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Wednesday, May 1, 2024 - Vol. 20, No. 27

FREE

Adopt a Pet in 2024

By Ava Moeckel, Reporter



Photo by Mary Lytle Lemmon and Lime were adopted last year

REGIONAL – The MSPCA achieved a major milestone in 2023 with the adoption of 10,500 homeless pets.

“That’s just one of many milestone moments for our veterinary, sheltering, advocacy, and anti-cruelty programs,” said Neal Litvack, president and CEO.

But the overpopulation of dogs and the lack of adopting homes has put thousands of dogs at risk of euthanasia throughout the country. More than 1,600 dogs were transported by the MSPCA to Massachusetts from areas of the country where adoptions are scarce.

According to the Shelter Animals Count, which tracks shelter data across the country, euthanasia rates are 22 percent higher than last year, with 96,000 more dogs expected to be euthanized due to lack of

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Help Wanted Ads - Page 7

A Ferry for the Merrimack

By Stewart Lytle, Reporter

REGIONAL – For many who lived here before us, the Merrimack River was a primary means of transportation. The river was a critical for fishing, hauling supplies and travel from town to town.

Noah Berger, the administrator for the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority, does not imagine the river will ever again supplant streets and highways as MEVA’s top source of transporting riders.

But a ferry could become a part of the regional transit system that serves the Merrimack Valley, a fun and exciting addition for visitors and residents.

As soon as the summer of 2025, Meva may test two solar-powered ferries that will carry up to 15 riders per trip between Haverhill and Newburyport with a stop in Amesbury. The ferries will also use ferries to ply the river between Amesbury and Newburyport.

The ferries, Berger said, will be low profile, 28-foot-long ferries.

“Don’t think Staten Island ferries,” he said. Or the Hy-Line ferries from Hyannis to the islands.

The trip from Haverhill’s city dock to Newburyport’s waterfront will take an hour or a little more, he said. The trip across the river from Amesbury to Newburyport will take 15 to 20 minutes.

MEVA was awarded \$4.2 million from the federal government to develop the ferry service.

The plan is to use the existing downtown municipal docks in Haverhill, behind 100 Washington St. and Newburyport, behind 54 Merrimack St., which served the Yankee Clipper boat tours. In Amesbury, the ferry will use a



Photo provided by the city of Amesbury Mayor Cassandra Gove, Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll and Police Chief Craig Bailey at the state capitol.

renovated municipal dock, which is being upgraded a part of a state grant of \$840,000 to improve the dock and other waterfront facilities.

Berger expects to issue a request for proposal soon to build the ferries.

“Our vision is to integrate all transportation services, buses, vans and eventually trains with the ferry,” Berger said. “If everything goes right, it could have a test run in the summer of ’24.”

The ferries will be distinctive as they ply the river. Berger plans to have them painted the same Caribbean color scheme as MEVA’s buses and vans.

MEVA, which operates its buses and vans fare free, has not yet determined if travel on the ferries will also be free. “I would like for the service to be fare free, given how successful the fare-free program has been with our bus service,” Berger wrote in an email.

The regional transit authority will also work with all three communities to determine the need for upgrades to the docks and to design anything needed, including low-profile, charging infrastructure, he wrote.

Thanks to Continued on page 3

Georgetown BOS Fail to Depose Bancroft

By Stewart Lytle, Reporter



Image courtesy of georgetownma.gov

L. to R. - SelectBoard members Rachel Bancroft, Robert Hoover, & Amy Smith

GEORGETOWN – In one of the most contentious and confusing hearings, the SelectBoard met in executive session last week to oust a fellow SelectBoard member Rachel Bancroft from her position as Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission.

But after an hour of hotly contested debate, the SelectBoard could not even agree on what the purpose of the meeting was. It went into the televised meeting with no resolution on removing Bancroft from her position as Vice Chair of the ConComm.

“What a messy meeting last night...,” wrote Bruce Fried, the Vice Chair of the town’s Planning Board and a candidate for next month’s SelectBoard election. The board had “No cause” and “No authority to ask her to step down as Vice Chair.”

A member of two town committees has petitioned the SelectBoard to remove Rachel Bancroft from her positions on the Conservation Commission and the Community Preservation Commission.

