

PUBLIC HEALTH

Dangerous lead pipes carry drinking water to thousands of city homes. Is yours one of them?

New Bedford's efforts to remove the pipes have lagged in recent years and the cost of replacement can fall on residents



Shining The Light

JACK SPILLANE COLUMN

It's not perfect but we need it: Train service to Boston hinges on vote to join MBTA

BY THE NUMBERS
14

The number of inches that NOAA scientists project seas will rise above 2000 levels along the South Coast by 2050. The region could get up to six feet of sea level rise by 2100.

EDUCATION

Book banning debates grip South Coast school elections

After years of grassroots conservative organizing, some South Coast school board elections are dealing with debates about "politicized" curriculum

BREAKING NEWS OFFSHORE WIND

Vineyard Wind delivers first power to grid

Additional testing is planned both on and offshore in the coming weeks, and the project expects to have five turbines operating at full capacity "early in 2024."

CITY HALL

Should New Bedford control rent hikes? City Council wants to know

"We have heard the stories [about rising rents]. This is just for us to ask the people of New Bedford what they want to do. Then we can begin the conversation."

Councilor Shane Burgo



\$1,100/mo 1 bd
74 County Street 3, # 35, N
Apartment for rent

Fast & easy Zil

"We have heard the stories [about rising rents]. This is just for us to ask the people of New Bedford what they want to do. Then we can begin the conversation."

Date Available No
available:

Type: Apartment

Cooling: Contact



THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT
FREE • INDEPENDENT • NEWS

Impact Report 2024



Strong independent journalism is essential to a healthy community. It is the lifeblood of democracy. And across the country, it is in a tailspin of decline.

But not here ...



“New Bedford Light is integrity in news journalism. Finally. Researched, informative, **factual**, and **reliable**.”

READER QUOTE

“You guys do such a great job. It's very unusual to see local issues covered in the **thoughtful, comprehensive** way that you do.”

READER QUOTE



The New Bedford Light is a leader in the nationwide movement to restore vigorous local news through a new model of free, nonprofit, reader-supported journalism that digs deep into the toughest local issues with insight, context and facts.

**We hold power to account.
We celebrate our diverse culture.
We make a difference.**

In this report, you will see how, in just three years of publication, our journalism is spurring positive change in New Bedford and beyond. From critical beats like housing, schools, immigration and climate change, to specialty areas like fishing and offshore wind, our reporters are on the ground pursuing stories that have a real impact on people's lives.

We have helped protect the rights of small fishermen, spurred assistance for displaced tenants, and spotlighted the complexities of substance abuse and its potential solutions. Through our community conversations and public events, we have enlivened the public debate around rising seas, book banning, rent control, gentrification and more.

Day in and day out, we fight to get public information into the hands of the public, bringing a new transparency to municipal government. And our focus on local elections ensures that all voters are equipped with the information to make thoughtful decisions for themselves and their families.

None of this would be possible without the overwhelming support of our community. From your important news tips, spirited opinions and critical feedback, to your donations large and small, thank you for powering independent local journalism in New Bedford and beyond.

Real Impact

The New Bedford Light is different from traditional local news outlets. We focus not on incremental breaking news but on stories that matter most and have a tangible impact on our community. Our impact is felt in many ways:

A federal inquiry into fishing industry consolidation.



INVESTIGATION: How foreign private equity hooked New England's fishing industry

Warren, Markey and Keating demand answers from Blue Harvest owners

"After years of putting private equity profits ahead of workers and small businesses, Bregal Partners – which owned and stripped Blue Harvest of its assets – owes the community an explanation."

My grandfather, captain and owner of the Wamsutta, is rolling over in his grave as the tentacles in these issues grow."

READER QUOTE

A state audit of UMass's sudden closing of its downtown art school.



UMass Dartmouth's Star Store maintenance costs don't add up

Montigny: Inspector General to investigate Star Store finances

Amazing how important a free press is. Your work on the Star Store has been invaluable. Stay locked on to that."

READER QUOTE

A change in the law to protect homeowners.



