

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...

Want to see more photos that Yue has taken?

Facebook: facebook.com/YueR.Photography/

Instagram: instagram.com/yue_ryder_photography/

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 NBG'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.

Is there still hope for a New Bedford casino? Yes and no

Casinos and South Coast Rail – the two items politicians love to tease us with. New Bedford residents have voted several times to support a casino only to have their hopes and dreams squashed by developers, politicians or political appointees.

Just a few years ago, voters in Massachusetts approved three resort casinos and a smaller one in Plainridge, but like legalized marijuana, politicians decided the peasants voice only matters on paper. The politicians rewrote the ballot question and decided no south coast, MA casino was needed. The threat of an Indian casino was enough to have the New Bedford casino developers pull out just a few feet from the finish line. Now a few New Bedford city councilors are hoping to entice the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) to consider a casino in New Bedford.

The following motion was submitted to the New Bedford City Council during the January 25 session:

1. WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Abreu, Lima, Giesta and Lopes, requesting, that the City of New Bedford send a letter to the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) expressing support of their casino interest for the mainland Southeastern Massachusetts region; and further, the City of New Bedford could be poised to host such a casino, given its available space for potential economic development, strong workforce,

solid public infrastructure, community support, and nearby location to Rhode Island and Cape Cod. (To be referred to Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) Tribal Council, Mayor's Office and the New Bedford Economic Development Council Office.)

The motion passed and was sent to the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and New Bedford Economic Development Center.

Is there still hope for a New Bedford casino? Yes, if you consider a 0.0001% hope.

OPINION: Chantele Bruno's murder shows New Bedford's lack of respect of personal space

The following essay was submitted to us by Jeff Taylor. Have an opinion to share? Email mike@newbedfordguide.com.

"With the news coming out recently regarding the unfortunate murder of Chantele Bruno, I feel it's time to discuss what many of us know to be true to New Bedford: Lack of respect of personal space.

In a city so congested, understandably it can be difficult to find personal space. A place we have full control over whether it be temperature, noise, smell, etc. Within that quest for personal space lies the responsibility to also respect others' space. We've all heard that car at the car wash or the gas station, blasting offensive music. We've been inside our

apartments, and heard somebody cleaning their car down the block. I myself have had neighbors so loud picture frames would shake off my wall, I've had kids hanging out in front of my place so loudly my (then) infant son was unable to sleep.

This all adds to the stressful climate of the city, and leads to choices of how to react. Just live miserably, sacrificing your peace so the neighborhood narcissist has a good day? Or complain to the landlord or the police? Neither of these are productive or generally healthy.

The answer is RESPECT PERSONAL SPACE. The stress level within the confines of New Bedford is through the roof, and given we all have choices of how we act/react we ought to choose respect. Respect our neighbors, daily life will be better for all. Trust me." – Jeff Taylor

It's your responsibility to clear your car after a snowfall

With each snowfall, comes responsibilities – the city and state must salt, sand and plow the roads. We citizens have our responsibilities too; we have to clear our driveway, walkways, sidewalks and cars.

However, with each snowfall, we see the same laziness or ignorance of the law and responsibilities and these create added dangerous conditions to the already dangerous conditions on the road. It is difficult enough to drive in wintry conditions, so making it even more dangerous for yourself and others ends up doing no one any good.

The vast majority of the issues stem from laziness and in some cases, it's ignorance. Not ignorance in a demeaning or insulting way, but in a manner that simply means not knowing. However, in this information age and with people glued to their computers and smart phones and the information circulating everywhere, there is really no excuse. You don't want to actually focus on the information and follow it AFTER you've been in an accident, harmed yourself or others or even worse cause mortal injury.

After someone reads this, the only excuse left is sheer laziness. This is when you are taking a gamble with your health, wallet, and the health of others – a gamble that you will eventually lose. It's only a matter of time before you are in an accident, get a ticket that also raises your insurance rates, or cause an accident. Don't gamble. We all know that the house always wins. You may go "home" once in a while with winning more than you paid in, but you won't be able to make that the case always. The house always wins.

While technically it is not illegal to leave to snow on your windshield or top of the car, you can STILL get a ticket – so even if you want to ignore the safety benefits, or be a productive member of society and the community, your wallet will take a hit. State and local police can prohibit you from using the roads if snow or ice, could potentially fall from your car and endanger individuals/property. It is within their authority to issue tickets and/or fines.

TIPS TO PREVENT AN ACCIDENT OR TICKET

Remove the snow from your windshields:

Sounds simple, right? Apparently it's not.