In a complaint of more than 1,300 words, Michael Donahue cited her lack of “professional competence” in making town decisions as the reason Bancroft should be removed.

“Some members of the BoS may think this is a complaint against her reputation and/or character rather than professional competence, (reference to MGL Chapter 30 a section 21); either way the BoS chooses to handle this, this really needs resolution,” he wrote.

This is the second SelectBoard member who has had a complaint filed against him or her. Last year, a group of more than 100 residents filed a petition, asking then chair Doug Dawes to step down as SelectBoard chair. The SelectBoard took no action.

Chair Amy Smith wrote to The Town Common that she has received Donahue’s complaint. “After consulting with town counsel, we are waiting for Ms. Bancroft to be available to meet with the town administrator, Conservation Commission Chair, and me,” Smith wrote.

Donahue accused Bancroft, the ConCom Vice Chair, of violating open meeting laws by talking with other ConCom members when the commission was not in session. He also accused her of filing “retaliatory” police reports against him and his friend Kevin Wood, who has filed a large number of requests against the town under the state Freedom of Information Act.

Continued on page 3

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How to Submit Letters to the Editor



Marc Maravalli, B.S., R.Ph. Publisher/Editor, The Town Common

Letters to the Editor provide a useful way of communicating concerns, issues, or suggestions to all members of the community.

The Town Common encourages all citizens to submit letters concerning issues of interest and concern to the local community.

Letters selected for publication may be edited for length and clarity. Some letters may serve as a catalyst for other articles or coverage, and community leaders and agencies will be offered an opportunity to respond to letters concerning their areas of responsibility.

All letters must be signed and include a daytime telephone number.

Letters may be submitted to:

The Editor
c/o The Town Common
77 Wethersfield St.
Rowley, MA 01969

or preferably via e-mail to:
editor@thetowncommon.com.

The Town Common deadline is 5pm Wednesday (except when a federal holiday necessitates an earlier deadline).

Correction

Regarding last week's article 'Local Election Turns Nasty' it has been brought to our attention that the Attorney General's Office has recently determined that the Georgetown Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen have violated Open Meeting Laws as brought forth by Kevin Wood.

In addition, while Michael Donahue remains a candidate for Selectmen, he is not one for the School Committee.

The Town Common

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In loving memory of

Liz Ichizawa, '04-05 Reporter (1956 - 2005)
Jim Wilson, '20-22 Publisher/Editor (1954-2022)



Letters To The Editor

Concerning MBTA 3A Zoning

Vote No on Article 32 May 6 Rowley Town Meeting. Long term effects of 3A zoning should be carefully considered. Town officials seem too eager to push this Article through and have made little effort to consider anything but undocumented short-term consequences. 3A zoning is completely unfunded. Don't let your vote be swayed by the loss of grants provided by the state that are currently unfunded or the threats of unspecified lawsuits if the vote outcome is not what the state expected. Costs impacting our school budget, infrastructure and dilution of public services has not been studied. Approving the 3A zoning proposed is like signing a blank check for future infrastructure costs, traffic congestion, degradation to the environment. It erodes home rule and relinquishes control of local zoning and the character of our town to a state agency controlled by entrenched politicians and not the people of the town.

Rescue Rowley Citizens Committee

LEGAL NOTICE

ROWLEY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS - CASE# 24.03

A Public Hearing will be held at the Town Hall Annex, 39 Central Street, on Wednesday, May 15th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to act on an application received April 22nd, 2024 from Core States Group c/o Stonefield Engineering & Design. Applicant(s) is Requesting a Special Permit from section 4.10.3.2 of the RPZB and for a Variance from section MGL c40A§10 & RPZB sec 7.1.2 for the construction of a proposed freestanding Chase bank with drive-thru ATM. The property is located at 165 Newburyport Turnpike in the Retail district and is shown on Assessors' Map 957 Block 14 Lot 13. At the public hearing, members of the public may ask questions and present evidence that supports either the approval or denial of this petition.

