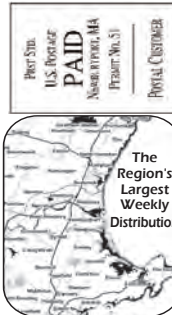


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FREE

CANDIDATE MESSAGE



TOPSFIELD Chris Ruggles

Topsfield Voters:
My name is Chris Ruggles and I am a candidate for Select Board in Topsfield. My wife Elise and I have been residents for 23 years. We raised our daughter here where she attended Topsfield Elementary Schools and Masconomet Middle and High Schools. I have volunteered as soccer

Continued on page 6



Brendan Sweeney

Sweeney to Leave Boxford for Ipswich

By Stewart Lytle, Sr. Reporter

IPSWICH - The Select Board last week voted unanimously to offer the town manager position to Brendan Sweeney, a native son, who currently serves as Boxford's assistant town

Continued on page 6



Designers in front of the Tenney masthead are (from left); Edith Heyck, Maria Russell, Jennifer MacLaren, Donna George, Margo Pullman, Patricia Chandler, Alexandra Gray, Carol Gura and Maria Sterk. Photo by Stewart Lytle

Tenney Statute Celebrated at Custom House Maritime Museum

By Stewart Lytle, Sr. Reporter

NEWBURYPORT - The Custom House Maritime Museum (CHMM) drew a crowd last week to celebrate the raising of more than \$25,000 to secure the acquisition of the 9-foot masthead

of one of the city's most famous philanthropist join the museum's collection of clipper ship art and artifacts.

Praising CHMM director James Russell as "the man who saved the Tenney," chairman Robert Cronin and Russell toasted the more than 100 donors to

the compacted fundraising campaign.

Not counted yet is the auction proceeds from the sale of 13 floral designs by local garden societies and florist shops in the annual Boats in Floom event. Last year, the auction raised about \$6,000, said Janet Collett, who conceived and

organized the floral event.

"We were a little concerned about raising \$25,000 in such a short time," Russell said. "That's a lot of money. Nantucket didn't really need the money, but wanted to be paid."

Continued on page 8

Selectman Paul B. Thompson Funeral Saturday at St. Mary's

by Lonnie Brennan

GEORGETOWN - Called home to reunite with his bride Catherine ("Buffy"), Georgetown's longest-serving selectman of recent memory passed on April 14, 2026 at the age of 93.

Mr. Thompson, long-retired from political life, will be remembered by many, as he touched and enriched the lives of neighbors and friends throughout his brief journey amongst us.

A member and officer of the American Legion, former Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus, and friend to many, his burial mass will be held Saturday, April 25 at 10:30 a.m. at Saint Mary's Church on 94 Andover Street in Georgetown. ♦



Paul B. Thompson at Town Hall, Dec. 2001 (Photo by Lonnie Brennan)

West Newbury Briefs
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Groveland Farms
PAGE 7

Why an Underride for the Town of Georgetown?



Kay's View
by Kay Lee Ogden

passed.

Several months ago, I became aware of bill coming before the legislature (S.2902) that would allow towns to establish tax relief programs for seniors! With regret, the bill lingers with no clear timeline for consider-

Georgetown voters are being asked to consider something the town has never done before: an underride. Statewide, only 24 underrides have been attempted - and every one of them has

ation and possible passage.

Rather than waiting for some unknown, I was thinking of a way that we could help our seniors, and the less fortunate in our town. I did some research and learned about the "underride." Since I've been to many houses, and have witnessed first-hand, elders and families making choices between their food, utilities, medicine, and new taxes, I knew I had to help somehow!

**"Vote Monday
May 4 at Town
Meeting"**

In January, I submitted a citizens' petition proposing a \$1.5 million underride. This follows last year's \$6 million override. This proposal represents

Continued on page 4



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Founder/Publisher/Editor 2004 - 2024
Advisory Board Member: 2024 - present

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

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**Newburyport Bank Appoints Amanda
Kelcourse VP, Commercial Loan Officer**

NEWBURYPORT - Newburyport
Bank is pleased to announce the pro-
motion of Amanda Kelcourse to Vice
President, Commercial Loan Officer,
based out of the Bank's Main Office at
63 State Street in Newburyport.

Kelcourse brings 23 years of bank-
ing experience to her role and most
recently served as Vice President, Busi-
ness Banking Officer at Newburyport
Bank. As a commercial lender, she is
responsible for attracting, developing,
and maintaining commercial lending
and deposit relationships with indi-
viduals, nonprofits, and businesses
throughout the Bank's footprint. Her
work focuses on building long-term
partnerships and delivering financial
solutions tailored to support busi-
ness growth and community devel-
opment.

"Amanda's depth of experience,
strong local relationships, and com-
mitment to serving businesses across
our region make her an outstand-
ing addition to our commercial lend-
ing team," said Elliot Smith, SVP,
Community Lending Team Lead
for Newburyport Bank. "She under-
stands the needs of our business cus-
tomers and brings both expertise and
integrity to every relationship."

Kelcourse holds a Bachelor of Sci-
ence degree from UMass Lowell and
has completed continuing educa-
tion in Business Administration. She
is deeply engaged in the community,
volunteering with the Exchange Club
of Greater Newburyport, where she



Amanda Kelcourse
serves as Treasurer, and at her son's
school. She is also a Board Member
of the Greater Newburyport Cham-
ber of Commerce and serves on its
finance committee.

"I'm proud to continue growing my
career at Newburyport Bank and to
support the businesses and nonprofits
that make our communities strong,"
said Kelcourse. "Building lasting rela-
tionships and helping local organiza-
tions access the capital they need to
grow is the most rewarding part of
what I do."

