

# The Boston Globe

Serving our community since 1872

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

## Once-promising, his future now in peril

After series of questionable investments, Tompkins goes from jailer to defendant

By Danny McDonald  
and Andrew Ryan  
GLOBE STAFF

Five years ago, longtime Suffolk County Sheriff Steven Tompkins had every reason to think he was looking forward to a lifetime of easy reelections.

Nearing retirement age, he held a post many Boston voters are scarcely aware of that paid him around \$190,000 a year.

But a lot changed for Tompkins in a short period of time. He invested a chunk of his nest egg into a cannabis company, and then refinanced his home in Hyde Park, taking on significant additional debt. Days later, he bought a half-million-dollar rental property in Roxbury.

On the same day that purchase closed, one of his top aides announced she was running against him — a stiff challenge that prompt-



Sheriff Steven Tompkins

ed Tompkins to put up tens of thousands of dollars of his own money to fight off.

Soon, the value of his stake in the

weed company was in free fall. And that's when Tompkins doubled down on what prosecutors say was already an illegal deal and demanded that the owner of the cannabis company refund his \$50,000 investment.

Now, Tompkins faces charges that could put the longtime jailer behind bars himself. Last month, a federal grand jury indicted the sheriff on two counts of extortion for allegedly using the power of his office to strong-arm the cannabis company.

**TOMPKINS, Page A10**

## For Fed, a political, economic quandary

Rate-setting board facing pressures from job market, inflation — and Trump

By Jim Puzzanghera  
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve officials meeting this week to decide whether to lower interest rates face an extremely daunting task: addressing the conflicting problems of rising inflation and a slowing job market while dealing with unprecedented attacks on the independence of the central bank.

Their difficulty is highlighted by a simple but stunning fact: leading up to the start of their two-day rate-setting meeting Tuesday, it remained unclear who would be voting on monetary policy as President Trump has infused chaos into the federal government's last stronghold against such disarray.

The status of Fed Governor Lisa Cook, whom Trump is trying to fire in a first at the central bank, is in the hands of an appeals court after a federal judge ruled she could remain in the job amid her legal challenge.

And Senate Republicans are rushing to vote Monday to confirm Trump nominee Stephen Miran to a newly open seat in time for the meeting. Miran has said he will not resign as a top White House economic official and will only take an unpaid leave while serving at the Fed, raising con-

**FEDERAL RESERVE, Page A6**

## Kirk suspect held 'leftist ideology,' says Utah governor

Motive for slaying unclear; arraignment set for Tuesday

By Jack Healy and Orlando Mayorquin  
NEW YORK TIMES

ST. GEORGE, Utah — Governor Spencer Cox of Utah on Sunday provided details about the background and political leanings of the 22-year-old accused of killing Charlie Kirk, saying the suspect had a "leftist ideology" and had been in a romantic relationship with a partner who was in the process of transitioning from male to female.

Cox, speaking on NBC's "Meet the Press," described the suspect, Tyler Robinson, as a "very normal young man" who appeared to have been "radicalized" some time after he dropped out of college and moved back to his hometown in southern Utah, where he had spent the past few years.

Cox did not go into specifics about Robinson's

**KIRK, Page A7**

### Campus concerns

Students at Utah Valley University strive for civil discourse; conservatives at Harvard University hold vigil. **A7, B1.**

'We're going to be slamming this little precious lake of ours with a ... ton of a chemical.'

KIRK MELONEY, on treatment of Lake Kanawatka



PHOTOS BY JIM DAVIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Owen Tucker (left) and Logan Tarts, University of New Hampshire researchers, took water samples on Lake Kanawatka.

## A dying lake, a desperate remedy

Toxic bacteria overwhelmed a N.H. lake. The solution could be deadly to fish.

By Amanda Gokee  
GLOBE STAFF

MOULTONBOROUGH, N.H. — Kirk Meloney remembers the crystal clear waters of Lake Kanawatka from visiting as a boy, when the water was clean enough that he and his family drank it during vacations in the 1970s.

But one morning in 2020, Meloney saw the entire lake had turned an alarming shade of Gatorade green, the result of an out-of-control bloom of potentially toxic cyanobacteria that can harm humans and animals.

The lake had crossed its tipping point, according to water quality experts, with nutrients from fertilizer, stormwater runoff, and increased levels of phosphorus fueling the cyanobacteria growth. By 2023, aerial photos showed the cyanobacteria blooms in Lake Kanawatka flowing downstream and leaking into Lake Winnepesaukee, threatening the state's largest lake and an economic engine.

Amid worsening conditions, the lake association pursued a last-resort chemical treatment: coating the lake with aluminum compounds that could end up killing fish and other aquatic life and that wasn't guaranteed to fix the problem.

"We're going to be slamming this little precious lake of ours with a ...

**LAKE, Page A10**



A pontoon boat delivered researchers across Lake Kanawatka, which has been inundated with cyanobacteria.

## Upcoming election seen as referendum on Somerville mayor

By Spencer Buell  
GLOBE STAFF

SOMERVILLE — The city is at a "tipping point," Mayor Katjana Ballantyne said last week.

On that, the city's chief executive and her two challengers can agree, just as they do on broad political strokes in this longtime progressive stronghold of 82,000 people.

But in Tuesday's preliminary election for mayor, voters will have a say on whether a new executive is needed to steer a city with a sky-high cost of living, new developments reshaping tightly packed streets' look and feel, and new threats from a federal government bent on making an example of places that lean as far left as Somerville. The contest will narrow the field to a head-to-head race and measure the appetite of voters to do something extraordinary in Massachusetts: unseat a sitting mayor.

The first to announce a campaign was Jake Wilson, an at-

**SOMERVILLE, Page A7**

### GRABBING VICTORY NO. 1



BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF

Wide receiver Mack Hollins nabbed a touchdown pass from Drake Maye, helping to spark the New England Patriots' victory Sunday over the Miami Dolphins, 33-27, in Miami. **C1.**



### Seize the ray

**Monday:** Lots of sun.  
High 69-74, low 56-61.

**Tuesday:** Foggy start.  
High 69-74, low 56-61.

Sunrise: 6:24. Sunset: 6:54.

Weather and comics, **D4-5.**

Obituaries, **B6.**

VOL. 308, NO. 77

\*

Suggested retail price  
\$4.00



**Transplants of kidneys from genetically altered pigs could free patients from the wear, tear, and stress of dialysis. D1.**



**"The Studio," which starred Seth Rogan (left), broke a record set last year by "The Bear" with 12 Emmy wins. C10.**

**New details of the last day of the life of Sandra Birchmore have been unveiled** in secret disciplinary hearing for a former Stoughton deputy chief accused of sexual misconduct. **B1.**

**President Vladimir Putin has been emboldened by a summit with President Trump and a meeting with Chinese leaders,** analysts say, with Ukraine facing more intense attacks. **A3.**