0501, 05/08

LEGAL NOTICE

ROWLEY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS - CASE# 24.02

A Public Hearing will be held at the Town Hall Annex, 39 Central Street, on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to act on an application received April 3rd, 2024 from Modern Heritage on behalf of Rachael Maiocco & Anthony Percoco. Applicant(s) is Requesting a Special Permit for an addition of a barn to an existing barn under section 5.2 of the Rowley Protective Zoning Bylaw from the Board of Appeals. The property is located at 217 Main Street in the Central district and is shown on Assessors' Map 25-36. At the public hearing, members of the public may ask questions and present evidence that supports either the approval or denial of this petition.

0501, 05/08

LEGAL NOTICE

GEORGETOWN CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1 Library Street, Georgetown, Massachusetts 01833
(978) 352-5712 • FAX (978) 352-5725

A Public Hearing will be held by the Georgetown Conservation Commission on Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 7:00 PM, by Zoom Link found on Town Website Calendar date of meeting 76 Jackman Street, Public Hearing for a Notice of Intent for the construction of a Pool within 100 feet of a Bordering Vegetated Wetland.

Contact person: Michèle Grenier, PWS (978) 352-5712

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1 Wed	5:37	8.4	6:23	7.4			12:10	0.4	5:34	7:45	☾
2 Thu	6:40	8.4	7:23	7.7	12:27	1.3	1:09	0.3	5:33	7:46	☾
3 Fri	7:44	8.4	8:22	8.2	1:31	1.0	2:08	0.2	5:32	7:48	☾
4 Sat	8:45	8.5	9:17	8.8	2:35	0.5	3:03	0.0	5:30	7:49	☾
5 Sun	9:44	8.7	10:09	9.3	3:34	0.0	3:56	-0.1	5:29	7:50	☾
6 Mon	10:39	8.7	10:59	9.7	4:29	-0.5	4:46	-0.2	5:28	7:51	☾
7 Tue	11:31	8.7	11:48	9.9	5:22	-0.9	5:35	-0.2	5:27	7:52	☾

Community-Led Rewilding Project at Veasey Memorial Park

GROVELAND - Veasey Memorial Park in Groveland hosted a community-led event to plant 1800 trees and shrubs in the Miyawaki planting method, on April 26th and 27th. The initiative, a collaboration between the town, local residents, and the Massachusetts Master Gardeners, aimed to enhance biodiversity by planting 4000 square feet of forest. The project showcases the town's commitment to conservation and sustainability.

The rewilding project has generated local interest, emphasizing the importance of restoring native habitats and ecological balance. With a focus on environmental stewardship, the initiative invites community participation to create a thriving ecosystem at Veasey Memorial Park. Visit <https://www.veaseypark.org/rewilding> for more information and to get involved.

Rowley Democrat Meeting

ROWLEY - The Rowley Democratic Town Committee is holding its May meeting on Tuesday, May 7 at 7pm at the Rowley Public Library, with special guest Sara Stanley, Executive Director of HAWC (Healing Abuse Working for Change). HAWC is a leading agency committed to ending domestic violence in Massachusetts, serving more than 2,500 families in the North Shore area each year. Stanley will discuss the organization's role and impact in the community, and how we can help.

At our meeting, we will be hosting a toiletries and diaper drive (disposable) for HAWC, so please bring what you can! The HAWC wishlist includes full size toiletries (not travel size), feminine hygiene products, and disposable diapers (specifically larger sizes). Can't make the meeting but still want to donate? Send us an email at rowleydemocrats@gmail.com and we can coordinate!

The Rowley DTC provides a forum to meet like-minded people, learn about local issues and candidates, and be active participants in the political process. For any questions about our meetings or to be added to our monthly newsletter please email rowleydemocrats@gmail.com.