A resident of Amesbury, Kelcourse
enjoys spending time with her hus-
band, James, their sons Michael and
Thomas, and their dog, Boo. Outside
of work, she can often be found cheer-
ing on her sons at sporting events and
spending as much time outdoors as
possible.

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22	Wed	3:43	9.6	4:26	8.0	10:14	-0.6	10:27	0.6	5:49	7:33	☾
23	Thu	4:43	9.2	5:27	7.8	11:15	-0.3	11:31	0.8	5:48	7:34	☾
24	Fri	5:47	8.8	6:31	7.7			12:17	0.0	5:46	7:35	☾
25	Sat	6:52	8.5	7:35	7.8	12:37	0.9	1:20	0.2	5:45	7:36	☾
26	Sun	7:57	8.3	8:35	8.1	1:45	0.8	2:21	0.3	5:43	7:38	☾
27	Mon	8:59	8.2	9:30	8.3	2:49	0.7	3:17	0.3	5:42	7:39	☾
28	Tue	9:54	8.1	10:19	8.5	3:46	0.4	4:07	0.4	5:41	7:40	☾
29	Wed	10:44	8.0	11:02	8.6	4:37	0.3	4:52	0.5	5:39	7:41	☾

West Newbury Briefs

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Hydrant Flushing! Flush Your Pipes Too!

... check the water before washing laundry!

WEST NEWBURY - The West Newbury Water Department 's spring hydrant flushing will continue through Friday, May 1st from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

At this time hydrants on roads south of Main Street are scheduled to be flushed April 20th - 24th and hydrants on roads north of Main Street are scheduled to be flushed April 27th- May 1st.

Flushing hydrants will cause the water to become discolored as sediment is removed from the water system and property owners may experience intervals of low water pressure as well. **If you have discolored water, wait until flushing is completed in your area and at a minimum wait 15-minutes and then run the cold-water faucet until the water runs clear.**

Do not run the hot water, as discolored water can be pulled into your hot water tank and take longer to clear up.

Before doing laundry, residents are advised to run the cold water to make sure it runs clear. Try to avoid using

bleach whenever possible, as it may cause the iron and manganese to permanently stain clothes.

If clothing is stained after washing, DO NOT MACHINE DRY.

There are products available, free of charge, in the Water Department office that will help take the stain out during re-washing or you can purchase the product at most grocery and hardware stores. The product would have a name like **Iron Out or Rust-B-Gone. Residents should only plan on washing laundry during the evening hours, after 6:00pm when flushing is not scheduled.** Continue to wash laundry in the evening until Friday, May 1st and when flushing will be completed.

Please note that hydrant flushing takes place twice a year in West Newbury during the months of April and October.

The Water Department appreciates your cooperation during this period.

If you have any questions please contact the water department at (978)363-1100 ext. 1127.

NEWBURYPORT TREE COMMISSION

Pruning Demonstration and Talk to Celebrate Arbor Day at Newburport YWCA 'Labrinth'

The Tree Commission (TC) and Friends of Newburyport Trees (FoNT) will celebrate Arbor Day on Saturday, April 25th by holding a pruning demonstration and talk at 9:30am at the YWCA, 13 Market Street Labyrinth, Newburyport. Mayor Sean Reardon will read the annual Arbor Day Proclamation. In case of rain, the event will be postponed until Saturday May 2nd at 10:30, same location.

Anyone wondering how to care for your own trees and shrubs, now's the time to find out! Members of the Tree Commission and FoNT will demonstrate pruning techniques and discuss timing. Literature will also be available. Questions are welcome.

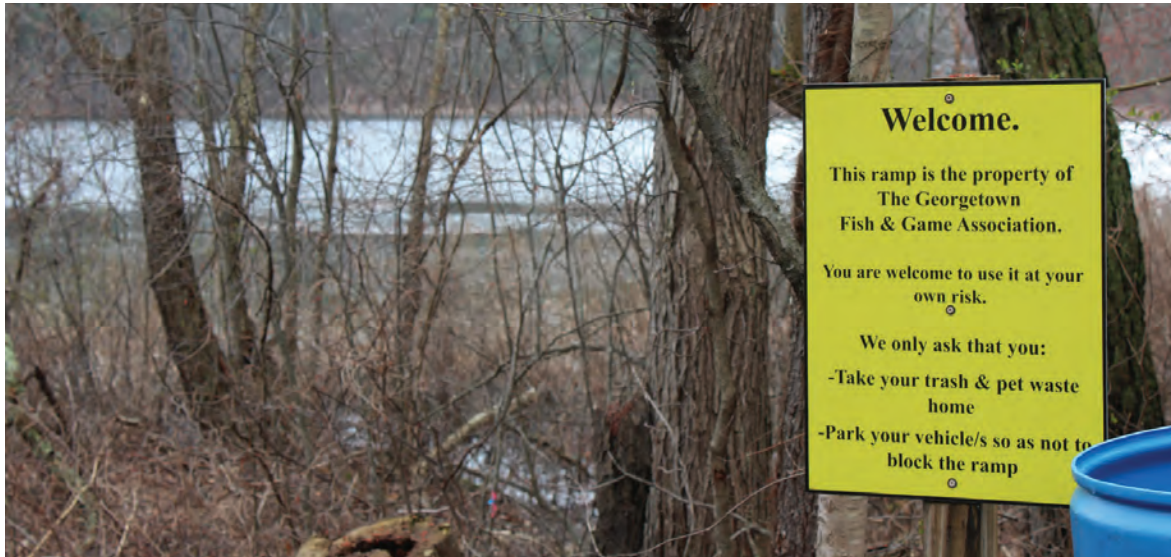
The Tree Commission works in conjunction with the Tree Warden to oversee and facilitate the increase,

protection and maintenance of the City of Newburyport's street tree canopy. Board meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month (except July and December) and the public is welcome to attend.