'Home equity theft' — in New Bedford and across Massachusetts

State senate moves to end 'home equity theft'

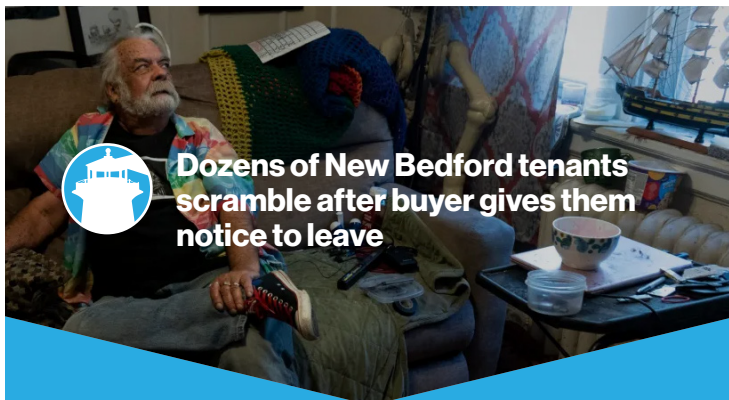
A citizens' petition protesting excessive raises for city employees.



Clumsy effort results in outrageous wage increases for some New Bedford employees

City Council backs off huge pay raise proposal, caps biggest increases at 25%

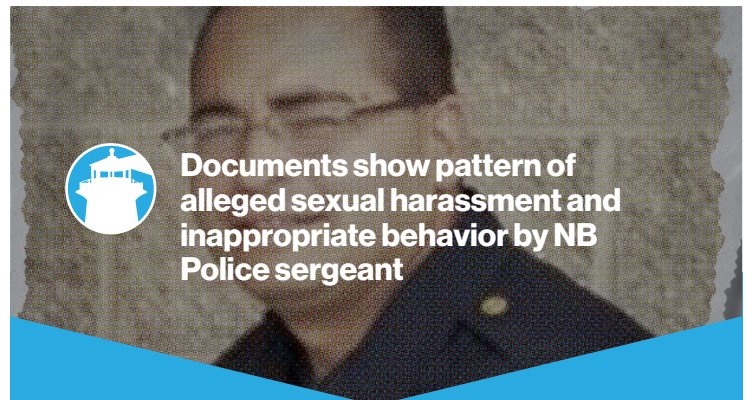
Emergency services for residents who were suddenly displaced.



Dozens of New Bedford tenants scramble after buyer gives them notice to leave

Agencies, advocates rally to assist New Bedford tenants with eviction crisis

Long delayed disciplinary action against errant police officers.



Documents show pattern of alleged sexual harassment and inappropriate behavior by NB Police sergeant

Police sergeant given written reprimand after harassment complaints uncovered

Real Voices

We strive to reflect the whole of our city by delving into the richly diverse viewpoints, backgrounds and aspirations of the people who make our place unique – often through multimedia interviews.



Tufts biology major turned baker, Brandon Roderick followed his heart

Culinary artist talks about science, baguettes and the camaraderie in downtown New Bedford



Inspired by Black community, Justina Perry pays it forward

"I have so much gratitude for the experience that I got from directing a platform and being a spokesperson for the Black community, and for the people that allowed me to do that."



A day at the CEDC: The immigrant center that never sleeps





The Light is scrupulously nonpartisan. We do not publish our own editorials or candidate endorsements. We maintain a strict firewall between our funders and our newsroom. But the issues we investigate are often controversial, and we welcome our readers' strong opinions.

Both sides react strongly to an offshore wind article on misinformation, both praising the story and criticizing it.

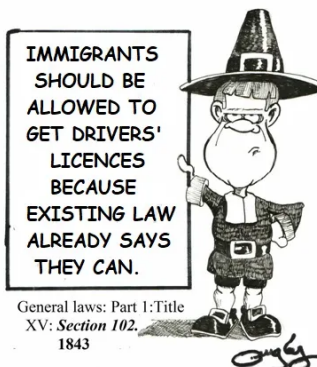
“Your article does a great service in cutting through the emotionally charged rhetoric, and respectfully acknowledges the opposing opinions. Thank you for your reporting and please keep up the good work of dispelling the disinformation and misinformation that abounds in this nascent and vitally necessary industry.”

READER QUOTE

“Totally biased since your donors include big wind. Lies, disinformation and financed wind propaganda. Corrupted news.”

READER QUOTE

Editor's Note: The Light's journalism is fiercely independent. Our donors have no influence over editorial content.



