

Top 5 Things to Do for AHA! (March 8th)



by
Nicholas
Walecka

Tonight, Downtown New Bedford will celebrate AHA!, the “Hear Me Roar” edition in honor of National Women’s History Month for March. Here’s a list of the top five woman-themed events that you should check out tonight if you’re in the city.

5) **Strong Arm Challenge:** The Hear Me Roar Edition at The Rose Alley Ale House (94 Front St.): Women especially are encouraged to come down and flex their muscles in an arm wrestling contest, though both sexes are allowed. Everyone present is automatically entered into a Strong Arm themed raffle. The event is hosted by MC Chris Swanson and starts at 8pm.

4) **Anything by Kim Barry:** Her custom pots spent some time with the Obama’s on their trip to the Vineyard last summer, and we’ll get a double dose of her talents for AHA! as she will be featured at both Gallery 65 and the Pour Farm Tavern. Her artwork will grace the walls at the Pour Farm, and she will also be showing, “a display of her large decorative plant containers, resplendent with orchids, and she will give an orchid potting demonstration and impart information about orchid species and care, and a variety of orchids and orchid pots will be on sale during the evening,” according to the AHA! website.

3) **Belly dancing at Boutique Fitness:** (516 Pleasant St. #104) Boutique Fitness is new to AHA!, having just opened their doors in late February, but that doesn't mean they're not ready to move. It is their goal, "to inspire you to live optimally" by providing you with guidance needed to achieve an effective but atypical workout, and they will have a belly dancing performance by Andrea Corrieri at 7pm to prove it.



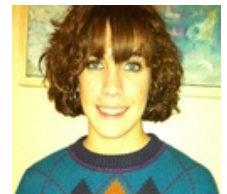
2) **Commons** (778 Purchase St.) will have a trio of women worth celebrating, as they welcome special guest chef Jan Baptist, hip-hop artist The Empress and photographer Amanda Cain into their establishment. Jan will do the cooking, The Empress will provide the entertainment, and a collection of Cain's work will be featured. Also, from 6-8pm catch Chris Haskell live. Facebook event here.

1) The unfriendly females of **Mass Attack Roller Derby** will be skating down Purchase Street at 6pm, courtesy of the Pour Farm Tavern. According to their website, "Mass Attack Roller Derby (MARD) is a female flat track roller derby league founded in November 2010. Silver City Sports Complex is the home rink for MARD in Taunton, Massachusetts." They are currently looking for newcomers, so tonight would be a great night to check them out and see how you stack up—if you think you've got what it takes.

A list of dozens of AHA! events and happenings can be found on their website here.



2012 New Bedford Half Marathon

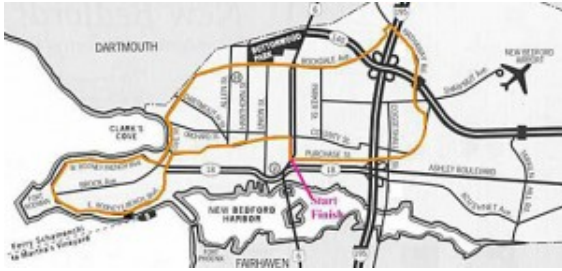


by Meg
Rogers

You're bored and need something to do, so you take off from Downtown New Bedford and decide to head to Fall River. It's about thirteen miles so it'll take you, oh, two hours.

Two hours? What? Shouldn't that take about ten minutes?

The distance from New Bedford to Fall river is approximately 13 miles, which is the same distance as the upcoming 35th Annual New Bedford Half Marathon, sponsored by the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. And those two hours? Well, this writer hopes to finish the New Bedford Half Marathon, her first half, in that time.



New Bedford Half Marathon Course Map

This year, the New Bedford Half Marathon is on Sunday, March 18th at 11 am. Racers like me will meet at the YMCA at the corner of Union Street and Water Street for the start and finish of the race which moves through Downtown, up the hill on Hathaway Road, down Rockdale Avenue, around the Rodney French peninsula and back Downtown via the second hill of the course on County Street.

Since 2008, the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick have sponsored the New Bedford Half Marathon along with the Mayor of New Bedford. The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick raise money for their community activities and scholarships. The mission of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is to, "sponsor and preserve cultural, charitable and social service programs. To sponsor and assist in the education of persons without concern for their national origin by providing financial and other assistance based upon merit," a valid cause whether one is of Irish descent or not.



