

# OPINION: What defines the city of New Bedford?

By Yue Ryder

*"I just wanted to share my thoughts with you because I just realized something about new bedford that I never really thought about before... I hope you like this as much as you liked the photo."*

Settled in 1652 and incorporated in 1787 New Bedford is the sixth largest city in the state of Massachusetts with a population of 95,072 people.

New Bedford is nicknamed "The Whaling City" because during the 19th century, the city was one of the most important, if not the most important, whaling ports in the world. Today I was wandering around and I always asked myself "I don't know too much about my home town, so what makes this city so known?"

After doing some research I came to realize that I had some misconceptions about the city. Yes, there is violence and yes, there have been some bad things that have happened here – but the reality of it is that this city is a **great** city. With history we barely know or acknowledge, we now forget that this city was built by settlers who moved here for freedom and independence. It is also known to be one of the most important whaling ports in the world along side with Nantucket, Massachusetts and New London, Connecticut.



I honestly am happy to know that my hometown has such a great story behind its cover and just to show the real meaning of this city I wanted to take a photo of this clock in Downtown New Bedford.

To me this clock symbolizes the time that has passed by

throughout the years of this city. This clock to me represents the time, patience, and strength of the struggles that we all have faced living in this city. But like they all say “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” Well, this clock has stood its ground through good and bad times with this city and honestly I’m inspired because it gives out the true definition of that saying.

I hope others can see and understand that just because there is violence doesn’t define a city if anything it just shows that violence is all around us no matter where we are. Instead of feeding into that we should understand that nothing is more important than patience and peace...

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*Want to see more photos that Yue has taken?*

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## **Narcan Issued to all Mattapoissett Police Officers**

NARCAN will now be issued to all Mattapoissett Police Officers. Although the Mattapoissett Police Department has carried Narcan on its Ambulances for decades, the increase in opioid overdoses in Mattapoissett has increased drastically over the past few years prompting this proactive step of outfitting each Officer with narcan.

The opioid epidemic continues to increase and stretch across the United States and is not isolated to the larger communities and cities. In 2017, the Mattapoissett Police

Department responded to approximately 20 opiate drug overdoses both non-fatal and fatal requiring the administration of narcan. As of January 23, 2018 the Mattapoissett Police Department has responded to 4 opioid overdoses already this year all requiring the administration of narcan. The rise in overdoses is believed to be associated with the increase exposure and presence of fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a synthetic (manmade) opioid that is very similar to morphine. However, it is reported that fentanyl is 50-100 times more potent than heroin and morphine. Due to the increase of fentanyl use by drug dealers, it is difficult to immediately determine if the substance is heroin, fentanyl or a mix of the two or other opioids. This unknown factor is a major contributor to the increase in opioid overdoses.

Similar to other drugs, fentanyl can be absorbed through the skin or inhaled if it becomes airborne, and due to its high potency it can be lethal in very small doses. As a result, police departments have seen an increase in overdoses including overdoses of police officers and first responders due to accidental exposures of fentanyl.

Narcan is highly successful in reversing opioid overdoses and the Police Officers of the Mattapoissett Police Department will now be able to provide quicker treatment prior to the arrival of the ambulance increasing the chance of survival.

The Mattapoissett Police Department is part of the Plymouth County Outreach Program which is a collaboration of Public Safety Agencies and Healthcare Providers. This program was created to help battle the ever increasing opioid epidemic. Following an opioid overdose a follow-up visit is conducted within 12-24 hours offering guidance and possible treatment options. The program is not limited to individuals addicted to opiates, but it is also for anyone impacted by addiction.

Any family or individual experiencing or associated with

opioid addiction is encouraged to obtain their own supply of narcan which could be life saving to a family member or friend.

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## **Registry of Motor Vehicles Clerk Sentenced for Role in Identity Theft Scheme**

A Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles clerk was sentenced on Monday in federal court in Boston for her role in a scheme to produce false identification documents.

Kimberly Jordan, 33, of Randolph, was sentenced to eight months in prison and two years of supervised release. In October 2017, Jordan and co-conspirators Evelyn Medina, 56; Annette Gracia, 37; David Brimage, 46; and Bivian Yohanny Brea, 41, all of Boston, agreed to plead guilty to one count of producing without lawful authority an identification document or a false identification document.

In December 2017, Angel Miguel Beltre Tejada, 32, a Dominican national illegally residing in Jamaica Plain, was sentenced to two years in prison after pleading guilty to one count of aggravated identity theft. Tejada will also be subject to deportation upon completion of the sentence. In January 2018, Medina and Gracia were sentenced to 15 months in prison and one year and one day in prison, respectively.