Opinion: Follow the law. 'All persons' have rights, not 'all citizens'

"We choose to ignore 1843 law still on the books. That's wrong."

JOE QUIGLEY

Opinion: Women belong at the Feast: A call for inclusion

"As we wind down Women's History Month, it is disheartening to confront a stark reminder that gender inequality still persists in our society and in our backyard."

CARMEN AMARAL, WOMEN'S FUND SOUTHCOAST

Opinion: End the test-and-punish approach to education in Massachusetts

"The MCAS graduation requirement does not serve the best interests of our students, educators or communities. Let's prioritize high standards over high stakes and foster a learning environment where all children can flourish."

BY CYNTHIA ROY

Reader reactions to State Pier plans are as mixed as city is diverse

Congratulations, skepticism, excitement, criticism ... Readers had a wide variety of reactions and thoughtful commentary.

“New Bedford needs this. I think it's a great plan. To the future.”

READER QUOTE

“Who really benefits the most is my question. Does this support the local folks from New Bedford who have lived here for generations? Or does this push us out? Do we want to be another Newport or Newton? New Bedford's ethnicity is its strength. Let's not lose us. Who are these developers coming into New Bedford? Where are they from? How much money will they make?”

READER QUOTE

Celebrating Culture

New Bedford's culture is unique, thanks to its wealth of creativity and flourishing arts scene. The Light strives to illuminate the people and ideas that drive this dynamic, from our curated calendars of events to in-depth interviews, live events and street photography.



Street Style



“Thank you... for acknowledging and recognizing the vibrant arts community.”

READER QUOTE

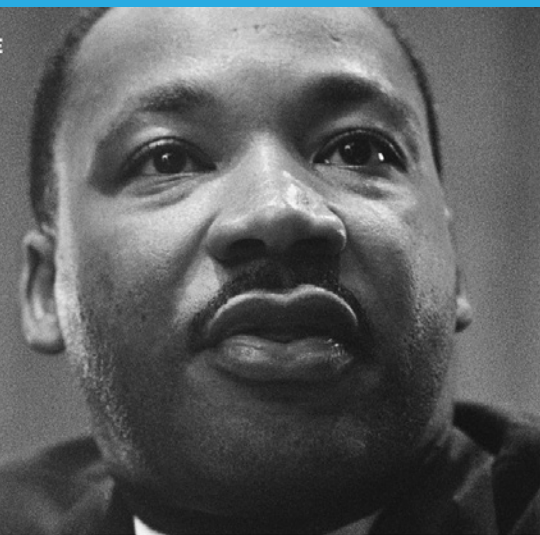




★ NEW BEDFORD LIGHT / CIVIC LIFE

**“
Democracy
transformed from
thin paper to
thick action is the
greatest form of
government
on earth.”**

Martin Luther King Jr.



In the Community

Our reporters are on the street and the waterfront, in the neighborhoods, the schools, the tenements, churches, coffee shops and watering holes. They're listening and questioning and digging beneath the surface of polarizing rhetoric to find out what's really going on – and what it means.



Two views on nip ban

IN SUPPORT Today at 7 p.m. via Zoom

IN OPPOSITION Thursday, Aug. 3 at 11 a.m. via Zoom

THE CHAT A series of community conversations



An evening with the Pocasset Tribe

7 p.m. Wednesday, May 11 on Zoom

THE CHAT A series of community conversations



THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT

New Bedford High's LGBTQ+ protesters speak out

7 p.m. Wednesday, March 15 on Zoom

THE CHAT A series of community conversations

Community Conversations/Rising Seas



New Bedford Light - A community-news organization

February 29

We love bringing people together to talk about important issues that impact the region. Thank you to the expert panelists and more than 150 readers who joined us for a Community Conversation last night at the New Bedford Art Museum. Climate reporter Adam Goldstein's story "South Coast confronts rising seas" generated lots of great questions and an informative discussion. Stay tuned to newbedfordlight.org for the event video and information about the next Community Conversation in April.

Read the full story here: <https://newbedfordlight.org/south-coast-towns-confront.../>





Diane M. Gilbert

This was terrific and a much-needed discussion.

9w Like Reply 2



RISE Recovery Support Center

Great event! You're gonna need a bigger boat!

9w Like Reply 3



Mark Lavallee

Agreed, they might want to consider the large meeting room at the library.