Ruben Sanca

In 2011, the 13.1 mile race had 2,655 runners finishing the race, a record number of racers for the course. Ruben Sanca

won the the men's race with a time of 1:05:25; Kim Smith won for the women with a time of 1:09:50. Though Mr. Sanca runs in Boston, Ms Smith traveled from New Zealand to race the New Bedford Half Marathon. Because the New Bedford Half Marathon has such a good reputation, the field frequently has runners from all over the country and the world racing for their personal best, no matter what that time might be.

As the Half Marathon is part of the USA Track and Field Championship and Grand Prix, the runners completing the course finish in a wide swath of times. For example, the first New Bedford runner to finish the race was 31 year old Corey Bachand with a time of 1:15:10. The last was 22 year old Nicole Nixon with a time of 2:56:46. Though everyone runs with the goal of finishing the race and some, like Sanca and Smith are serious competitors looking to win money and set records, some runners are out there with a specific cause in mind.

One such group is "Team Owen." Team Owen was started by Stephen Taylor, a school resource officer at New Bedford High School had a colleague who lost his son, Owen Simmons, to Spinal Muscular Atrophy, the leading genetic cause of death of infants and toddlers. Team Owen runs to raise money for the Gwendolyn Strong Foundation that searches for a cure for SMA. Like Team Owen, these groups of runners racing for charity "Run for those who can't." To donate or to get more details on Team Owen go here: <http://www.firstgiving.com/gsf/new-bedford-half-marathon>

So if you're looking for something fun and different to do on Sunday, March 18th, head on towards the Half Marathon route to cheer on the runners challenging themselves for their personal best and, some, for charity.

For more information, check out the websites below:

- <http://www.newbedfordguide.com/running-the-new-bedford-half-marathon/2011/03/22>

- <http://newbedfordhalfmarathon.com>
 - <http://friendlysonsofsaintpatrick.com>
 - <http://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/stephen-taylor-1/100miles4owen>
 - <http://www.firstgiving.com/gsf/new-bedford-half-marathon>
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17 Must Attend New Bedford Events

Summerfest, New Bedford Chowder Festival, and The Feast, just to name a few.

A New Bedford Newbie



by Eric
Tripoli

For almost six years, I called the Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts my home. More specifically, I lived in and around the Amherst/Northampton region while attending school. During my time there, I came to embrace the whimsical nature of the mishmash of places and personalities that came together to create the iconic “college town” atmosphere and life style.

If you're a visitor or a resident, you are guaranteed to see at least one thing every day you would never expect to see. For example, one day in the winter of 2009, while walking to the library, I saw a fellow student riding her bike across our snow-covered campus. She was sporting a one-foot tall mohawk, camouflage cargo pants, flip-flops, scarf, and a bikini top. She had a hula-hoop resting on each of her tattooed shoulders as she glided her bike one-handed down the path. In the scope of day-to-day life's predictability, she was resting comfortably outside of that bell curve.

But those were the types of things that made Western Massachusetts feel like home. I lived in a world that not only welcomed and supported the unconventional, but thrived on it like nectar. Needless to say, this is not what most people would define as "the real world." And I agree with those people.



Before all this, I grew up in a town of about 11,000 people in northeastern Connecticut, a rural, lily-white, mostly Christian place, so it took a while for me to get accustomed to being surrounded by the weird and unpredictable.

Eventually I adopted the "When in Rome..." philosophy and espoused the culture for everything it offered. From the vanilla-almond bubble tea at Souper Bowl to the fire breathers who would practice on the Amherst town green on the warmer nights of spring and summer, that world became my real world.

Then I graduated and relocation became a requirement. After days of discussion and debate with my girlfriend and our puppy, we decided that New Bedford was going to be the next place we call home. But being the new kids in town, we don't really know what makes New Bedford home to her thousands of

residents.

And that's where you, dear reader, come in.

I'm planning on writing a column about the city of New Bedford from the perspective of one who has never lived here. This is a rich place for so many reasons and I hope to begin this journey using your suggestions as my starting points. Whether it's one of the beautiful churches that line the cobblestone side streets of downtown or a delicious beverage offered by a local café, I would love to know about it. In my short time here, I've learned that New Bedford is a community in the truest sense. People love the city and they feel a strong sense of pride for the South Coast. And you make the best seafood I've ever had.

So, New Bedford, what makes this city home for you? Please leave your suggestions in the Comments section of this column. I look forward to hearing from you.

