

# Registered Nurses at St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford Vote to Join Massachusetts Nurses Association

The 722 registered nurses of St. Luke's Hospital voted on Thursday, Nov. 29 to form a union and join the Massachusetts Nurses Association in an election overseen by the National Labor Relations Board.

"We're thrilled to be coming together as a union," said Deb Falk, a nurse in the emergency department at St. Luke's. "Those of us in the Emergency Department always felt kind of separated from the nurses on other floors, and I've loved getting to know so many great nurses throughout the hospital during our organizing. I really feel like we're a close family now. It's been amazing seeing so many of our co-workers coming together to improve conditions for our patients and our community."

"St. Luke's nurses are united!" said St. Luke's RN Kate Hughes. "We hope to work with everyone at St. Luke's in a positive way to create excellent outcomes. Our top concern has been the safety of our patients. As unionized nurses we will work together to make sure every St. Luke's patient has the safest possible care environment."

MNA president and registered nurse Donna Kelly-Williams congratulated the St. Luke's nurses for their brave effort to form a union.

"When nurses are organized, patients are the biggest beneficiaries," Kelly-Williams said. "Nurses at St. Luke's now

have a legally protected seat at the table with management to define their nursing practice and address issues impacting patients under their care.”

The MNA is the largest union and professional organization of nurses and healthcare professionals in Massachusetts. It represents 23,000 members in healthcare facilities across the state, including nurses at 70 percent of the Commonwealth’s acute care hospitals. The MNA is led by a board of directors that is directly elected by its membership and consists of front-line nurses and other healthcare professionals.

St. Luke’s nurses are planning to move quickly to negotiate their first contract. They were supported in their effort to unionize by MNA members at hospitals in Southeastern Massachusetts and throughout the state.

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## **Spinner Publications Holiday Party ~ Meet your Favorite Spinner Authors during AHA! night, Dec. 15**

Spinner Publications is celebrating the holidays with a special “Spinner Authors Meet & Greet” Holiday Party. Many of the authors who have written some of Spinner’s most popular books will be in attendance. The event will take place Thursday, December 13, 2018, at Gallery X, 169 William Street, New Bedford MA from 5 to 8 PM.

Celebrate the holidays with the writers, editors, and photographers that have given you so many quality books over

the last 40 years. Bring books to have signed. Hobnob with local literary celebs. Spinner's newest books and calendars will be available for purchase.

### **Authors Attending:**

- Catherine McLaughlin (Blue Collars)
- Marsha McCabe, Alfred H. Saulniers, Joseph Thomas, Natalie White & Jay Avila (A Picture History of New Bedford Volumes 1 & 2)
- Everett Hoagland (Ocean Voices)
- Lynn Donohue (Brick by Brick)
- Laurie Robertson-Lorant (The Man Who Lived Among The Cannibals)
- Robert & Linda Waxler (Losing Jonathan & Courage to Walk)
- Daniel Georgianna (The Strike of '28)
- James Bobrick (Throwbacks)
- Ada Jill Schneider (Behind the Pictures I Hang)

Jim Sears (Urban Cottage Gardens of the Portuguese Community DVD) and Spinner founding member Donna Huse (Spinner ~ People and Culture of Southeastern Massachusetts) are unable to attend but will sign DVDs and books ahead of time.

Spinner Publications is a New Bedford-based, non-profit cultural organization whose mission is to record and promote the history and culture of Southeastern Massachusetts.

### **Among Spinner's award-winning titles are:**

- A Picture History of New Bedford ~ Volume 1: 1602-1925
- A Picture History of New Bedford ~ Volume 2: 1925-1980,
- Lincoln Park Remembered, Portuguese Spinner: An American Story, Brick by Brick:
- A Woman's Journey Branded on My Arm and in My Soul
- The anthology series, Spinner: People Culture in Southeastern Massachusetts.

For more information, 'Like' us on Facebook, visit

## Faces Of New Bedford #182: Sorrell Macaroco

Meet Sorrell Macaroco, 27-year-old instructor and owner at Stagelights Studio. Sorrell has been dancing since she was 5, which started as a way to correct her inward facing toes, as ballet is known to help that condition. Dance soon became a huge part of her life, as she was a natural and became an escape for her.



Sorrell competed throughout her childhood and began teaching at the age of 16. When she went away for college though, she focused on school and only danced on the school team. During her final year at Bridgewater, she realized that she only wanted to be a dance instructor, but in her own studio.