Friends of Newburyport Trees is a volunteer non-profit organization that provides tree education to the community and raises funds to help the City plant and care for Newburyport's street trees.

To learn more visit or www.cityofnewburyport.com/tree-commission or www.fontrees.org.





Sign near the boat ramp on Pentucket Pond owned by the Georgetown Fish and Game Association (Photo by Stewart Lytle)

Town Tries to Limit Pentucket Pond Water Skiing

By Stewart Lytle, Sr. Reporter

GEORGETOWN – Police here have issued only one permit for waterskiing on the 88-acre Pentucket Pond, but it

was about as murky as the pond water whether the town had authority to issue even that permit.

With waterskiing season approaching, the Select Board met last week with

Police Chief David Sedgwick and Office Tyler Shane, who acts as the town's harbor-master, to ask how the town should proceed to figure out if waterskiing is allowed on the relatively small pond. Sedgwick and Shane were responding to a complaint by a resident, who bought a house on the pond and apparently claimed her Realtor said that no motorized vehicles were allowed on the pond.

Pentucket is not owned by the town. At almost 90 acres, Pentucket exceeds the 50 acres that makes it a state-owned Great Pond.

Forty-four years ago, the town tried to pass a bylaw governing activities on the pond, but the measure was never ratified by the state, leaving governance of activities at the pond uncertain. The pond is governed by State law MGLchapter 90B.

To complicate the activities allowed on the pond, the ramp on the pond is privately owned by the Georgetown Fish and Game Assn. Town Administrator Orlando Pacheco said the ramp was in poor repair, mostly gravel and mud.

And Pacheco offered to apply for state grants to repair the ramp so more boats could be unloaded from trailers into the pond. The problem, according to former harbor-master and long-time Conservation Commission chair Carl Sheder, is that being privately owned, the ramp would not be eligible to apply for public funds.

Any privately funded improvements to the ramp would have to be approved by the town's Conservation Commission.

Most of the users of the pond are kayaks and small fishing boats, said Selectman Doug Dawes, a member of the Fish & Game Assn.

When the motorized ski boats, which travel at 34+ mph when pulling a skier, are on the pond, other users cannot safely use the area.

The SelectBoard voted that chief Sedgwick and Officer Skane should

Continued on page 11



Merrimac Purple Sage Potters Sale

MERRIMAC, Mass. – The Purple Sage Potters Offer their work for sale twice a year at Purple Sage Pottery, 3 Mechanic Street in Merrimac. o

Twelve local potters will offer a variety of sculptural, decorative, and functional ware on Saturday, May 2nd, from 10-5, with a rain date of Sunday, May 3rd. After a particularly long New England winter, the Purple Sage potters are thrilled to be supporting the current trend of vibrant color in home décor.

From functional tableware to whimsical birdhouses, and garden ornaments, color abounds! Paying careful attention to both form and function, the potters are creating pieces designed to enhance everyday experiences. They recognize the simple joy that comes from a favorite coffee mug that fits perfectly in your hand.

In addition to the exploration of brighter colors, much of the pottery on display will also reflect the tradition of earth tones and neutral glazes that enhance any collection. The Open Studio Sale offers a unique opportunity to see an array of thoughtfully crafted functional art created here in

the Merrimack Valley.

Joining studio owner and founder Iris Minc on May 2nd, will be Purple Sage teachers Lisa Mistretta and Jenny Graf; League of New Hampshire Craftsman juried artist, Hiromi Sato; and Studio members Lucy Hutchinson, Judy Nevius, Karen Girard, Kathy Clark, Jodi Bevelaqua, Meg Wiley, Emily Samataro, and Darlene Beal.

For more information about Purple Sage Pottery and the spring show, go to www.purplesagepottery.com, call 978-346-9978, or connect with them on Facebook or Instagram. ♦



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UNDERRIDE

Continued from page 1

a partial correction - reducing the tax burden while maintain core services.

We are not going to lose accreditations of police, or schools. The council on aging, and other departments, will not close due to this reduction! This is the scare tactic they used on us last year to pull the wool over our eyes, like the sky is falling! Please do not believe the untruths that people are talking about, or on Facebook! They are all lying and will try to do anything they can to stop us from getting this passed! You watch what they try! Look up facts yourself, you'll find that these facts are correct!

It is not up to me to rewrite the budgets to try and save money for our town! In the past, every year, we put money away for a rainy day! Not now. They want to spend it all and ask for more!!!! The people that are responsible for the budgets are the department heads of each department. At home, we have to live within our budgets.

They can ask for up to 2.5% increase, anything above that, is an override if they ask for it! Please bear in mind that we also need to take into consideration insurance, energy sources, snow removal, contracts, vendors, and keeping our equipment in tune and up and running!

In years past, we would put money away and save. Jim Davis, one of our previous financial directors, by moving money around from bank to bank, and other skills he had, made us a million dollars! I don't think that we ever grew beyond that, and I don't think we even have that now!

The average homeowner in Mass. pays approximately \$7,732 - \$8,000 in taxes per year. Our rate is now \$13.76 per thousand in Georgetown!

Our schools account for 70% of our budget, serving approximately 1,123 students. At

the same time, about 239 school-aged children residing in Georgetown are not enrolled in the district.

Our school system is comprised of a ratio of roughly 4.4 employees per student. We have approximately 270 employees, and, we have a very heavy administration!

So, I asked the finance committee chair: "why do we have so many principals, and assistant principals?" I was told, "K through 6 grades, have problems!" "What kind, disciplinary?" The answer was "yes." "You mean we are paying thousands of dollars for babysitters?" ... No answer!