Obituary - Ralph M. Titus

Ralph M. Titus, passed away on April 20, 2024. He was born in Boxford, MA, son of the late Henry U. Titus, Sr., and the late Edna M. (Hicks) Titus. Ralph grew up in Boxford and Topsfield and graduated from Topsfield High School in 1949. A Korean War veteran, Ralph joined the Navy in 1950 and was honorably discharged in 1954. He married his lovely sweetheart, Diana Tagg from Boxford in 1957 at the Congregational Church of Topsfield and became members in December 1957. He volunteered for many positions including six years on the Board of Trustees and ten years on the Fair Booth Committee. He also worked at the Fair Booth for many years during the Fair. He also belonged to the Council on Aging in Rowley and served as Treasurer for the Friends of the COA. He attended night school at Feener Technical School in Boston and earned a Certificate in Machine Design while working at Vulcan Electric Co. in Danvers. He then went to work for GTE Sylvania and continued his education at Northeastern University nights and earned an Associate Degree in Mechanical Engineering. He received several Design awards while working in the Design Department. He worked for two years in the Service Group and was then promoted to Supervisor of a Design Group. Ralph retired in 1993, and he and Diana decided to travel. They enjoyed cruises to the Caribbean, Hawaii, and Alaska. They also took trips to the Canadian Rockies and Bermuda, where Ralph was stationed while in the Navy.



Ralph is survived by his wife, Diana of 66 years, and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his four brothers, Richard E. Titus, Gerald A. Titus, Henry U. Titus, Jr., and Robert P. Titus and two sisters, Dorothy A. Griffin, and Eileen F. Fairweather.

Calling hours were on Sunday, April 28th at F. S. Roberts & Son Funeral Home, 14 Independent Street, Rowley. Funeral Service was at the Topsfield Congregational Church, 9 E Common Street, Topsfield, on Monday, April 29th. Interment was at Pine Grove Cemetery, Topsfield, followed by a Collation at the Church's Emerson Center, Fellowship Hall. Donations may be made to Care Dimensions Hospice at 75 Sylvan Street, B102, Danvers, MA 01923 or to The Congregational Church of Topsfield, MA.

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Ferry

Continued from page 1

the state grant, the Washington Landing boat ramp, which serves as the city's only public access to the river, will be replaced. The state funds will also add about 900 square feet of boardwalk to support the harbor master office and access the boat ramp. There will also be a new gangway and a 100-foot finger dock for the boat ramp facility and transient vessels.

The parking area will be improved and the living shoreline will be restored next to the boat ramp.

Amesbury Police Chief Craig Bailey and Nick Cracknell, director of the city's community and economic development, wrote the application for the funds to improve recreational access to the river and support potential economic development along the waterfront.

Two marinas that utilize the boat ramp, John Jay McPartland, owner of the Marina at Hatter's Point, and Dan Healey, owner of the Marina at Amesbury Point, committed funds for the design, permitting, and future maintenance of the dock.

Mayor Cassandra Gove called the state grant "a huge win for Amesbury."

The improvements to the Washington Landing boat ramp and the proposed development of the adjacent marina, Gove said, will transform the area and will provide safe access to the Merrimack and foster economic growth.

Newburyport Choral Society Annual Spring Concerts

NEWBURYPORT - The Newburyport Choral Society will present their annual spring concerts on Saturday May 4th at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 5th at 4:00 p.m. at Pentucket Regional High School's new auditorium in West Newbury. The concerts include some of the most passionate choral music ever written celebrating the resilience of the human spirit and the power of hope. The performances feature Maurice Duruflé's glorious Requiem, and 20th Century French composer Lili Boulanger's majestic Psalm 24. The chorus will be accompanied by an 18-piece orchestra, including strings, trumpets, timpani, harp, piano and organ. Featured vocal soloists will be mezzo-soprano Katherine Maysek, and baritone Will Prapestis. The concerts are funded in part by the Local Cultural Councils of Merrimack, Newbury, Newburyport and Salisbury, as well as a grant from the Institution for Savings Charitable Foundation. For information and tickets, go to tickets.chorusconnection.com/nbptcs/events/1008.

Georgetown

Continued from page 1

Donahue based much of his complaint against Bancroft on accusations of payroll fraud by a former staff member against the former town conservation agent Steve Przyjemski. The accusation, which Town Administrator Orlando Pacheco repeated to The Town Common, have been investigated by KP Law, the town attorneys, and

dismissed.

The law firm investigation concluded that Przyjemski, who resigned more than a year ago citing the toxic work environment at Town Hall, could not have committed fraud on his payroll timesheets because he was an exempt employee and was not required to report his time.