9w Like Reply



Rachel G. Thomas

It was an evening of great sharing by a five-star panel, terrific questions from an attentive audience and a communal sense of urgency. So glad I went.

9w Like Reply 3

8 THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT

Meet the Reporters



THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT

Meet the **REPORTERS**

Join New Bedford Light reporters Grace Ferguson and Arthur Hirsch for a conversation about our investigation into the ongoing opioid epidemic and its potential solutions. Mix and mingle with New Bedford Light readers and staff. Enjoy complimentary light snacks and refreshments.

Free, afterwork event at PAACA
Thursday, October 19th, 2023 - 5:30-6:30 pm
360 Coggeshall St, New Bedford, MA 02746



Arthur Hirsch



Grace Ferguson





“The recent New Bedford Light Meet the Reporters event was such a great opportunity for the community to come together to address different facets of the opioid crisis, from multiple perspectives. I was heartened to see the diverse group of individuals in attendance and even more importantly, to hear their perspectives.”

CARL ALVES, POSITIVE ACTION AGAINST CHEMICAL ADDICTION CEO

The
**addiction
factor**

Drug abuse pulses through so many aspects of city life, from public health and safety to housing and education. Why? And what can be done? The Light investigates.



Student Interns

Our summer internship program draws budding reporters from local high schools and colleges, including New Bedford High School, Dartmouth High School, Bristol Community College and UMass Dartmouth.



“Huge shoutout to the summer interns and the work they’re doing. Their videos are terrific. They give me hope for the future knowing how committed they are to sharing stories and helping us all to know one another more deeply.”

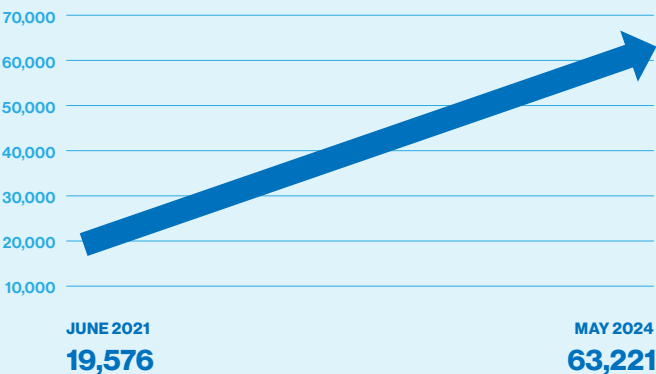
READER QUOTE



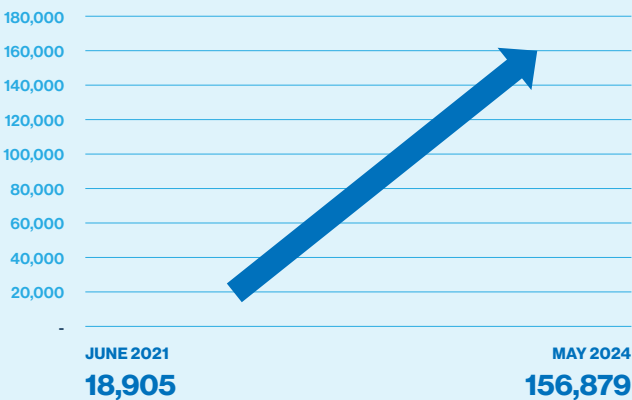
Our Growth

The Light’s emphasis on in-depth, fact-based reporting and diverse voices has propelled a dramatic increase in our readership – from zero to approximately 60,000 website visitors per month. We also distribute our content across multiple social media platforms, where our “reach” has hit 1.1 million in 2022 and 1.5 million in 2023. Subscribers to our free daily newsletter now exceed 11,000.

Monthly Visitors



Monthly Social Reach



POLITICO

Our journalism reflects the uniqueness of the New Bedford area, but it is resonating throughout the state, the region and the nation.

Our stories on the fishing and offshore wind industries are routinely republished or referenced in national and international media and trade publications.