In the town of Georgetown, we care about all our students, they are our future! I believe our new superintendent took on a job that had many problems, and I believe in her, that she is working extremely hard to work through a lot of problems that were left to her! My heart goes out to her; she has an extremely tough job!

It's time to reflect, stay informed, and participate.

Please register to vote before April 23rd, 2026 at the town clerk's office! Make sure you get your absentee ballot also!

Make sure that you attend the town meeting, Monday, May 4th, at 7:00, at the high school.

Please go early to get a seat, and do not leave until the end, as someone could make a motion for reconsideration of the underride article! And we could lose!

If this article passes, it will have to be voted on again by the selectman, to go on to the November ballot!

Please tell all your friends and neighbors, as I cannot do this alone!!!

Responsible budgetting and active participation will determine whether Georgetown remains affordable for ALL the people who call it home.

Thank you, Kay Lee.

More Open Meeting Law Complaints, Minutes Scrambles, Automation Woes

by Lonnie Brennan

GEORGETOWN - The SelectBoard had to play catch-up, once again, on meeting minutes. As previously reported and detailed, Georgetown has a habit of falling further behind in releasing meeting minutes than seemingly all surrounding communities (and only seems to manage to play catch-up when resident **Kevin Wood** files yet another Open Meeting Law violation complaint).

At last week's meeting, Chair **Robert Hoover** mentioned there were many reasons why the board fell so far behind (16 sets of minutes, at least, were outstanding, including those dating back into 2025), but emphasized that there was no ill intent, and that they are on now on top of things. He explained that the list also includes five sets of minutes from private Executive Sessions, four of which can now be released. The board set a special meeting for Tuesday, April 21 to address outstanding minutes.

The town of Georgetown employs a town administrator, **Orlando Pacheco**, as well as Administrative Assistant **Maureen Shultz**. Shultz attends most meeting via Zoom while the board appears in person at town hall with their other employee. The pair is responsible for drafting the minutes; the selectboard is responsible for reviewing, correcting, and voting to release the minutes to the public in a timely manner.

Some of the 16 sets of lagging minutes included those from this year's meetings of:

January 5, 2026, January 12, 2026, February 9, 2026, February 26, 2026, March 5, 2026, March 9, 2026, March 23, 2026, March 26, 2026.

Zoning Board of Appeals Dumps Minutes Service.

They had enough! At the town's Planning

Board meeting two weeks ago, Zoning Board of Appeals member **Tom Mulligan** was on their Zoom-only meeting and related that the ZBA has eliminated the costly and confusing transcription service they were using to prepare minutes. "We probably did seven meetings and the minutes that we were receiving back from them did not even meet the minimum qualifications."

Mulligan related that they even had town counsel review the minutes and that were told the minutes were not even meeting the bare minimum requirements. "Our admin. was spending more time making corrections. I don't know how many times I was called either Rob Hoover, Bob Watts, Frank O'Connor, all these different names ... we ended up stop using the service. We had to pay our final couple months of the invoice to the town. We got really no value out of this service..."

Town Planner **Frank O'Connor** said he didn't see the advantage in using the service which adds a cost of \$80 to \$100 to each meeting. "I don't see the value add," O'Connor concluded.

Open Meeting Law Violation on Appeal

At press time, it appeared yet another Georgetown Open Meeting Law Violation was headed for adjudication by the State.

As reported last week in this paper, Town Administrator Orlando Pacheco and the Selectboard Chair Rob Hoover accommodated a last-minute agenda change to discuss an exploration of changing the form of government for Georgetown. This rushed agenda change - placed after the required 48-hour posting notice - was questioned by Selectman **Michael Donahue** for compliance with state law. In response to his inquiry, the board's employee, Pacheco retorted:

Continued on page 6

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21st Greater Newburyport Literary Festival Features Updike

By Stewart Lytle, Sr. Reporter

NEWBURYPORT – Michael Updike, a marvelous sculptor of delicate silver platters, boots and bowls as well as huge granite gravestones, will bring his wit and insights into his father’s mastery of the great American novel to this year’s weekend of celebrating all things literary.

A resident of Newbury, Updike is the son of the world-famous John Updike, who spent much of his life in Ipswich. Michael will open this year’s Newburyport Literary Festivities at the Firehouse Center for the Arts. He will engage in conversation with New York Times Book Review critic Alexander Jacobs, a life-long John Updike fan about the 900-page collected Updike letters by James Schiff.

“We are thrilled to offer the Greater Newburyport community a robust range of authors, poets, and historians for our 21st annual Newburyport Literary Festival,” said Newburyport Literary Association President Jill Gross, a festival co-director along with Vice President and Treasurer Paula Breger. “All through the winter we offered events for our reading community to stay connected with us in order to continue offering the festival for no charge to our many patrons, and we are so appreciative of the support. We encourage all readers to join us for the festival, and immerse into a weekend of hearing from their favorite authors in our beautiful city.”

All festival events are free except Friday evening’s welcome event immediately following the opening ceremony. Upstairs at Mission Oak Grill, light appetizers will be served along with a cash bar. Tickets are \$50 on the festival’s website or by check mailed to the Newburyport Literary Association, Box 268, Newburyport, MA 01950.

For 21 years in a row, including a change in leadership over the last year, the festival will feature readers, authors and poets celebrating the love of books and learning through panel discussions.

Events continue early Saturday morning at 8:30 a.m. with the Breakfast with the Poets and continue throughout the day. A wide range of distinguished biographers, poets, novelists and historians will read from and discuss their work. Authors and poets include Catherine Newman, Annie Hartnett, Andre Dubus III, Marianne Leone, Gish Jen, Alan Lightman, Christine Pride and Jenna Blum.