At the age of 25, she put together her business plan and opened Stagelight Studio in the city's west end. She is passionate about teaching in New Bedford, as she wants to create an outlet for the youth, like those before her, sharing and spreading the passion she has for dancing. Since opening, she has been able to bring her team to regional competitions, winning several awards, even one recognizing her for creative choreography.

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*Faces of New Bedford is a project by Colton Simmons. If you are interested in booking a shoot or getting prints from the series email all inquiries to [colton@coltonsimmons.com](mailto:colton@coltonsimmons.com). Follow Colton on Instagram: <https://instagram.com/simmonscolton>*

Read more of the Faces of New Bedford series **here**.

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## **Massachusetts State Trooper Pleads Guilty in Overtime Abuse Investigation**

A retired Massachusetts State Police Trooper pleaded guilty on Thursday to collecting over \$29,000 in overtime pay that he did not work.

Paul Cesan, 50, of Southwick, who was previously arrested and charged on June 27, 2018, pleaded guilty to one count of embezzlement from an agency receiving federal funds. U.S. Senior District Court Judge Douglas P. Woodlock scheduled sentencing for March 12, 2019.

Cesan was a Massachusetts State Police (MSP) Trooper assigned to Troop E, which was responsible for enforcing criminal and traffic regulations along the Massachusetts Turnpike, Interstate I-90. In 2016, Cesan earned \$163,533, which included approximately \$50,866 in overtime pay.

Cesan was paid for overtime shifts that he did not work at all or from which he left early. Cesan concealed his fraud by submitting fraudulent citations designed to create the appearance that he had worked overtime hours that he had not,

and falsely claimed in MSP paperwork and payroll entries that he had worked the entirety of his overtime shifts.

Cesan has admitted collecting \$29,287 for overtime hours that he did not work.

The overtime in question involved the Accident and Injury Reduction Effort program (AIRE) and the "X-Team" initiative, which were intended to reduce accidents, crashes, and injuries on I-90 through an enhanced presence of MSP Troopers who were to target vehicles traveling at excessive speeds.

In 2016, MSP received annual benefits from the U.S. Department of Transportation in excess of \$10,000, which were funded pursuant to numerous federal grants.

Cesan is the fourth Trooper to plead guilty as a result of the ongoing investigation. On July 2, 2018, former Trooper Gregory Raftery, 47, of Westwood, pleaded guilty, on Sept. 14, 2018, suspended Trooper Kevin Sweeney, 40, of Braintree, pleaded guilty, and on Oct. 11, 2018, suspended Trooper Gary Herman, 45, of Chester, pleaded guilty. Three others have been charged: former Lieutenant David Wilson, 57, of Charlton; retired Trooper Daren DeJong, 56, of Uxbridge; and suspended Trooper Eric Chin.

Pursuant to the plea agreement, the government will recommend a sentence of between 10 and 16 months in prison. The charge of theft of government funds provides for a sentence of no greater than 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

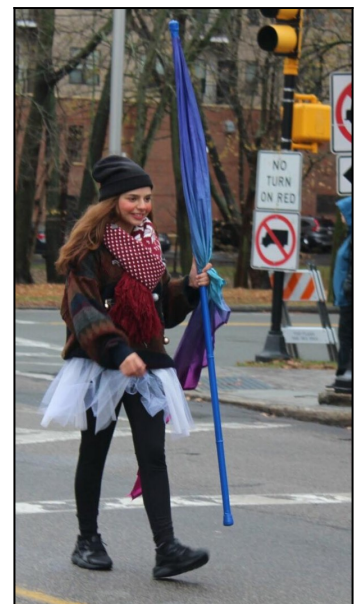
United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Harold H. Shaw, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; and Douglas Shoemaker, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of

Transportation's Office of Inspector General, made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Dustin Chao and Mark Grady of Lelling's Public Corruption Unit are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the court documents are allegations. The remaining defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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## New Bedford Whaler Marching Band earns First Place, Division 2, and several 'Bests'



*Madison Costa wears her pride with a smile. Photo by Tracey*

*Durant.*

The New Bedford High School Whaler Marching Band participated and competed in the 66th Annual Quincy Christmas Parade on Sunday, November 25th. The Whaler Marching Band won '1st Place' in Division 2 and won the following caption awards: 'Best Music,' 'Best Percussion,' and 'Best Color Guard.' Under band director Matt Pacheco, the Whaler Marching Band was also awarded 'Best Overall Band,' scoring a 93.4, one of the band's highest placements in years.