New Bedford Department of Veterans' Services Relocates

The City of New Bedford Department of Veterans' Services & Benefits has begun serving New Bedford veterans and their families from office space located at 181 Hillman Street, Building #3. The office is in the same complex of government buildings as the recently opened Andrea McCoy Recreation Center.



The new Hillman Street location is handicapped accessible and features renovated office and multi-use space to support a variety of veterans services. The location also takes advantage of ample nearby parking and is located on a public bus route.

The New Bedford Department of Veterans' Services and Benefits advocates on behalf of all veterans, provides them with quality support services, and directs an emergency financial assistance program for those veterans and their dependents who are in need. The New Bedford Department of Veterans' Services and Benefits is currently serving over 500 veterans and their widows.

For more information on the assistance and services available to veterans, please contact Christopher Gomes, Director of the New Bedford Department of Veterans' Services and Benefits at (508) 991-6184 or by email at CGomes@newbedford-ma.gov .

Recycle That Phone Book!

Rather than throwing away last year's phone book, recycle it in your blue bin designated for paper – along with newspapers, magazines, junk mail, paperboard (e.g. cereal boxes) and flattened cardboard. Phone books can also be recycled at the Shawmut Avenue Transfer Station located at 1103 Shawmut Avenue.



Every resident's participation in the recycling program makes a difference. By recycling paper and cans & bottles, residents help to prolong the life of the Crapo Hill Landfill, New Bedford's waste disposal site. These recyclables earn revenue that has been used to purchase an assortment of items including recycling bins, black mesh litter baskets, various equipment (a tractor, two packer trucks and a trash compactor), educational materials, and improvements at the transfer station (new signage, new doors and paving). Residents can help to further enhance the City's recycling and solid waste services by recycling as much as possible.

If you would like to opt-out of receiving the yellow pages, please visit www.yellowpagesoptout.com to register and manage which directories you will receive.

If you have any questions or would like to request a blue bin, call (508) 979-1493, visit our website at www.gnbrrmdistrict.org or find us on Facebook.

Historical Park Continues Exploration Series

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park announces the next sessions in its Exploration Series. On Thurs., March 8, AHA! Night, Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) Executive Director Lisa Bergson will offer a photographic presentation at 7:30 PM. She will discuss the vision of local residents, decades ago as well as today, to save New Bedford's historic structures. On Sat., March 10, at 10:00 AM, Lee Blake, Executive Director of New Bedford Historical Society, will offer a talk "From slavery to freedom: New Bedford's Underground Railroad." These sessions will take place at New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, 33 William St., in downtown New Bedford.

The Exploration Series is an opportunity for the public to delve into New Bedford's fascinating history and its people. The sessions take place on select Thursday evenings from 7:00-8:30 PM and on select Saturday mornings from 10:00-11:30 AM, with most sessions taking place adjacent to the national park visitor center, 33 William Street, New Bedford. All sessions are free of charge, and the public is welcome to attend one, some, or all of the events.

Voting in Super Tuesday's Election

New Bedford voters unable to travel to the polls for the election on **Super Tuesday, March 6, 2012** will be able to cast their ballots on **Saturday, March 3**, between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 12:00 P.M. at New Bedford City Hall, 133 William St., Room 114.



In this Presidential Primary, voters will cast their votes for President, City Committee Man, State Committee Woman, and Ward Committees. Un-enrolled voters (Independent) will have to choose a Democratic, Republican, or Green Rainbow ballot.

Voters will be able to request an absentee ballot up to 12:00 P.M. the day before the election: **Monday, March 5, 2012**. All absentee ballots have to be mailed by the voter, but completed ballots can be returned in person to the Election office by 7:45 P.M. on Election Day.

Due to re-drawing of precincts, many of the polling places have changed. This will be the first election with the new ward and precinct lines. Voters who are uncertain as to their voting status or who do not know where their assigned polling location is, should contact the Board of Election Commissioners at (508) 979-1420. Voters can also visit the City's website www.newbedford-ma.gov to view specimen ballots and find out their polling locations.

The polls will be open on Election Day, Tuesday, March 6, 2012, from 7:00 A.M. until 8:00 P.M.

New Bedford “State of the City” Address (22 March)

Each year the New Bedford mayor gives a State of the City speech at a luncheon in front of hundreds of attendees. WBSM and the public TV network typically cover the event. We posted a review of Mayor Lang’s 2011 State of the City address [here](#).



The hot topics for 2012 are not expected to change; economy, public education and crime.