Planned panels will focus on romance novels, humor and immigration, and Caleb Gayle (Black Moses) will speak as part of a session sponsored by the Massachusetts Center for the Book. A Melopoeia for Charles Coe will be performed by the original Diminished Prophets, and Newburyport High School’s Poetry Soup students will read original works.

Saturday evening’s event, Women’s Voices of Rebellion and Revolution, features readings of women’s writing at 7 p.m. at the Firehouse. As the U.S.

Continued on page 11

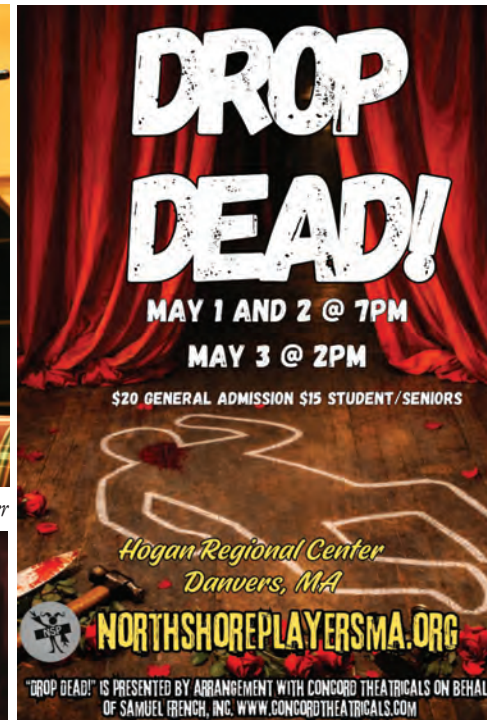


Dick Scorsese, cousin of Martin Scorsese, as Inspector Mounds

Mona, as Bette, tries to shoot Drools, the butler



Brent, as Alexander, and Mona, as Bette, discuss who killed ...



Chaz Looney, as Drools the butler, announces the arrival of Lady Barrington.

'Drop Dead!' - North Shore Players - Danvers, Mass.

Submitted by Martin Fucio

The North Shore Players, a community theater in Danvers, presents the comedy-murder-mystery “Drop Dead!” A cast of has-been actors, led

by an insane director, is trying to stage a murder-mystery. Then the real murders happen. It’s at Hogan Regional Auditorium, 450 Maple St., Danvers. Curtain is at 7 p.m., May 1 and 2, and

2 p.m. on May 3. Tickets, \$15-\$20, and other information at www.northshoreplayersma.org. The North Shore Players is a 501(c)3 non-profit, and has been on the North Shore since 1957.

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CHRIS RUGGLES

Continued from page 1

coach with TAA, worked on our Rail Trail, attend Town Meeting religiously and devoted many hours attending or watching our Town Board meetings.

I was raised in East Hartford, Connecticut in a home where political discussion was frequent, heated, and fun. Friends and family took part in Town and State politics and government. I believe I am uniquely qualified for this job. As a trained scientist, I hold a Ph. D. in chemistry and have worked with scientific information systems utilizing AI technology for many years, developing products to assist chemists with discovering new pharmaceuticals and materials. I have a strong connection

to nature and a deep desire to preserve and conserve these resources and will support our efforts to develop a more sustainable way of life. Having served the Northshore Unitarian Universalist Church as Board Chair, and Meeting Moderator I'm familiar Board and meeting rules. I am semi-retired teaching chemistry at North Shore Community College in Danvers and Lynn.

As your Select Board member, I will always respect your views, engage in civil discourse, and strive to engage in thoughtful, data-driven discussions surrounding town issues. Though we will ever agree 100%, you will always know where I stand and you will come to learn I am willing and happy to be persuaded by a cogent argument. I will approach every question before

me with the following guiding perspectives front of mind. How does it effect: A) Residents' daily lives, B) Topsfield's economic growth, and C) Our natural resources?

So why do I want to serve on the Select Board? I in the wise words of my tennis-loving, Yankee dad, I want to "leave the place better than you found it" and "Never fix a winning game." A tall task to be sure, but as my Irish mom might have said, "Do it with love and you won't go wrong."

So as a Connecticut Yankee with an Irish heart, I ask for your vote at our annual Town election Thursday, May 7th at St. Rose of Lima Church.

Please reach out to me rugglesforselectboard@gmail.com if you have any questions, suggestion! ♦

SWEENEY

Continued from page 1

administrator. Sweeney was selected over fellow finalist Steve Bartha, Lexington's town manager, while a third candidate, West Newbury Town Manager Angus Jennings, announced he would become the business manager at Whittier Vocational and Technology High School. A total of forty people applied for the position of Ipswich Town Administrator.

SelectBoard Chair Michael Dougherty called the decision of selecting the successor to Stephen Craine, as town administrator, one of "the most important decisions" the SelectBoard will make. Carl Younger has served as interim town manager.

The town administrator in Ipswich

has a lot of authority, making many decisions that shape the town, Dougherty said.

All five board members noted Sweeney's ties to Ipswich, where his parents still live. Dougherty quoted Sweeney saying it would be a "homecoming" for him to work in Ipswich.

An Ipswich High School graduate, Sweeney has served for nearly four years as Boxford's assistant town administrator and finance director.

Vice Chair Charles Surpitski said Boxford Town Administrator Matt Coogan told him he would miss Sweeney, and a finance committee member wanted to wear a sign to their meeting that said Don't Take Brendan.

Working in Sweeney's favor was his age. Being in the first half of his career, Sweeney has the opportunity "to make his bones" in Ipswich, Dougherty said.