Bancroft, said Donahue's complaint is based on "a false narrative."

Adopt a Pet

Continued from page 1

placement.

The number of dog adoptions is down a more than 1 percent from last year. If the decrease continues through the end of the year, about

20,000 fewer dogs will be adopted nationwide in 2024.

Interested adopters may visit mspc.org/adoptadog to see the dogs available for adoption, and visit open hours to talk to the staff at any of the MSPCA's shelters in Boston, Methuen, Salem and Centerville on Cape Cod.

Rowley Artist - "The Coast Up Close"

TOPSFIELD - Slow River Studio, located at 17 Main Street in Topsfield, will proudly host the debut show of painter and Rowley resident Rachel Fondell beginning Sunday, April 28 and running through June 22. A middle school English and social studies teacher at St. John's Prep and the mother of two young boys, the artist spends her summers exploring New England's coastal landscapes with her family and her winters painting. Fondell's primary medium is acrylic and the gallery will hang 35 of her works depicting still life renderings of dockside and inner-coastal scenes as part of her show entitled "The Coast Up Close."

All work from "The Coast Up Close" is now available for viewing and purchase online through 6/22 at slowriverstudio.com.



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Georgetown to Host Budget Fair and Candidate Night, Featuring Individual Department Heads and Board Candidates

Free Children's Activities Provided with Free Food, Movie Night and Arts/Crafts for All Georgetown Children

GEORGETOWN – The Town of Georgetown, including Select Board Chair Amy E. Smith, Town Administrator Orlando Pacheco, Superintendent of Schools Margo Ferrick, Police Chief David Sedgwick, Fire Chief Matt McKay and other department heads and leaders in town are pleased to announce that the Town of Georgetown will host its first Budget Fair and Candidate Night event, offering town residents the opportunity to meet face to face with town leaders and ask questions about the municipal budget process and to meet and greet with candidates for elected office in town.

In what the Town hopes will become a tradition every year during budget season, this event will also feature free activities for kids, courtesy of the Georgetown PTA, and feature arts and crafts and free food and entertainment for kids.

WHEN: Friday, May 3, 2024 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Penn Brook School, Gymnasium (Budget Fair), Cafeteria (Kids Activities), 68 Elm St., Georgetown

WHO: Numerous Georgetown officials and leaders will be present with their own tables. Rather than creating a rehash of budget presentation events, residents will be able to pick and choose the “booths” they wish to visit, with leaders offering remarks about the budget process and answering questions from residents.

Town leaders on hand will include:

- Town Administrator Pacheco
- Members of the Georgetown Select Board
- Members of the Georgetown School Committee
- The Georgetown Finance and Advisory Committee
- Superintendent Ferrick
- Chief McKay and Georgetown Firefighters
- Chief Sedgwick and Georgetown Police Officers
- Georgetown Council on Aging staff and volunteers
- Georgetown Peabody Library Director Sarah Cognata
- Town Clerk Kerri McManus

Each department will have its own station with handouts, literature, presentations and people to meet and greet residents in attendance.

Additionally, candidates for Select Board and School Committee have been invited and will have equal space to discuss their platform and answer questions from residents/voters.

“One of the most common pieces of feedback we receive from our residents is that they are hungry for more information about the budget — not just the numbers but how our department heads arrive at their final numbers and exactly how the town budgeting process works,” Town Administrator Pacheco said. “It is our sincere hope that an event like this, instead of a typical on-stage speaking program, will help residents not only better understand the process but also get to know their town leaders in this informational, informal setting. We hope to see a great turnout on May 3!”

No RSVP is necessary for attendees. The event is open to all, and the kid's activities are 100% free to all families attending the Budget Fair event.

The All-Scout Paper Drive Jan 13th

The All-Scout Paper Drive will be held on Saturday May 11, 2024 from 9:00am to 12 noon behind the First Congregational Church of Rowley on Main Street. The Scouts will be collecting newspapers, books, cardboard, and magazines. The Boy Scouts will be collecting redeemable bottles and cans. The Boy, Cub and Girl Scouts of Rowley thank you very much for helping to keep Scouting active in Rowley.