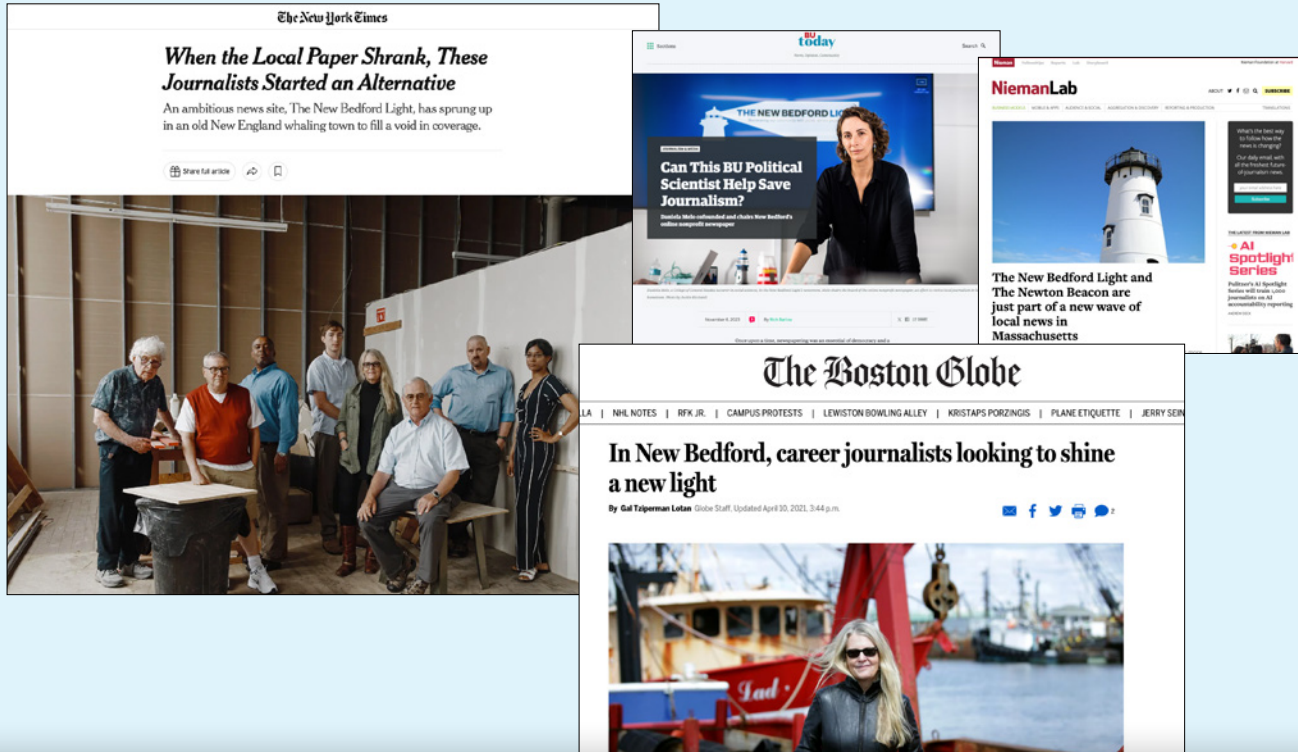


The New York Times



Recognition

The Light is a pioneer. We regularly provide advice and assistance to other nonprofit efforts across the country. Our staff is frequently featured at industrywide journalism workshops and conferences. State and national media have taken note.



The Institute for Nonprofit News recently honored The Light with an award for excellence in visual storytelling.

Our fishing industry coverage, produced in partnership with ProPublica, was a finalist for the prestigious 2023 Gerald Loeb Awards, losing to an investigative team of seven reporters from The Los Angeles Times.



Institute for
Nonprofit News

2023 Nonprofit News Award Winners

THE GERALD
LOEB
AWARDS
Distinguished Business
& Financial Journalism

**2023 Gerald Loeb Award Finalists,
Lifetime Honorees and Awards Event
in New York City Announced by
UCLA Anderson**

Our Revenue

The New Bedford Light finished its second full year of operation in a strong financial position, continuing to operate with a balanced budget and maintaining more than six months of operating expense in reserve. These financial achievements are significant milestones for an organization as young as The Light.



**We raised over
\$1.6 million in 2023.**

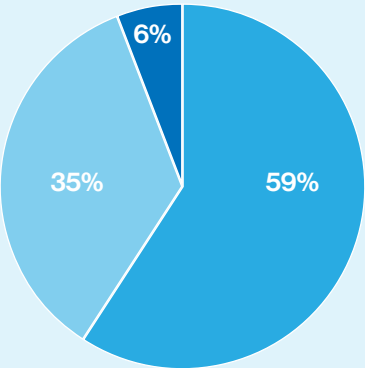
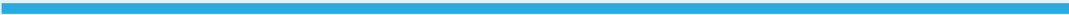
**Over 80% of our revenue
directly supports our
local reporting.**

The Light's strong financial standing and increasingly broad public support reflects the reach and impact of our work and has bolstered our capacity to engage and inform the community.

