website throughout the flu season.

Date/Time	Location
Tuesday, October 21, 2:30–4 p.m.	Council on Aging, 167 Holland St.
Monday, October 27, 5–7 p.m.	West Branch Library, 40 College Ave.
Tuesday, November 4, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Tufts Administration Building,

167 Holland St. Thursday, November 6, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
Office of Immigrant Affairs, 42 Cross St. Thursday, November 13, 1–6:30 p.m.
City Hall Annex, 50 Evergreen Ave. Tuesday, November 18, 2:30–4 p.m.
Council on Aging, 167 Holland Street Thursday, November 20, 3:30--5:30 p.m.
West Branch Library, 40 College Ave.

Vaccines are provided by the Somerville Public Health Nursing Department with support

from the Medical Reserve Corps and local health partners.

Residents may also receive flu and COVID-19 vaccines from their healthcare provider or at participating local pharmacies. To find other locations, visit [Vaccines.gov](https://Vaccines.gov), call 2-1-1.

For more information, pre-registration links, and the most up-to-date vaccine guidance, visit [somervillema.gov/vaccinations](https://somervillema.gov/vaccinations).

## REQUIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS (H 2644)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would allow cities and towns to require the installation of an automatic sprinkler system in any building with more than four units, which “undergoes a major alteration or modification and is occupied in whole or in part for residential purposes” including lodging houses, boarding houses, fraternity houses, dormitories, apartments, townhouses, condominiums,

hotels, motels and group residences.

This requirement would replace a current law that allows cities and towns to require the installation of an automatic sprinkler system in any building with more than four units, which is “substantially rehabilitated so as to constitute the equivalent of new construction.”

Both the current law and the bill allow cities and

towns to require the installation of an automatic sprinkler system in newly constructed buildings.

Supporters of the bill said that the “major alteration” standard is more inclusive and will apply to more buildings than the “substantially rehabilitated so as to constitute the equivalent of new construction” standard. They argued that changing the standard will save more lives.

They noted that automatic sprinklers work fast and give people more time to escape. They said that according to the Massachusetts Fire Sprinkler Coalition, having both sprinklers and smoke alarms reduces the risk of dying in a home fire by 80 percent. They also pointed out that automatic sprinklers put out 90 percent of home fires before the fire department arrives, which reduces firefighters’ exposure to the toxic products

of combustion that cause cancer.

Once again, Rep. Dan Hunt (D-Boston), the sponsor of the proposal, did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking him to comment on his bill and its approval.

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## Somerville to Honor Victims of Domestic Violence at Annual Vigil on October 28



One candle glowing in a dark room  
Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, the Somerville

Commission for Women, RESPOND, Inc., and the Department of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) invite residents to attend the City's annual Domestic Violence Vigil on Tuesday, October 28, at Somernova (19 Properzi Way) at 6 p.m.

This annual vigil is dedicated to commemorating the lives lost to domestic violence in the past year,

recognizing the strength of survivors, and renewing our community's shared commitment to eradicating domestic violence.

Attendees are welcome to join neighbors from across Somerville and raise a candle in remembrance of domestic violence victims. Community groups will be tabling with information

and resources.

"Each year this important vigil brings us together as a community to stand in solidarity with survivors, victims, and all who are impacted by domestic violence," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "As we gather, we build on their strength with our collective strength. We honor those lost by holding them in our collective

memory. And we reaffirm our collective commitment to ending the violence and creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone in Somerville. All are needed for this effort, and all are welcome to join us."

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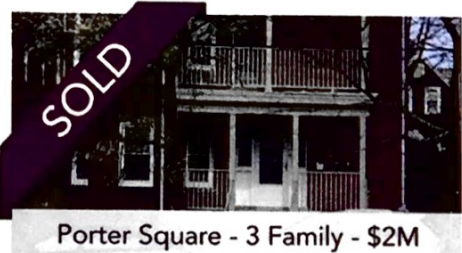
Porter Square - 4 Family - \$2.1M



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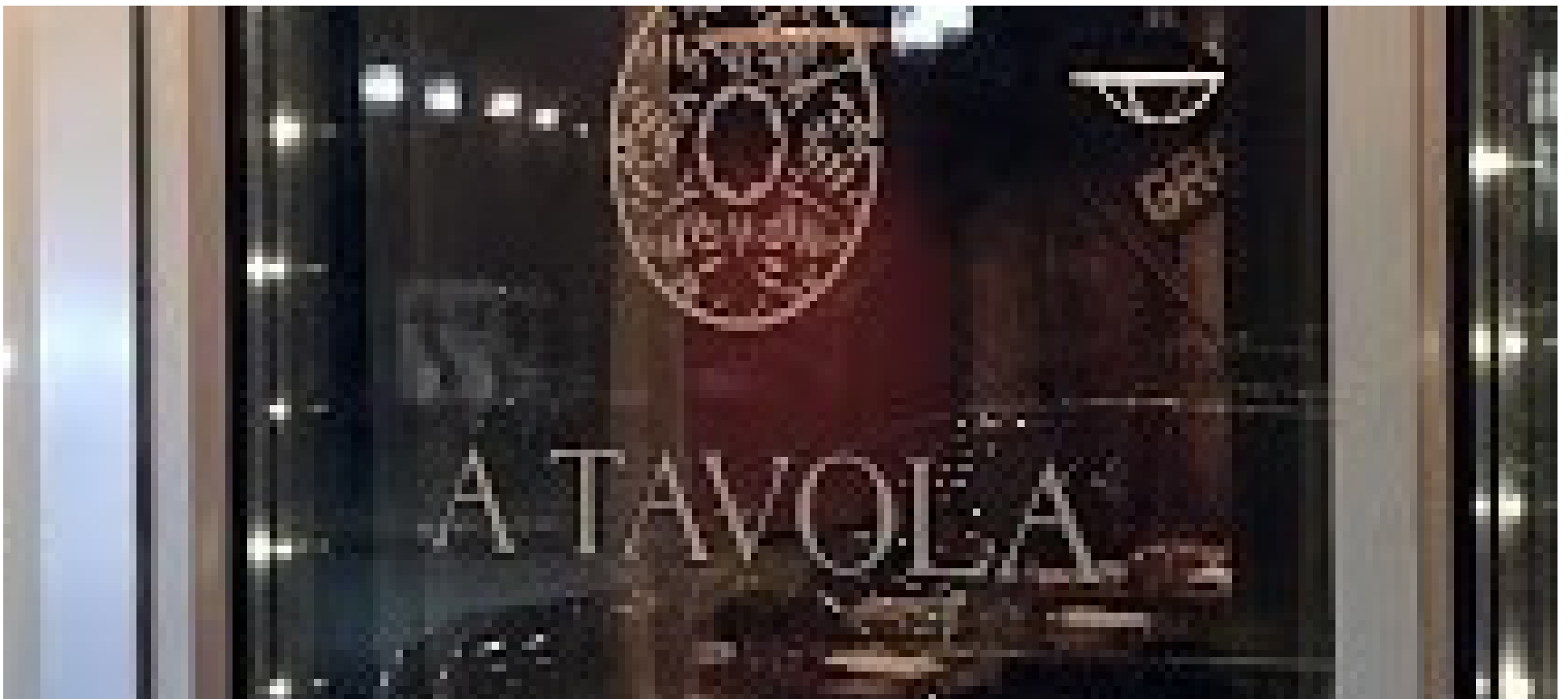
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