The paper drives are held the second Saturday of odd numbered months. If you have any questions please call George Pacenka at (978) 948-7918. Non-perishable items including diapers, paper towels, toilet paper will also be collected at this time for the Rowley Food Pantry.

Bird Watching & Marsh Talk at Rough Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary

Tuesday, May 7, 9-10:30AM
In-person at Rough Meadows

Mass Audubon's David Moon will guide participants through Rough Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary in Rowley in search of some of the many birds that make their homes in the Great Marsh. Early May is a time of increasing migration of tropical birds on their way to breeding habitats both in this region and further into the north country of Maine and Canada. David will share what he is seeing and hearing for birders of any level including beginners.

Recent advances in low-impact techniques hold great promise for helping the marsh to keep up with sea level rise, and David will also show the group what is going on with the salt marsh restoration work that they are planning at the sanctuary and across the Great Marsh.

The tour will be on even terrain on dry roads and trails, but for some moments might walk on and across squishy spots in the salt marsh. The total distance may be about 1.5 miles. The group will meet in the Rough Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary parking lot on Patmos Rd. in Rowley.

Rain date will be Thursday, May 9. Registration is appreciated for this in-person program. To sign up or for more information on this or other programs, check the Rowley Library web site at www.rowleylibrary.org/calendar, or call (978) 948-2850.




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By J. PETER ST. CLAIR, DMD

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BASEBALL + TEETH = BAD

The following day, Sprinz "murmured" through his hospital bandages and a wired jaw reflecting on what happened: "I had the ball judged all the way. The ball hit my glove. ... [It] didn't hit my face. The jar of the ball drove the mitt back against my mouth and caused all the damage."

"Most of the eight teeth lost were bridgework and can be replaced," his doctor noted. Sprinz chimed in that he was more hurt and baffled by his failure to hold onto the ball "than he is hurt by his hurts." He returned the following year in May 1940 as the starting catcher for the Seals, claiming he was "just as good" as he was before the accident.

After his retirement from baseball in 1942, he worked with the Seals back office and later with little leagues and the San Francisco Parks and Recreation Department, developing intercity baseball. Sprinz died in 1977 in San Francisco. He was 91.

Sprinz's catch was officially recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records as the World's Highest Catch in 1994.

In 2013, baseball sportswriter Zack Hample decided to break Sprinz's

record. He accomplished the feat in July 2013, catching a baseball dropped from a helicopter at 1,050 feet. Unlike Sprinz -- and maybe because of him -- Hample wore protective gear, including a catcher's mask, hard-shell protective headgear, and breast plate. Nobody from the Guinness World Record organization attended, although invited. Hample lost no teeth. Officially, Sprinz still holds the record.

Lesson #1: Don't try to catch a baseball dropped from any flying machine; it's not worth it.

Lesson #2: Baseball is not considered a contact sport but there are many ways "contact" can be made with the mouth. Despite the fact that mouthguard protection is not the "in" thing to do when playing baseball, I highly recommend it.

Dr. St. Clair maintains a private dental practice in Rowley dedicated to health-centered family dentistry. He has a special interest in treating snoring, sleep apnea and TMJ problems. If there are certain topics you would like to see written about or questions you have please email them to him at jpstclair@stclairdmd.com

Graduation at Mark Warner's PMA

Recently, 25 students of all ages were tested and promoted at PMA. Starting at 9am the students were tested on their abilities and knowledge of the martial arts. The participants were sweating smiling and even managed to learn a little. At the graduation the PMA Demonstration Teamed performed and refreshments were served. A very good day for all. - Mark Warner's Professional Martial Arts Academy, 43 Market St, Ipswich, MA. 978-356-9800



Civil War Roundtable of the Merrimack

Hilton Senior Center,
43 Lafayette Road, Salisbury, MA
Wed, May 8 - 7:30 to 9:30 PM

There will be a brief business meeting after which we will be joined by author Robert Conner. He will present a talk on his book James Montgomery: Abolitionist Warrior. Montgomery was a leader of the free-state movement in pre-Civil War Kansas and Missouri, associated with its direct-action military wing. He then joined the Union Army and fought through most of the war. He was a close ally and associate of many other prominent abolitionists.

This event is free and open to the public.



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