I am grateful to each reader and supporter who has invested in The Light. You have contributed to the stability and sustainability of local news.

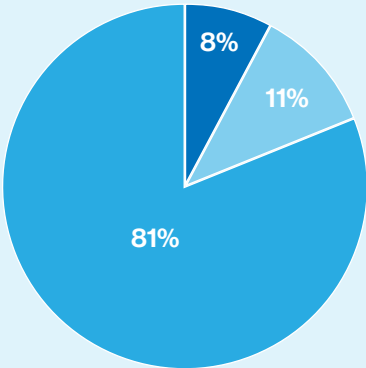
JOEL ALVORD, TREASURER

FISCAL YEAR 2023
January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023
Unaudited Financial Results



Revenue

Individual Donations	\$972,598
Grants	\$569,268
Sponsorships & Events	\$96,566
Total Revenue	\$1,638,432



Operating Expenses

Journalism	\$1,253,600
Fundraising	\$170,280
Administration	\$125,037
Total Expenses	\$1,548,918

Net Assets

Beginning	\$1,301,995
Increase in NetAssets	\$265,691
Ending Net Assets	\$1,567,686

YOU are THE LIGHT

A free press has never been more vital to sustaining our democracy, yet never more at risk than it is today. How is it possible that The Light is able to investigate important issues, amplify diverse voices and celebrate local culture? We have 1,500-plus reasons.

FOUNDING BENEFACTORS

• Jacobs Family fund of the Jewish Community Foundation
• Mary & Jim Ottaway

Corporate and foundation grants

Anonymous (2) • Baldwin Brothers
• BankFive • BayCoast Bank • The Boston Foundation, Anonymous Fund • Braitmayer Foundation • Bristol County Savings Bank • Carney Family Foundation
• Charles L. Barmonde Fund • CHT Foundation • Claremont Companies • Common Ground Cafe and Catering
• Henry H. Crapo Foundation • Mary Crapo Hyde Eccles Fund • Cuttyhunk Ferry • Fiber Optic Center • First Citizens' Charitable Foundation • HarborOne Bank
• IceCube Cold Storage & Logistics • Imtra Corporation • Inasmuch Foundation • Island Foundation • Jardim & Marotta, CPA
• John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
• LandVest • Lang, Xifaras and Bullard
• Meta Journalism Project • Morton's Fork Catering Company • New Bedford Historical Society • Olivier Group Wellness Center • Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation • Oxford Creamery • ProPublica • Rathmann Family Foundation • Schooner Ernestina • Schrafft Charitable Trust • Adam R. Scripps Foundation • Skip's Marine Supply • 11th Hour Fund Grant, SouthCoast Community Foundation • SouthCoast Community Foundation • SouthCoast Wind • Sperry Tents • Sylvia Group • Taunton Federal Credit Union • Tavares Movers Inc. • Tonix Pharmaceuticals • Tulgey Wood Foundation • Unger LeBlanc, Inc. • Vineyard Wind • Walmart Foundation

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• Deborah Bullock • Adrian Burke • Patricia Burke • Richard & Jayne Burkhardt • Andy & Amy Burnes • Richard Burnes • Siobhan Burns • Carleton Burr • Don Burton

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 • David & Deb Ehrens • Rachel Eisendrath
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 Kimberly Griffith • Noah Griffith • Michael

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 Grosart • Ann Groves • Kathleen Guarino
 • Jeannie Gulbranson • Jon Gunschel •
 Valerie & Ihsan Gurdal • John Gushue •
 Philip Guymont & Susan McLaren

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 • George Hager • Rob Haines • Cynthia
 Haines • Amy Haley • Candace Hall •
 Jennifer Hall • Sandra Hall • William Hall
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As a free, independent, nonprofit news outlet, we rely on the generosity of our readers. Thank you for making our work possible.

The list reflects all donations received by The New Bedford Light from inception to Jan. 31, 2024. We regret any errors or omissions. Please send any changes to Director of Advancement Chrystal Walsh at cwalsh@newbedfordlight.org.