Headmaster Bernadette Coelho noted the band's determination and growth. "Our Whaler Marching Band is making a name for itself at competitions, sporting events, parades and performances across the region. These young musicians are wonderful ambassadors for their city and exemplify what New Bedford High School aims to instill in all its students: determination, creativity and pride."

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## **The Thomas H. and Catherine D. O'Neil Charitable Foundation help bring virtual reality technology to Southcoast Health patients**

Virtual reality technology is coming to Southcoast Health, courtesy of a gift from the Thomas H. and Catherine D. O'Neil Charitable Foundation. The technology will be utilized to help mitigate patient pain and anxiety both leading up to and during medical procedures.



The donation was presented by the grandchildren of Thomas and Catherine O'Neil at St. Luke's Hospital on the 76th anniversary of Boston's Coconut Grove Fire. Thomas and Catherine were among the 492 individuals killed on November 28, 1942 in the historic blaze. To honor their memory, in 2012 one of Thomas and Catherine's grandchildren, Chris O'Neil, created the Foundation as a way to honor the victims of the fire while also helping those suffering from painful injuries, particularly burn victims and pediatric patients. Chris says, "I wanted to bring some good where a lot of pain had once been, that the lives lost were not in vain. We can make an impact with the O'Neil Foundation."



The virtual reality system will be the first such technology utilized by Southcoast Health. The system will be used to manage patient pain, first at the Southcoast Health Wound Center at St. Luke's Hospital, with plans to incorporate its use into other service areas at Southcoast moving forward. "The opportunity for our Foundation to provide this technology to Southcoast has brought a lot of excitement versus a simple

cash donation,” Chris says. “We get a chance to be part of a new way of helping people.”

“We are incredibly grateful to the Thomas H. and Catherine D. O’Neil Charitable Foundation for this generous and innovative donation of technology, which benefits our patients who are suffering from painful injuries and illnesses,” said Keith A. Hovan, President & CEO of Southcoast Health. “As a not-for-profit healthcare system, we rely on the generosity of so many within our community to help provide our patients with the best care and attention possible. Virtual reality pain mitigation will be a great tool for our providers and physicians to offer to our patients.”

Chris, a New Bedford native, is excited to be helping patients in his own backyard: “Southcoast Health is always investing in cutting-edge health technology and has been so supportive to our family over the years; it was time for us to help contribute in some way.”

The O’Neil Foundation gift was made in memory of Dr. Charles Eades, one of the Foundation’s most generous supporters.



#### Cut line photo Information:

Peggy O'Neil Verronneau tries out donated VR device at St. Luke's Hospital on 76th anniversary of Coconut Grove Fire. O'Neil Family with CEO from Left to Right, Keith Hovan CEO of Southcoast Health, Chris O'Neil, Mark O'Neil, Andrew O'Neil, Catherine O'Neil Norton, Tom O'Neil, Ellie Potter, Peggy O'Neil Verronneau

O'Neil family joins Southcoast Philanthropy, CEO, and medical staff to mark occasion: Front Row Jack Dresser SVP of Southcoast Health Philanthropy, Chris O'Neil, Keith Hovan CEO of Southcoast Health, Dr. Robert Sanford Wound Center Medical Director, Catherine O'Neil Norton. Behind left to right: Dr. Robert Caldas Chief Medical Officer, Ellie Potter, and Peggy O'Neil Verronneau. Behind Left to right: Mark O'Neil and Andrew O'Neil. Back row: Tom O'Neil (left), Tricia Grimes of Southcoast Health Philanthropy (center), and Tricia Verronneau (right)

Photo Credit Stephen Preston/ Southcoast Health

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## **About The Thomas H. and Catherine D. O'Neil Charitable Foundation Inc.**

*The Thomas H. and Catherine D. O'Neil Charitable Foundation, Inc was established in 2012 by the grandchildren of Thomas and Catherine O'Neil of New Bedford, MA. who perished in the Cocoanut Grove Fire in Boston on November 28th 1942. The mission of the Foundation is to raise and distribute funds for the benefit of pediatric burn patients and their families in memory of the 492 victims of the Cocoanut Grove fire.*

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# **U.S. Attorney in Massachusetts Issues Warning to Opioid Prescribers**

As part of a comprehensive response to the opioid epidemic, the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Massachusetts has warned a number of medical professionals that their opioid prescribing practices have been identified as a source of concern.