The 2012 State of the City luncheon is hosted by the Chamber of Commerce at the United Fisherman Club of New Bedford (639 Orchard St.) from 12-2pm on 22 March, 2012 with Mayor Jon Mitchell as the keynote speaker. All of the public is welcome to attend.

From the New Bedford Chamber of Commerce:

This Annual Chamber luncheon program is held in March when the Mayor of New Bedford delivers the “State of the City” address detailing past accomplishments, goals, planned policies and objectives for the largest city in the region for the coming year. Over 500 business, community, media, and political leaders are expected to attend this luncheon program.

Fees are \$28 per person, \$280 per table of 10 or \$325 per Signed Corporate table of 10 (includes tabletop sign with company logo). Reservation deadline is March 16, 2012. You can register online or contact rbranco@newbedfordchamber.com.

New Bedford Connecting Activities Partnership Seeking Volunteers

Every school day 7,000 students become dropouts nationwide, that's one every 26 seconds. The Greater New Bedford Connecting Activities Partnership needs volunteers to help address this crisis within the New Bedford area by delivering CHOICES, an interactive decision-making workshop that empowers teens to achieve academic success in pursuit of their career and life aspirations. Volunteer presenters from the local community are needed to deliver CHOICES to local 8th and 9th graders at New Bedford High School and Hastings Middle School in Fairhaven.



In the 90-minute session, presenters take students through real-world exercises on academic self-discipline, time and money management, and goal setting. The hands-on activities awaken students to the fact that they have the power to make important future-impacting decisions right now. The seminar develops the ideas of time management, self-discipline and wise academic decision making. It brings home to teenagers the meaning of the term “cost of living” and exposes them to sobering information about the education skills required for various occupations in today’s and tomorrow’s workplace. They stress how education achievement levels will either greatly limit or expand career choices and the ability to financially support oneself or a family.

“The presenters want to help the students understand how their level of education will expand their future choices and income,” says Noelle Pina, Employer Specialist for the Partnership at the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce. “The CHOICES program makes a positive difference in the lives of students by encouraging them to make good decisions and stay in school. The program is fast-paced and participatory so students are constantly active and never have the opportunity to become bored,” Pina continues.

CHOICES is a fun workshop that quickly becomes easy to present. The partnership is looking for local business and community leaders who are comfortable with public speaking, are passionate about the success of youth and are interested in education, are organized and creative, and who can donate approximately 5 hours of their time to the workshop. This includes presenter training on March 14th, 9:00am-12pm (3 hours) and presenting the full workshop (2 hours). Presenters are encouraged to practice the presentation before their first workshop and to work in pairs to allow for variety and sharing of the workload. “We will be with our presenters every step of the way so they feel at ease in front of the students,” says Zelia LaGarde, Internship Coordinator for the Partnership from Bristol Community College.

“CHOICES strives to awaken high school students to their potential, and helps them discover and develop aspirations for their lives,” said Leo Muller, Executive Director of the national non-profit. “We help kids understand the consequences of dropping out and the opportunities available by pursuing their education. We introduce them to life skills they can use to take charge of their lives and to build a better future for themselves. We look forward to our partnership with Connecting Activities and are honored to be part of a comprehensive solution for students in the New Bedford area.”

After the workshop each student can participate in the CHOICES

Challenge, a text messaging activity designed to reinforce the principles of the workshop, students who complete the activity will be entered to win prizes.

Presenter training is taking place at the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday March 14th, 9:00am-12:00pm. To register to be trained as a CHOICES presenter please call Noelle Pina at (508) 999-5231 or e-mail npina@newbedfordchamber.com.

About the Connecting Activities Partnership

The Greater New Bedford Connecting Activities Partnership, a collaboration of the City of New Bedford Office of the Mayor, the Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council, Bristol Community College and the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce, promotes the connecting of academic and workplace learning through Connecting Activities workplace internships. Area employers assist High School seniors to make more informed decisions about their future education and career choices. Currently we service students at Dartmouth High School, Fairhaven High School, Global Learning Charter Public School, New Bedford High School, and Old Rochester Regional High School. More information about the partnership is available at www.newbedfordchamber.com or by calling (508) 999-5231.

About The CHOICES Education Group

The CHOICES Education Group is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit social enterprise started in 1985 with initial funding from Pacific Northwest Bell (now Qwest Communications). CHOICES has been delivered to more than six million students since 1985. The CHOICES workshop is currently being delivered in hundreds of locations across the U.S. and Canada. More information about CHOICES is available at www.choices.org or by calling 1-888-CHOICES (1-888-246-4237).