In October 2015, law enforcement received an anonymous letter alleging that a corrupt RMV employee was providing Massachusetts identifications and driver's licenses to individuals who were using false identifications. An

investigation revealed that several Haymarket RMV clerks – Jordan, Medina, Gracia, and Brimage – were working with Brea and Tejada to fraudulently provide Massachusetts licenses and identification cards to illegal aliens for cash.

The scheme involved several steps. Tejada and Brea would obtain identification documents belonging to United States citizens in Puerto Rico and sell them to clients who were seeking legitimate identities in Massachusetts. These clients included illegal aliens, individuals who were previously deported, and an individual who admitted to previously facing drug charges. Tejada would receive several hundred dollars in cash each time he sold identification documents. Brea received up to \$2,700 per identity for her role in the scheme, which included helping clients obtain the documents and facilitating their acquisition of Massachusetts identity documents.

Typically, Brea and the client brought the stolen identities to the Haymarket RMV, where Medina, Gracia, Jordan, and/or Brimage would accept hundreds of dollars in cash to illegally issue authentic RMV documents, including Massachusetts licenses and ID cards. The clerks also accepted bribes to use the RMV's system to run queries, including Social Security number audits, to confirm that the identities the clients were stealing actually belonged to verifiable individuals.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Michael Shea, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; William B. Gannon, Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Office of the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service; and Colonel Kerry A. Gilpin, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police, made the announcement. HSI's Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugenia M. Carris of Lelling's Public Corruption & Special Prosecutions Unit is prosecuting the cases.

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# Marijuana: Gateway Drug? Depends on what you mean by “gateway”

By Craig DeMelo

This week, **New Bedford Guide** decided to reopen the age-old **discussion about whether or not marijuana is a gateway drug**. In the article the author claims that since recreational usage often precedes stronger drugs, it is, in fact, a stepping stone. Upon examination, however, this oft-debunked talking point—a stalwart argument from the anti-legalization community—goes up in smoke.

First, the word “gateway” is problematic. The term generally means “an entry point,” in this case to narcotics and addiction. The main piece of evidence offered is the statement that “marijuana use is likely to precede use of other licit and illicit substances and the development of addiction to other substances.” Here, the word “precede” means “comes before,” but the implication is that it leads to more dangerous substances. This may seem like a distinction without a difference—but there is a difference, and it’s important.

It is fair to say that most people addicted to things like crack cocaine, heroine or other opioids first began recreational use with marijuana. Marijuana is cheap and accessible for people during their experimental teenage years. According to the **National Institute of Drug Abuse**—the source cited in the original piece—13% of 8th graders, 30% of sophomores, and 45% of seniors had tried marijuana at least once. This is unsurprising data.

But here's the rub: as the adage goes "correlation does not equal causation." Given the fact that a small fraction of those people will go on to become drug addicts, there is clearly no evidence to suggest that marijuana causes people to try other drugs, or that the sensation fosters a desire for greater highs. The sheer number of people who have tried it—or who continue to use recreationally or medicinally—without graduating to more severe substances is damning to the central claim that it is an avenue to more nefarious drugs.

Further, alcohol—which is usually as available as the nearest liquor cabinet—is far more prevalent among those underage than weed. The **same survey** indicated 23% of 8th graders, 42% of sophomores, and 61% of seniors had tried alcohol at least once. It stands to reason that if marijuana—which alters your perception—is a gateway to other drugs, then alcohol ought to be as well. And yet, nobody seems to be arguing that alcohol is leading people down the road to drug addiction.

If marijuana were truly a gateway drug we should expect to see some statistical trends in usage between marijuana and other drugs. But that doesn't seem to be the case. In 2014, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health asserted that nearly half of all Americans have tried marijuana in some form after the age of 13. That number drops for cocaine use to nearly 15%, while less than 2% of Americans have tried heroin. Those subsequent stats would need to be much, much higher to even consider the theory.

This entire argument is an example of the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy—after this, therefore because of this. People who are heroin addicts may have smoked weed, but they're not addicts because they smoked weed (this is the same faulty rationale behind the now debunked theory that vaccines cause autism). This bit of logic is the central point NBG has glossed over.

There are a host of reasons why people try narcotics. Stats



vary given certain qualifiers like age, gender, socioeconomic circumstances, family history, etc. Attempting to pin addiction down to one particular cause is a fool's errand. Undoubtedly articles like NRG's are driven by the opioid crisis, but even that is better explained by the explosion of careless prescriptions, the influx of fentanyl, and the ever-burgeoning black market for secondhand pharmaceuticals.