In a letter sent this week, United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling informed a number of prescribers that a data review identified them as having prescribed opioids to a patient within 60 days of that patient's death or to a patient who subsequently died from an opioid overdose. The letter reminds physicians that although prescriptions may be medically appropriate, the law prohibits prescribing opioids without a legitimate medical purpose, substantially in excess of the needs of the patient, or outside the usual course of professional practice.

“The opioid crisis is killing tens of thousands of people a year, including thousands in Massachusetts,” said U.S. Attorney Lelling. “One source of opioids – used for both legitimate and illegitimate purposes – is medical professionals, who have an obligation always to act in patients’ best interests. In the midst of an opioid epidemic, that obligation is more important than ever before. Through this effort, we’re trying to educate prescribers who may be improperly dispensing these drugs, stem the flow of opioids to the public and, ultimately, save lives and reduce opioid addiction rates.”

In 2017, approximately 2,000 Commonwealth residents died of opioid-related overdoses and, in the first six months of this year, there were 657 confirmed opioid-related overdose deaths in Massachusetts. While the amount of opioids prescribed and sold in the U.S. has quadrupled since 1999, the overall amount of pain reported by Americans during this period has not changed; the opioid epidemic was caused, in part, by the widespread over-prescription of opioid-based medications.

The Department of Justice is committed to reducing the numbers of opioid deaths and new addictions by monitoring prescription practices. Through this effort and others, the Department aims to reduce the impact of this crisis in our communities by notifying prescribers that their patients have died either as a result of or close in time to receiving an opioid prescription. By doing so, we reduce the risk of unused prescriptions being diverted for non-medical use by those whom the prescription was never intended. At this point, the Department has made no determination that the prescribers receiving these letters have violated the law; the goal is to induce these medical professionals to take stock of their prescribing practices and make any necessary adjustments.



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# Seastreak sailing between Edgartown and New Bedford for 4-day Edgartown Christmas Festival

We're excited to announce that we will be sailing between Edgartown and New Bedford from 12/6-12/9 for the Edgartown Christmas Festival!

Voted Best of the Vineyard for the fourth year in a row, Christmas in Edgartown is a festival you won't want to miss! There are special events, crafts, shows, and sweets & treats throughout the four-day event! You can view the schedule [here](#).



## **SEASTREAK FERRY SCHEDULE**

Effective

December 6, 2018 through December 9, 2018

### **Thursday 12/6/2018**

<u>New Bedford Departures</u>	<u>Vineyard Haven Arrivals</u>	<u>Vineyard Haven Departures</u>	<u>New Bedford Arrivals</u>
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:15 AM	11:15 PM
6:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:15 PM	8:15 PM

### **Friday 12/7/2018**

<u>New Bedford Departures</u>	<u>Vineyard Haven Arrivals</u>	<u>Vineyard Haven Departures</u>	<u>New Bedford Arrivals</u>
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:15 AM	11:15 PM
6:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:15 PM	8:15 PM

### **Saturday 12/8/2018**

<u>New Bedford Departures</u>	<u>Vineyard Haven Arrivals</u>	<u>Vineyard Haven Departures</u>	<u>New Bedford Arrivals</u>
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:15 AM	11:15 PM
6:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:15 PM	8:15 PM

### **Sunday 12/9/2018**

<u>New Bedford Departures</u>	<u>Vineyard Haven Arrivals</u>	<u>Vineyard Haven Departures</u>	<u>New Bedford Arrivals</u>
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:15 AM	11:15 PM
2:45 PM	3:45 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM

### **FARES**

<b>ONE WAY</b>		<b>ROUND TRIP</b>	
Adult	\$40	Adult	\$70
Child	\$22	Child	\$40
Resident	\$30	Resident	\$60
Bike	\$7	Bike	\$14

**SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE**

**1-800-BOATRIDE 1-800-262-8743**

**seastreak.com**

# **seastreak**



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# **CLOSED: City of New Bedford Police Department seeks to fill a Police Cadet vacancy**

\*\*\*\*\* This position has been filled and is no longer available.\*\*\*\*\*

**PAY: \$12.00hr – \$13.09hr**

Assists Police Officers with administrative duties.