He added it would be good if Ipswich could have the town administrator stay more than four years.

Sarah Player said one of the challenges for Sweeney will be "to heal some of the fractures" that exist among what she described as "a very skilled" town staff. She noted Sweeney's career has included being Boxford's finance director and has served at the state level as well as an elected official on the Beverly City Council and running for mayor.

"He is very experienced on a lot of levels," Player said.

Alexson said she was impressed that Sweeney did not avoid difficult questions and expects he will do the same with residents and staff.

The SelectBoard entered into an executive session after the vote to begin negotiating an offer to Sweeney. ♦

MINUTES & MTGS.

Continued from page 4

"I would say file an Open Meeting Law complaint."

Friction between the selectman and the town administrator has been obvious, with similar retorts which some

members have stated, though not on the record, border on or constitute blatant "insubordination."

In another matter, Donahue had asked for a meeting to review the process of the recent firing of the town's conservation agent. Despite Donahue's request and the board vot-

ing to place the item on the agenda for an upcoming meeting, no action has been taken in several weeks. We expect to hear more on this matter as the **former conservation agent** has shared that her lawyer was scheduled to engage the town just after our deadline. ♦

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Groveland News



By Mike Dempsey

Groveland Farms

Groveland was always a farming community. Through the years, as more houses have been built and more people have moved to town, farms have taken on a much smaller role in our community. Do we even have any farms left?

We do have some farms that are commercial in scale with the farmers making a living from the activity. However, we also have many small-scale farms or hobby farms where residents raise animals for their own or their nearby neighbors' benefit.

According to the town code enforcement officer, Groveland residents raise 74 horses, 38 cows, 15 goats, 3 pigs, 3 donkeys, 2 alpacas, and many farm birds.

As towns become suburbs, many times they are forced to severely restrict both commercial and small-scale farming. Will that happen to Groveland? Do we need a new measure to protect farming in town? Does Groveland need a Right to Farm Bylaw?

According to recent discussions at the Select Board, a protective bylaw may be put on the town meeting warrant either this year or next. The bylaw would protect farms and farmers from harassment or neighbor complaints. A dispute resolution procedure would be included. Many residents provided the Select Board with comments requesting such protection at a recent meeting.

Be on the watch at this year's annual town meeting on April 27 for a bylaw to protect farms in Groveland.

No More Code Red

Groveland used a program called Code Red to notify residents of dangerous situations, missing persons, or imminent bad weather. A message would be sent to any resident providing an email address, cell phone number for texts or phone number for a phone call. The program has been helpful but does have its limits. It also costs the town money to use it.

A new program has gone into effect this past month called the 911 Center Alerts which will replace Code Red. The new program has similar features but also offers new benefits. In addition, it will no longer cost the town to use it. You can sign up to be notified in specific instances on the town website, Grovelandma.com.

Residents may choose to receive Emergency Alerts only, Non-Emergency Alerts only or Both Emergency and Non-Emergency Alerts.

Emergency Alerts include urgent situations such as hazardous material spills, missing persons or children, and other high-priority public safety incidents. Non-Emergency Alerts include important but non-urgent updates such as hydrant flushing schedules, detour notices, water main breaks, trash collection delays, and community event announcements. Sign up now to stay informed!

New Trash Contract

Groveland has signed a new contract for a trash collecting. This is just ahead of the current five-year contract expiring in June. The new contract is with G. Mello Disposal Corp and will be in place for five years. It will begin on July 1 2026.

According to the Town Administrator Rebecca Oldham, trash collection will continue on a weekly basis. Residents will be able to place one 64-gallon container on the curb each week. The town will supply each residence with a single 64-gallon container for trash. Recycling will be picked up every two weeks.

Residents are to use the already supplied 96-gallon container provided last year. Before the new contract begins, residents will be given a new schedule for both trash and recycling pick-up days. The contractor will also allow residents to bring any overflow trash to its new transfer station in Georgetown. All questions about the new contract should be directed to the town administrator

at town hall or by calling 978-556-7204. The most exciting part of the new contract is that it will save the town and residents money. We may save up to five hundred thousand dollars over the life of the contract. In addition to the town administrator, much work to accomplish the new contract was provided by the Trash and Recycling Committee.

Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2027

It is that time of year again when we will approve a new town budget for the next fiscal year, 2027. As of March 16, Town Administrator Rebecca Oldham announced that she does not expect that any overrides will be needed to enact a balanced budget. The is great news for residents. Due to cost savings from the new trash contract and the switch to the regional dispatch center for fire and police calls, expenses will be lower. However, education costs continue to rise. Select Board members will continue to request that our state representative and senator help us to provide some relief for those rising costs. ♦

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MARITIME MUSEUM

Continued from page 1

Tenney, who was a successful New York City jeweler, generously supported Newburyport. Born in 1800, Tenney, who lived to age 81, contributed in 1863 to buying the Tracy House, today the reading room of the Newburyport Public Library.

Fourteen years later, he paid for the installation of bronze lamp posts along Pleasant Street in front of City Hall. And in 1878, he donated the life-size, bronze statue of Gen. George Washington by renowned artist John Quincy Adams Ward. The statue of the nation's first President today greets pedestrians on Bartlett Mall and motorists along High Street.

When legendary clipper ship builder John Currier, Jr., was constructing a new two-mast, square-sail brig, he chose to name it for Tenney and have a famed wood carver cast his likeness as the ship's 9-foot masthead.

Since 2023, that masthead, which hung on the bow of the ship, has been on loan from the Nantucket Historical Assn. Now the only masthead like it that once hung on a clipper ship will remain permanently in the Newburyport museum, Cronin said.