Simply put: we all want someone or something to blame, but it makes no sense to point the finger at cannabis.

"Gateway drug" is a propagandistic boogeyman phrase designed to discourage people from smoking the devil's lettuce (which makes sense considering "gateway drug" was coined in the 1980s—the decade of the failed "War on Drugs"). Scientifically there is no connection. It may be the first mind-altering substance people consume (alongside alcohol), but there is no causal link between marijuana and harder drugs.

So put that in your pipe and smoke it.

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## **5 things to know if you are considering a solar system for your home or business (#5 will blow your mind):**

### **1. Who Should I Choose for My Solar Installer.**

Ultimately you want to move forward with a company that you trust. You should choose an installer that offers a great service and product while providing an excellent overall value. A local company can usually tailor a project to your

specific needs and at a much lower cost than other “big box” solar companies. If you decide on a local company, ensure that the work being done on your home is being performed by a licensed electrician. It is always best to choose an installer who employs their own crew because it ensures quality of work and accountability.

We recommend that you always receive multiple quotes in order to protect yourself against an unfair high price. On average, homeowners save 10% or more when they receive multiple bids on a job. There is nothing worse than having buyer's remorse after finding out your neighbor paid 10% less for the same solar system.

Arguably the most important thing to consider when choosing an installer is the provided warranty. Look into what it covers and for how long. Warranties can range from 10 years to 25 years and vary greatly with the protections they offer. Also, inquire about protections if the company goes out of business. Is this a warranty backed by the manufacturer or the installer? Make sure you are not left in the dark if your installer goes belly up.

*Pro tip – Not all companies guarantee the roof as part of their install. It is always a good idea to ensure your roof is in good condition and to understand your installers re-roof policy if you need to remove your panels for a repair in the future.*

## **2. Going Solar is Easier Than You Might Think.**

Solar projects have now progressed to the point where installation processes have can be completed in 1 to 3 days. Prior to installation there are various hoops to jump through. A reputable company will be there to guide you through the process so that it causes as little stress as possible. A typical project can take 6-10 weeks from initial consultation to flipping the switch on an installed system because there are utility regulations and permits to complete before any

work can be done.

This may seem like a long time but Isaksen Solar takes care of our clients every step of the way. You just say the word and we take care of utility documentation, town or city permitting, even the financing process. Our goal in every project is to have our customers say "Wow, that was easier than expected". This philosophy is the guiding principal that provides an enjoyable process for our customers, you sit back and we do all the hard work!

### **3. Is my house or business a good fit?**

Every solar project has a unique set of challenges to overcome. To start the process, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- *Does my roof get enough sunlight?*

If you are surrounded by trees, then the answer is most likely no. On the other hand, if you can fry an egg on your back porch you may be a perfect fit.

- *Do I use enough electricity to make solar worth it?*

Ultimately, that is for you to decide. Most people who pay more than \$70.00 per month for electricity would typically be a good fit.

- *Do I need a new roof?*

We recommend that your roof be no older than 10 years. Each home is fully inspected as installations are determined to pass or fail based on condition, not on age.

Unfortunately, not every home is a fit. If your roof is disqualified during the engineering process you could always look into a ground mounted system. Before installing we verify all projects with our structural engineers. Once installed we guarantee our craftsmanship and the power the system produces.

### **4. Where are my solar panels coming from?**

There is an incredible amount of options today for solar

panels. It can be dizzying trying to do research on your own. Most solar panels are manufactured in China, South Korea, or Malaysia. Very few are actually manufactured here in the United States. The US government recently decided to place a 30% Tax on all solar panel imports. To ensure that your cost is as low as possible, we recommend using panels manufactured exclusively in the USA.

## **5. How much does it really cost to go solar? It's cheaper than you think!**

There are multiple incentives available to homeowners that the net cost of owning your own solar system is a fraction of what you are going to pay your utility company long term. The best part? Most homeowners decide to finance their systems with \$0 down.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the average American uses 897 kWh of energy or \$215.00 per month. This means that over the next 25 years the average Massachusetts home will consume over \$64,000.00 in electricity (assuming that electricity rates never increase over that time). A solar system that provides the same amount of electricity would cost about \$36,000.00. System owners can qualify to receive 30% of the cost refunded to them in their tax return through the Solar Investment tax credit. There is also a Massachusetts state tax credit and SREC's that are issued to the owner of the solar system for ten years.