We've Just Begun

While we are proud of what we've accomplished in just three years, we are mindful of the work ahead. Huge changes are coming to our area, from the arrival of a commuter rail service between New Bedford and Boston to expansion of the offshore wind industry. With a steady influx of immigrants from Latin America, demographic change is bringing new opportunity and challenge. As a coastal region, climate change and its effects are becoming more urgent by the day.

Our team is primed to dig into these complex topics with hard facts and context. As the issues centered in New Bedford reflect and spread to the wider region, we expect our geographic footprint to expand as well, with a keen focus on rising sea levels, warming ocean waters and accelerating storms.

All our major stories are now accompanied by an audio option in multiple languages – including Spanish and Portuguese. We look forward to new partnerships with other media outlets serving diverse audiences. And we will continue to collaborate with investigative powerhouses such as ProPublica and The Marshall Project, as well as public radio and television stations.

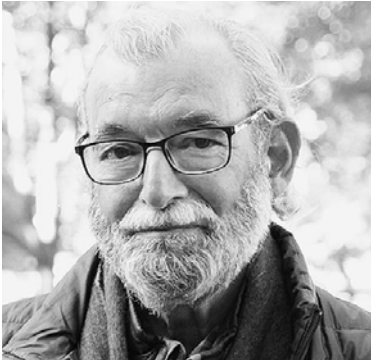
Our staff is the heart of The Light. In addition to industry veterans, they include a cadre of reporters who have come to The Light straight out of college and graduate schools – from UC Berkeley, Columbia University, Boston University, UMass and elsewhere. They are multi-talented, creative and passionate about the power of local journalism to make a tangible difference.



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- John Vasconcellos
- and in memoriam, Greg Torres

GREG TORRES FAMILY PHOTO



Greg Torres, a founding board member of The New Bedford Light, passed away in August 2023. He was passionate about The Light's mission and the power of independent and non-partisan journalism. Greg was a former publisher of CommonWealth Magazine, a leader in investigative journalism, and former CEO and board Chair of Mass INC. Beyond journalism, Greg dedicated himself to developing community-based organizations and shaping public policy responses that improved lives.

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- and in memoriam, Kevin Harrington*

* also a founding member of The Light

Are we there yet?

A Community Conversation about what's next for transit on the South Coast

Participants include:

New Bedford Light reporter Grace Ferguson, State Rep. Bill Straus, and officials from SRTA, The City of New Bedford, South Coast Rail, and The Realty Association of Southeastern MA.



Free admission



Tuesday,
6 p.m. June 18



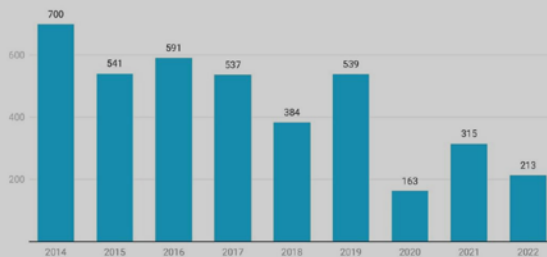
New Bedford Public Library
3rd Floor Meeting Room

JACK SPILLANE COLUMN

New Bedford is planting trees, but the heat island problem **requires more** >>

Tree plantings by year in New Bedford

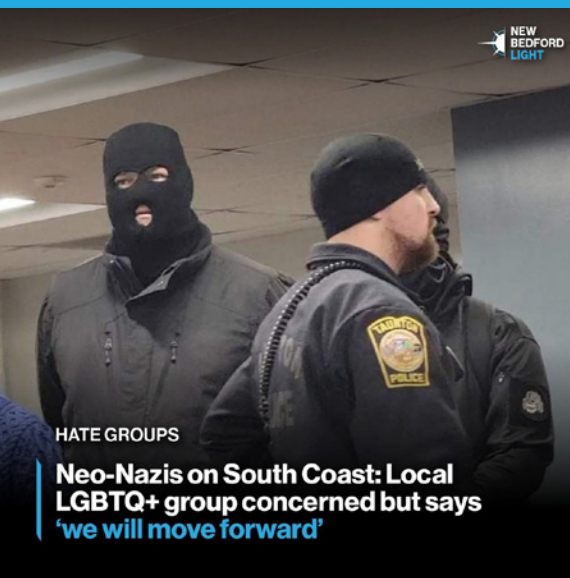
Estimated total number of trees planted over nine-year period: 3,983



OFFSHORE WIND

Compensation programs open for Mass. fishermen

Because the projects and funds are independent of (and different from) one another, fishermen must apply separately to be eligible for each program.