All 13 of the designs were inspired by the art and artifacts in the museum. Members were encouraged to bid on the arrangements. Russell said he may keep the Beach Plum arrangement next to Tenney "for a while," as Jay Lesynski of Merri-Mar Yacht Basin finishes building the new base. His base will allow the statute to be positioned at a 45-degree angle, as it was on the ship.

The event included hors d'oeuvres by Kefi Caterers and live music with guitarist Mark Young.

The floral displays were provided by Beach Plum Flower Shop and Lisa Green; Dew Collective and Jennifer MacLaren; Flower Fauxnatic and Alex Gray; Greenery Designs and Terrance Gleason; The Hive and Cate Adamopoulos; Pullman Designs and Margo Pullman; Sweetbriar Studios and Anna Smith; Martha Bower; Patricia Chandler; Donna George; Carole Gura; Edyth Heyck; Sally Milliken; Maria Sterk; the Newburyport Garden Club and the Newburyport Horticultural Society.

Donor gifts of \$250 or more will be listed on a plaque.



In front of the masthead of Daniel Tenney is Janet Collett, who organized the floral donations from seven local designers. (Photo by Stewart Lytle)



In front of the masthead of Daniel Tenney is Janet Collett, who organized the floral donations from seven local designers. (Photo by Stewart Lytle)

The Town Common

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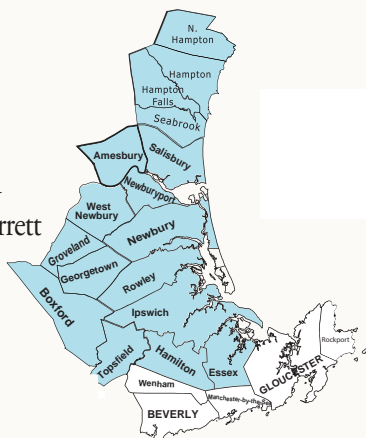
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Letters To The Editor

Town on Legal Hook Regarding Agent Firing

To the Editor:
Georgetown Town Administrator Orlando Pacheco engaged an outside law firm over a year ago to counteract Town Counsel KP Law's opinion that only the Conservation Commission has the authority to hire/terminate the Conservation Commission agent. He never obtained approval or direction from the Board of Selectmen.

By doing so he violated Georgetown Bylaw Chapter 125-1 which specifically empowers only the Board of Selectmen to engage counsel.

Mr. Pacheco received his opinion and kept it a secret and never informed the Board until after he exercised this "authority" to terminate Conservation Commissioner Michele Grenier. In fact, even after Ms. Grenier was terminated, The Town Common reported there was a "Town Counsel Opinion" which the paper corrected in the following edition to state "Counsel" as town counsel apparently was not consulted.

When Mr. Pacheco terminated Ms. Grenier, he did not have Selectmen approval. This violated another bylaw, Chapter 105-3 which limits authority to the Board of Selectmen.

This bylaw was specifically amended at last year's annual Town Meeting [Article 12]. The citizens expected, demanded, that the Board of Selectmen weigh in on all hires or terminations. This is part of the job we require them to do. It's the law.

So what did the Selectmen do? They voted at their March 26th meeting to place the issue on the upcoming agenda. Chairman Hoover failed to do that, so it was brought up at the end of their April 13th meeting and decided to include it with their Special Meeting on April 21st. Except Chairman Hoover again failed to place it on the agenda despite a VOTE of the board to do so.

Meanwhile, Ms. Grenier has prepared to sue the Town. And boy does she have a case.

So, where is this "Special Counsel" opinion Mr. Pacheco relied on to nullify our Town Bylaw? It's a secret. He claims it is protected by attorney client privilege. Well then, what's the name of this "Special Counsel"? Sorry, that's secret too.

He refused a record request for that information, and an appeal has been filed with the Secretary of State Record Supervisor. And he will lose.

So, we have a very public Bylaw, passed at a public Annual Town Meeting – contrasting with a very secret new law created by a secret attorney with no legal standing with the Town. That sounds like Communist China.

And Board Chair Rob Hoover must think this is just fine, as he has taken no action in the matter, and multiple times refused to even place it on the agenda. This is the same response he had to Ms. Grenier's performance related to Open Meeting Law Determination 2025-175. This was the same conduct Mr. Pacheco cited in his Termination Letter where he found Ms. Grenier failed to

produce complete documents pursuant to a record request regarding the Commission's February 26, 2026 meeting. This was the same thing, except now there was a transcript which captured Ms. Grenier saying in reference to Mr. Pacheco: "Oh, boy. And I wanted to say, it's your f*cking job"

That's what got her fired.

It wasn't her performance. Her statement apparently so offended and angered Mr. Pacheco that he illegally

fired her – in violation of Georgetown Bylaws.

What Hoover should have done is convene an emergency meeting:

- Vote to suspend Mr. Pacheco with pay pending an investigation.
- Vote to rescind Ms. Grenier's termination.

- Vote to issue her an apology. There's more to this story. Stay tuned. It gets even worse.

Vote wisely this year. The Town needs new blood.

Kevin Wood
Georgetown

DEATH NOTICES The loss of loved ones in our communities, compiled exclusively for The Town Common by Michelle Leininger.