After factoring in available incentives, the net cost of the system would be \$7,300.00. This example shows that Solar can be 89% cheaper than the utility. Because of these available incentives, the cost of solar ownership has never been lower than it is today. Unfortunately, these programs are not in place for much longer. Enrollment in the SREC program is only available for the next few months with a current deadline of March 31, 2018. Table 1 shows the breakdown of these incentives

Table 1.

<b>System Breakdown</b>	
System Size (kW)	9.6
Annual Production (kWh)	10,560
Total Cost	\$ 36,000.00
30% FTC	\$ 10,800.00
State Tax Credit	\$ 1,000.00
<u>SREC Revenue</u>	\$ 16,896.00
Net Cost	\$ 7,304.00

Interested in more information? Call today 508.567.0647 or visit our website at [isaksensolar.com](http://isaksensolar.com). You may also visit the FAQ page for more details.

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# **Diane Lopes Tax & Accounting Services offer experience and trust to greater New Bedford and beyond**

With tax season here it's important than ever to start thinking about who you're going to use this year to prepare your return. Given the recent changes in the tax code it's more crucial to have a skilled and trusted professional look over your taxes.

Whether you like it or not, tax season happens every year, which means one thing – you'll soon have to face a pile of forms, you start to stress out and hope for the best. Why not make things easier on yourself and avoid the hassle and stress and rely on someone who is an expert? Enlist the assistance of a professional tax preparer, who'll do the majority of the work for you and save you a lot of headaches and aggravation!



One of the area's most qualified accounting firms is **Diane Lopes Tax & Accounting Service**. They have years of experience, with trained and reputable professionals who are ready to help you get the most from your return. The best part is, they stand by their work and have helped protect clients should they ever be audited. Diane Lopes is a consummate professional with the experience and expertise that's so crucial in today's world.

Those individuals who have less complicated returns might be considering going it alone. Did you know that Diane Lopes offers their own version if your an EZ filer? Check out their **file online option** as well (like a turbo tax, but local) with free 1040EZ.

Often however, life events will drastically change how and what you file. What was a simple return has now become complex. Did you get married this year? Are you filing jointly? Did you buy a house? Have a kid? How do I deduct my mortgage payment? What does it mean to be "head of household"?

Sometimes there aren't simple answers and that's when a licensed tax professional comes in handy.

It's why more than 60 percent of American taxpayers choose to remove the burden from their shoulders and turn to a qualified professional. These are the reasons to hire a tax-preparation service, even if you think that you're capable of completing the task on your own. Another set of eyes can't hurt and someone to back you up should you ever be audited is worth every penny.





Diane Lopes Tax and Accounting Service can also assist with your business tax matters, in a responsive and accurate manner. Other services include Payroll management; they can help you pay your employees quickly and easily with their Payroll Services. Their plans are designed to swiftly create paychecks and calculate payroll taxes, making your job easier. It doesn't matter if you're a business or an individual; they've got you covered!

**Here is what some of her clients have to say:**

"It's been 17 years in business and have Diane Lopes as my accounting and the wonderful staff she has I'm always satisfied by there work and job they get done . Also on a personal note she always gives me good advise and positive future . I have to say No matter what you are going thru every time I walk in that place I always feel a warmth , good energy and blessings . Thanks God bless." **Fern.**

"Diane has completed my tax return for many years. she is an amazing accountant and an absolutely wonderful right woman who has build a successful business that is capable of providing a wide array of services for her clients both individuals as well as large businesses. Diane, you rock !!"

**Lisa Tavares**

All it takes is a phone call or click.

If you want to schedule an appointment its easy!  
[dianelopes.com/schedule-an-appointment/](http://dianelopes.com/schedule-an-appointment/)



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## **Diane Lopes Tax & Accounting Services**

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# **Community Preservation Committee seeks public input to consider funding for 2018 projects**

The City of New Bedford's Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development announced that the city's Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is hosting two public hearings on February 7 and February 13, at which CPA project proposals will be presented before the CPC. This is an opportunity for the public to comment on the project proposals being considered for funding in fiscal year 2018.

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) was adopted by New Bedford voters through a ballot question in November 2014. This statewide enabling legislation allows communities to create dedicated funding for: Open Space, Outdoor Recreational Facilities, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing activities in the city. Oversight of this process rests with the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), the body established by the City to oversee the CPA program in New Bedford.

In June of 2017 the CPC hosted three community meetings that invited the public to provide comments and suggestions for the community's goals and objectives for Open Space, Outdoor

Recreational Facilities, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing that were used in developing a Community Preservation Plan. The input provided by citizens at these well-attended meetings has been incorporated into the Plan, and a final Community Preservation Plan was adopted on August 22 by the CPC.