Maintains and files records, operates office machines, answers telephones, receives complaints, enters and indexes official documents, prepares routine reports, prepares and tabulates facts and figures for statistical purposes, and performs similar duties of an administrative rather than an enforcement type.

Shall not carry arms, nor shall he/she have any power of arrest other than that of an ordinary citizen.

Must be a New Bedford resident for the duration of employment. Cadet must be (eighteen) 18 years old. Employment is terminated on the Cadet's 25th birthday.

High school graduate or GED equivalent. Possession of a valid Massachusetts driver's license and good driving record.

Must be willing to work nights, weekends and holidays.

For application/complete job description, please visit [www.newbedford-ma.gov](http://www.newbedford-ma.gov) or contact the Personnel Dept., 133 William St., Room 212, 508-979-1444. Applications will be accepted until a suitable candidate is found. EE0



New Bedford has a residency requirement.

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# Five reasons your property taxes are going up in New Bedford

Guess what New Bedford property owners? Your **property taxes are going up next year**. Residential property taxes in New Bedford will go up on average \$220 and commercial property owners will see an average increase of \$26 for the year.

Here are 5 reasons why property taxes in New Bedford are going up year again next year and will continue to do so unless these major issues are resolved:

## **1. Simply put – property taxes go up every year because the City budget increases each year**

Let's compare it to a personal level – if your rent, electric bill, and cable bill go up and your child is heading off to college, you better have a large savings account or ask your boss for a raise. When it comes to City government, the property taxpayers are the boss that the City is forcing the raise on.

One of the biggest issues with New Bedford's budget is that 85% of City spending is non-discretionary (predetermined by state mandates and other contractual agreements) with only 15% discretionary. For FY19, \$287.9 million is non-discretionary spending of the \$338.7 million total budget. City government, the mayor and city council, really only have control of the 15%, or \$50 million of the total \$338.7 million FY19 budget.

## **2. Increase in property valuations**

Generally, there are three ways to raise property taxes – increase the tax rates on properties, increase property values or a combination of both. The Assessor's Office increased the average residential property value by 5.2%. The city council can actually lower a tax rate, but you'll still see your tax bill go up if your property value goes up significantly.

The real battle that city councilors fight is where the increase in taxes will come from – residential or commercial sources. Clearly, the burden this year was put on the residential homeowners as they saw an 8-fold increase compared to commercial owners (\$220 Vs. \$26) resulting in a residential property tax rate average next year of \$3,742.

I've seen **drug dens raided constantly by police go up in value year after year**, so I'm assuming most of these home value increases are simply happening to raise taxes, not because the building is actually worth more.

## **3. Charter school obligations**

From the **FY19 budget proposal press release** sent out by the mayor's office:

"The Commonwealth continues to fail to meet its own statutory obligation to partially reimburse municipalities' costs. As a result, the City's net obligation will rise from \$12.1 in FY 2018 to \$13.8 million in FY 2019. This growth in New Bedford's obligation toward charter schools diverts more and more funds away from New Bedford Public Schools."

## **4. City of New Bedford Healthcare and pension costs**

From the **FY19 budget proposal press release** sent out by the mayor's office:

Employee benefits costs will continue to place an increasing strain on overall finances. Projected increases in medical

claims and the City's pension assessment will require \$2.1 million in additional general fund support.

## **5. According to Mayor Jon Mitchell, the State not meeting its statutory funding obligations**

From the **FY19 budget proposal press release** sent out by the mayor's office:

"Constraints [imposed by the Commonwealth] have made it more difficult to ensure that the City remains on a fiscally sustainable path while providing the reliable and effective services that our residents expect. Our ongoing efforts to improve efficiency and operational readiness have produced a lean organization where the most advantageous efficiencies have already been implemented, making future reforms much more challenging. Nevertheless, we must continue on this path in order to move New Bedford forward.

The Commonwealth has complicated this [budget] process by not meeting its statutory funding obligations and continuing to impose requirements that serve as roadblocks to effective reform."

In closing, New Bedford's elected leaders at the local and state level need to resolve the root causes of increased budgets or taxes will keep going up every year. Until our state leaders fix some of the non-discretionary issues and get the State to meet its funding obligations, 85% of the budget will continue to grow. Until our local leadership fixes the City pension, healthcare and charter school issues, the budget will continue to grow. Next year is an important election year at the local level, let's hope that provides incentive enough.