HATE GROUPS

Neo-Nazis on South Coast: Local LGBTQ+ group concerned but says **'we will move forward'**

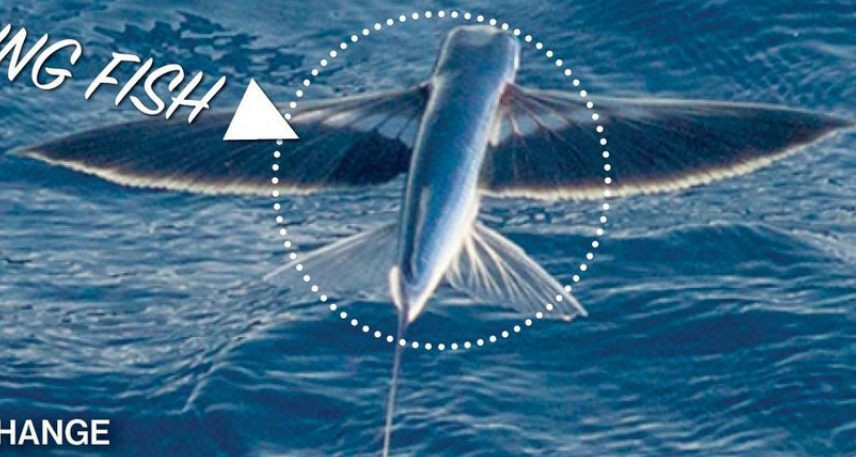
 **NEW BEDFORD LIGHT**

ENVIRONMENT

New **septic regulations** could cost towns, taxpayers and homeowners a bundle

The state aims to reduce nitrogen pollution by tightening restrictions on septic systems for Cape Cod and South Coast communities

FLYING FISH



CLIMATE CHANGE

Warm waters are bringing exotic, tropical species to the South Coast

The appearance of **flying fish** — alongside reports of **tarpon** and other species — has many residents wondering what's bringing tropical fish to the South Coast. >>

Why are there so many prison suicides in Bristol County?

Sheriff Paul Heroux has turned to Lindsay M. Hayes, an authority on jail and prison suicide, who's requested documents on the following information. >>

THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT



CULTURE

Women threaten to sue Feast organizers for gender discrimination

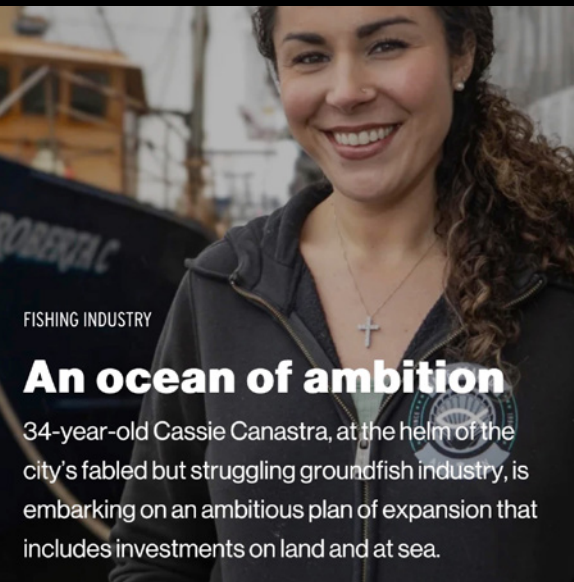
NEW BEDFORD LIGHT

\$14.11

Median hourly wage for early educators in Massachusetts before the pandemic

15%

Poverty rate among early educators in Massachusetts



FISHING INDUSTRY

An ocean of ambition

34-year-old Cassie Canastra, at the helm of the city's fabled but struggling groundfish industry, is embarking on an ambitious plan of expansion that includes investments on land and at sea.



The next Tavares — Marlowe has their soul but 'the influence of the modern world'

InPerson



DEADLY FIRE

'Death trap': Rooming house where fire killed two had multiple code violations



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