The CPA fund has over \$2.9 million available for projects and in the fall of 2017 began the application process for eligible projects. The CPC is currently in the course of reviewing the proposed projects and is conducting the public hearings in order for the applicants to present their project proposals to the CPC as well as to the community in a public setting. Once the CPC has reviewed and selected the projects, the CPC will recommend project applications to the City Council for final consideration and awarding of funds.

The two meetings will be held in City Hall at 6:00 p.m., on Wednesday, February 7 and Tuesday, February 13 in Room 314 and the following project proposals will be heard at the respective meeting dates:

<b>Wednesday, February 7, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. City Hall –Room 314 133 William Street</b>	<b>Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. City Hall –Room 314 133 William Street</b>
<b>PROJECT PROPOSALS</b>	<b>PROJECT PROPOSALS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 305-307 Pleasant St.</li><li>• First Baptist Church Theatre</li><li>• James Arnold Mansion</li><li>• Mariner’s Home</li><li>• Seamen’s Bethel</li><li>• Sgt Carney House</li><li>• Strand Theatre</li><li>• Talbot’s Apartments</li><li>• Veteran Transition House</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acushnet Saw Mill</li><li>• Abolition Row Park</li><li>• Butlers Flats Lighthouse</li><li>• Buttonwood Brook Trail</li><li>• Buttonwood Outdoor Adult Fitness</li><li>• Ernestina Morrissey</li><li>• Rotch Jones Duff House</li><li>• South Coast Scenic Greenway</li><li>• Zeiterion Theatre Marquee</li></ul>

For further information please go to the CPC webpage on the city website at:

<http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/community-preservation/>  
or call the Department of Planning, Housing & Community

## **New Bedford cold weather overflow shelter open tonight, Feb. 05**

Due to the expected temperature drop for this evening the overflow at 71 Division Street will be opened tonight. All inquiries can be forwarded to Sister Rose House and 1-800-homeless.

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## **Local Episcopal Parishes to offer “Ashes to Go”**

St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Dartmouth and St. Martin's Episcopal Church in New Bedford will commemorate Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018 by offering “Ashes to Go.”

“Ashes to Go” is an opportunity for our local parishes to get outside the walls of the church and to meet people where they are in the busyness of their day and to invite them into an opportunity for prayer as Christians throughout the world begin the Season of Lent. (This is also an attempt to make it easy and quick for people simply to drive up and get marked with ashes as Ash Wednesday falls in the middle of the work week.)



Ash Wednesday the beginning of Lent, the 40 day period of spiritual renewal and preparation for Easter.

On Ash Wednesday anyone in the community is welcome to stop by one of the following locations, regardless of current religious affiliation or denomination, to begin the commemoration of the Season of Lent by being marked with ashes.

In a particular way, we welcome those who have been away from a church community. The Episcopal Church promotes the inclusion of all people regardless of family or marital situations, sexual orientation, race, creed, gender or life story. All faith traditions are welcome!

“ASHES TO GO” will take place at the following locations:

- 10:00AM-12:00AM: Drive into the Parking Lot of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 136 Rivet Street (corner of County St.) in New Bedford.
- 12:15PM-12:30PM: Brief Ash Wednesday service in St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 136 Rivet Street, New Bedford. This service includes the Liturgy of the Work and Imposition of Ashes.
- 3:30PM-5:30PM: Drive up to the front doors of Big Value Outlet, 718 Dartmouth Street in Dartmouth
- 7:00PM: A Service of of Holy Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes will be offered at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 351 Elm Street, Dartmouth. Music for the service will be provided by the St. Peter's Contemporary Folk Group.

Everyone in the community is welcome and encouraged to attend any of the above services. For more information on the national Ashes to Go movement, please visit <http://ashestogo.org/> or <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/story/2012-02-21/lent-ash-wednesday-ashes-to-go/53195664/1#.T0QHxC6eI2Q.twitter>.

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# Fairhaven man charged with distribution of Fentanyl

On Friday, February 2, 2018 at approximately 11:10 a.m., members of the Dartmouth Police Department responded to #36 Lakeside Avenue for a reported medical emergency.

While on location, a corresponding investigation led to the discovery of 2.6 grams of suspected Fentanyl on a male party identified as Ryan DOUCETTE, 34, of #106 Main Street, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

In addition to a non-related narcotics offense, DOUCETTE was charged with distribution of a Class B drug and possession with intent to distribute a Class B drug. Arresting officer was David OIKARINEN.