Name	City/State Live	Funeral Home
Paul B. Thompson	Georgetown, MA	Funeral Service at St. Mary's on Andover St. Sat. April 25th, 10:30 a.m.
Richard E. Manning	Rockport, MA	CR Lyons & Sons Funeral Directors, Danvers, 978-777-7900
Dorothy Estelle Burak	Beverly, MA	Campbell Funeral Home Beverly, 978-922-1113
Christopher P. Rand	North Andover, MA	Conte Funeral Home, North Andover, 978-681-5000
Elizabeth Farrah Picard	Salem, NH	Conte-Giamberardino Funeral Home, Georgetown, 978-352-8700
Gregory James Morse	Groveland, MA	
Ann M O'Brien	Lynnfield, MA	
Josephine A. Mattuchio	Woburn, MA	Conway Cahill-Brodeur Funeral Home, Peabody, 978-531-0472
Karen Lynne Levenson	Peabody, MA	
Cynthia Bettencourt	Peabody, MA	
Paul H. Voyer	Peabody, MA	
Bhikhabai Patel	Haverhill, MA	Driscoll Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Haverhill, 978-374-0000
Jeremy David Isabelle	Amesbury, MA	E.V. Jutras & Sons Funeral Home, Amesbury, 978-388-0430
F. Rita (Bilodeau) Groves	Haverhill, MA	Kevin B. Comeau Funeral Home, Haverhill, 978-521-4845
Peter Prescott	Ipswich, MA	Morris Funeral Home Ipswich, 978-356-2422
Katherine Marie Addie	Brentwood, NH	Remick & Gendron Funeral Home, Hampton, NH, 603-926-6500
George W. Snow, Jr.	Hampton, NH	
Robert E. Leary	Hampton, NH	
Arthur K. Watkins, Jr.	Hamton Falls, NH	

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POND SKIING

Continued from page 3

limit the skiing to weekdays, leaving the weekends and holidays for non-motorized boats.

Normal licensed motor boats could

still operate on non-ski days per state law. The town cannot prevent that, Shreder said.

The ski course, laid out by the permit holder, are defined by buoys that are deflated and sink to the pond bottom when not being used. ♦

LITERARY FESTIVAL

Continued from page 5

reflects on 250 years as a nation, this event celebrates voices that were largely uncelebrated at the time.

Virtual programming on Sunday runs from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and will include a writing workshop with Sara Reish Desmond, a conversation with local tennis journalist Christopher Clarey, who wrote *The Master* and *The Warrior* and panels on writing for both Young Adult fiction and adult audiences, plus the environmental mystery of Costa Rica's golden toads. Registration is required for Zoom events.

Also on Sunday, at 9 a.m., local historian Ghlee Woodworth will lead a historical walk of downtown Newburyport meeting at the Essex Street Inn.

As part of the festival's efforts to reach readers of all ages, 6 to 8 grade pupils at Newburyport's Rupert A. Nock Middle School will read *No Place Like Home* by James Bird of Salem, Mass., made possible by The Charles & Marianne Small Charitable Foundation, and Bird will visit the school to lead students in discussion. The Vicki Hendrickson Literary Festival Scholarship will again be offered to one senior graduating from Newburyport High School who has shown a dedication to reading. Hendrickson founded the festival more than 20 years ago.

The festival's official bookstores are

Jabberwocky Bookshop and The Book Shop of Beverly Farms. Festival tote bags will be sold for \$15 at Jabberwocky at the Tannery and at Illume Books at 10 Market Square throughout the weekend and at most festival locations.

Whoopie pies decorated with the festival's logo will be available at Chococoa Baking Co., with a portion of the proceeds donated in support of the festival.

The festival is organized by the Newburyport Literary Association and is made possible through the generosity of our founding sponsors, including the Newburyport Bank and the Institution for Savings. Additional support comes from The Charles & Marianne Small Charitable Foundation, The Friends of the Newburyport Public Library, Burch Ives Family Charitable Foundation, Rotary Club of Newburyport, Hogrefe Publishing, the Cultural Councils of Newburyport, West Newbury, Newbury, Merrimac, Groveland and Georgetown, and Bradford & Bigelow printers.

For a full schedule of events, visit www.newburyportliteraryfestival.org. ♦

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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Changes in the workplace might be daunting for some, but you love challenges and will do just fine with this one. Remember to work with facts, not rumors.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Just when you need some emotional reassurances, an almost-forgotten friendly gesture gets repaid in the most wonderful way. More good news follows!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You have a chance to restart a stalled personal relationship. Meanwhile, a workplace change bodes well for new opportunities, but you need more facts before you can act.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Talk to your longtime friends about why they're not in sync with your new pal. You might learn some startling facts. Additionally, a difficult workplace situation eases.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) What seems to be a golden opportunity is naturally attractive to Leos, but be careful that it's not just a lot of surface glitter. You need to ask more questions.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) There are still some problems with getting decisions made on your workplace project. Talk to a supervisor about possible ways to break the impasse.

LIBRA (September 23 to October

22) A family matter could become more complicated and reach an apparent dead end. Don't give up on trying to find a solution. Work patiently with everyone involved.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) You'll soon hear more about an offer that could change the direction of your career. Meanwhile, enjoy the newly positive on-the-job environment.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Expect a favorable reply to a workplace request. On the home front, a full explanation helps you sort out a long-standing personal problem.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) A serious matter needs focused consideration. Watch that your sometimes-capricious nature doesn't create any unnecessary distractions.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) You win added support for your determination to turn a bad situation into a good one. One new ally arrives from a most unexpected source.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Family and friends need to be told about a decision that you're about to make. Be prepared to offer a full explanation when asked. Hold nothing back.

BORN THIS WEEK: You can be a fighter and a lover. You are a natural leader with a strong, no-nonsense sense of justice that makes people respect you.



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2	7	9	6	5	4	1	8	3
6	1	8	3	7	9	5	2	4
5	3	4	2	8	1	9	6	7
3	4	7	1	2	5	8	9	6
9	5	1	4	6	8	3	7	2
8	6	2	9	3	7	4	1	5
7	9	3	5	1	2	6	4	8
1	8	6	7	4	3	2	5	9
4	5	2	8	9	6	7	3	1

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