Many think that that means just quickly scrape whatever snow is obscuring the driver's view – leaving snow on the passenger

side and/or back windshield. Don't be lazy – a state trooper or local police officer will ticket you and hopefully before you get in an accident or cause one. You need to be able to see all around your vehicle. Why would you do something that would make it so you CAN'T see multi-ton death machines coming at you? Don't you want to see what others are doing, especially if they are sliding towards you, not paying attention.

People will often say, they don't have time. In an era when people send 50 texts or more a day – none of which are more important than your safety or life – I find it hard to believe you don't have enough time. You do. And guess what? You'll have plenty of time when you are on the side of the road waiting for an officer to write your ticket or for the tow truck to take your banged car to a repair shop.

Impeded operation from snow on the windows is a \$40 fine.

Remove the snow from the TOP of your car:

Another common foul. Not removing the snow on top of the car means that time goes on, the snow starts packing together and creates little blocks, sheets or chunks. All of the snow can slough off at once once you are on the road and the wind drag increases – it can cover the windshield of the car behind you. It has happened to me a number of times and the heavy, compact snow will make it difficult for you wipers to remove in a timely fashion. Very dangerous.

An Unsecured Load from having snow and/or ice on the roof will set you back \$200. Even worse, if that sheet of snow from the roof (or even the windshields) causes a crash, you can face additional civil or criminal liability and charged with Negligent Operation.

Clear the license plates:

While this one isn't dangerous, it's a red flag for any police officer. It looks pretty suspicious – one has to wonder why

something that literally will take 2 seconds, wasn't done. Knowing many police officers, I can't tell you how many times they have said they have pulled over a car for the most minor of things – sometimes not even to the intent to ticket or arrest someone – and it turns into an arrest once the plate and license is run through the system.

If you have warrants, your registration or inspection sticker has expired, you have something illegal on you or in your car, or you have other violations that turn up only because you were pulled over... you can only blame yourself for the ignorant act of not clearing your windshields and license plate. You basically asked to get pulled over and put a flashing neon sign on your car saying "LOOK AT ME OFFICER!!!"

Clear the headlights and wipers:

When it snows, visibility is reduced. Having your lights on and visible helps others see you. We're in this together, so helping others, helps you. In Massachusetts you can get a ticket for using your wipers and not having your lights on anyway.

The Massachusetts DOT RMV states "Massachusetts drivers should remove ice and snow from your vehicle before driving. Clear all windows, windshield, wipers, headlights, and brake lights. Clear the roof so ice and snow does not blow into vehicles behind you."

It's the law, it's safe practice, it's the responsible, ethical adult thing to do.

Opinion: Little is being done about bullying at Parker Elementary School

Do you have a child that goes to a school in New Bedford, is subject to bullying, but getting little to no response or action for the school? Kourtney shares her grievance:

“My daughter is a 10 yr old 5th grader at Parker Elementary School and she is one of 8 students being bullied by one particular girl. There have been multiple reports on the bully from others in the class.

I’m just wondering how many more kids feel targeted and does the school actually steps up? The children should feel safe in school and mine doesn’t. Totally unfair. The school keeps saying that they are taking care of it but there are seven kids before my daughter that had complaints with nothing done about it.”

Have an opinion to share? E-mail mike@newbedfordguide.com

Opinion: Why doesn’t the mayor fine homeowners that do not clear sidewalks?

Here’s a letter to the New Bedford Guide editor concerning homeowners that do not clear their sidewalks:

“My question is how come the City of New Bedford during snowy

times can implement a parking ban and raise over \$30,000, to which we see NOT where it goes and they are able to ticket the disabled, pregnant, low income people, but can't fine all of these slum lords and homeowners that do not clear their sidewalks?

Is it more of a concern for the City that doesn't even do a decent job at plowing to make sure that cars are fined but we can sit here and watch all these little children walk in the middle of the road to school and no one bats an eye. It's disgusting. I'm a homeowner and I clear my sidewalk, partly because I'm supposed to or receive a fine and partly because I was taught to do the right thing. Year after year, why does the mayor not DO something about it!" – Annie Garcia

Have an opinion to share? E-mail mike@newbedfordguide.com

Live with New Bedford Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro and Lt. Rezendes

Live with New Bedford Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro and public information officer Lt. Rezendes to discuss New Bedford issues.

Chris Resendes Show with doctors Michael Rocha and Bonnie Boerl

Chris Resendes Show sat down with Dr. Mike Rocha and Dr Bonnie Boerl to discuss the medical field's role in creating the Opioid Epidemic and what they've done now to help fight it.

They'll also touch upon programs and ideas that will help our children stay away from drug abuse.

The LGBTQ Voice – Parents with LGBTQ children

Join The LGBTQ Voice for their fourth episode! In this episode, we will chat with parents with LGBTQ children.

Catch The LGBTQ Voice on New Bedford Guide's Facebook page every Tuesday at 7pm.