

1st Quarter 2023

WQRC (7 a.m.) / WOCN (8 a.m.) / WFCC (6 a.m.) / WKPE (5 a.m.)

Segment times 17:30 unless otherwise indicated.

January 1 - Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Steamship Authority Considers New Vessel

Program description: The Steamship Authority has acquired three new vessels in the past few months , with a fourth acquisition being considered, according to officials.

Communications Director for the Authority Sean Driscoll says that the idea of a spare fourth vessel is appealing, as it would cut down on service interruptions for maintenance, but it would not be without its own challenges. “It’s great to have a spare vessel but spare vessels come with costs. It’s another ship that we have to spend maintenance on, do a drydock every two years and have enough crews to run,” said Driscoll. “It’s not only about how many ships you have, but also how many people you have to run those ships and how many boats can fit in port at one time. It’s much more complicated. Even if we had 100 boats, we only have enough people to run 10 of them at a time.” The new vessels are one of several steps in updating the service, including a new app and redesigned website that is in final testing stages, says Driscoll. As work is ongoing to get the ships ready for their eventual entry into the fleet, officials are also gearing up for summer travel reservations opening on January 17 for Nantucket and January 24 for Martha’s Vineyard.

Program Title: Canal Bridges

Program Description: Governor Maura Healey highlighted the importance of the Cape Cod Canal Bridges during recent meetings in Washington, D.C. with lawmakers, other governors and President Joe Biden. She said that she spoke with several people in Washington D.C. about the aging spans now approaching 100 years of service. She emphasized the importance of federal funding for the project to replace them, which has twice been rejected for grant opportunities in recent months. Estimates place the cost of replacing the two bridges at around \$4 billion dollars.

January 8 - Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Nero's Law Update

Program Description: A local lawmaker offered an update on the implementation of Nero's Law almost a year after the legislation went into effect. Fifth Barnstable State Representative Steven Xiarhos said Nero's Law has allowed EMTs to transport and treat police dogs when they are wounded in the line of duty. "When they're injured in the line of duty, they should be treated and they should be put in an ambulance and they should be transported and given every chance to live," he said. Xiarhos said there were two instances that required medical transport of police dogs in 2022, one of which was when K9 Frankie with the Massachusetts State Police was shot and killed in the line of duty in Fitchburg. Xiarhos recalled receiving a text from a State Trooper thanking him for his efforts to pass Nero's Law because even though Frankie died, the law provided the dog emergency services and a death with dignity. Xiarhos said the law was also utilized last month when Massachusetts State Trooper Kenneth Hanchett and K9 Orry were rear-ended in their stationary vehicle on Route 495 in Hopkinton. The law allowed the dog to be transported to Tufts Veterinary Hospital in North Grafton. Both Hanchett and Orry survived the crash and were released from their respective care facilities. Xiarhos said Nero's Law also passed in Rhode Island this year.

Program Title: Cape Cod Community College Update

Program Description: Cape Cod Community College has been recognized by state officials for its initiatives to promote sustainability. The school was recently honored at the 16th Annual Leading By Example Awards for reducing its environmental impacts. State officials commended the college for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 67% over a 2004 baseline and for its use of solar technology. "Our college is uniquely positioned on Cape Cod, surrounded and empowered by the environment and ocean around us," President John Cox said. Cox cited the school's green initiatives including its student-led orchard, the development of the net-zero Frank and Maureen Wilkens Science and Engineering Center, and its implementation of the Gates Foundation's "Toilet of the Future." "We are always looking for ways to not only enhance sustainability, but to do it in such a way that serves as a learning tool for our students," Cox said. The college was recognized along with six other state groups, municipalities, and individuals working in the public sector. 4Cs is holding a Blue Economy Career Day in March.

January 15 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: COVID Hearth Health

Program Description: After a recent spike in COVID-19 cases in Barnstable County, a local doctor explained some of the impacts the virus can have on the heart. Dr. John Hostetter, Cardiologist at the Cape Cod Healthcare Cardiovascular Center located at Falmouth Hospital, said that negative effects to the heart are typically seen in more severe cases of COVID. Dr. Hostetter said some of those effects seen in hospitalized cases have included inflammation of the heart, fluid buildup, evidence of congestive heart failure, and heart rhythm issues. When asked if a COVID infection can lead to long-term heart risks, Hostetter cited a study in Nature. The study followed a group of people that contracted the virus during the first year of the pandemic. It discovered that the participants had increased risks for heart attacks and strokes. Hostetter clarified that risks were lower in those that had less intense cases, but even those people still had some heightened health risks. “What we don’t know is whether that continues beyond that year or if that was a more short-term risk that fades out over time,” he said. Hostetter said that COVID vaccines and boosters reduce the risk of developing a serious case of the virus, which in turn benefit heart health. “That should translate it to less chance of arrhythmias, congestive heart failure, and events that we’re trying to prevent,” he said.

Program Title: Cape Cod’s New District Attorney

Program Description: Now into his second week on the job, Cape and Islands District Attorney Rob Galibois says he’s hard at work on campaign promises made during last year’s race. Chief among them is working towards a mental health session that will focus on his goals of rehabilitation for those accused of crimes. “As we roll into February, I’m looking forward to getting together with Barnstable District Court First Justice John Julian again to further that conversation. And we have had some conversations with local legislators here on the Cape—actually the full delegation,” said Galibois. “I am confident in saying that we will enjoy the full support of the Cape delegation, as we are going to have to coordinate both with the trial court and our state legislators to launch a mental health session. I am quite hopeful that we’re going to get there.” In addition to the mental health session, Galibois says he is instituting a “vertical prosecution” structure that will ensure officials won’t get brought onto cases they aren’t already familiar with. Under the new system, the prosecutor at arraignment will follow the case all the way through the court system. “We’re trying to do away with instances and circumstances where a case arrives on a trial list and the prosecutor that is covering that session is seeing it for the first time,” said Galibois. “With this vertical prosecution that we’ve put into place, it eliminates that possibility and prosecutors are getting to know each case as they’re going through the system.”

January 22 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Housing Assistance Corporation

Program Description: Housing Assistance Corporation CEO Alisa Magnotta gave insight on an upcoming lottery the group is overseeing for an affordable East Falmouth home and spoke about the organization’s systemic approach to addressing the region’s housing crisis. Magnotta said that the Falmouth Housing Trust purchased the home at 33 Pheasant Lane from a developer and has made it deed-restricted, with HAC supervising the lottery. Applicants with qualifying income have to apply before March 8 to be entered. Magnotta explained how the lottery process works. “We will pull the names and in the order that they come out, we will re-certify and re-qualify, ensuring that they meet the income guidelines and then be able to move forward with a sale for that family or that household,” she said. She noted that HAC has about six other affordable resales in the pipeline. HAC was one of the partnering agencies that helped launch Housing to Protect Cape Cod last year. The group shared a report that found about 50% of the region’s workforce commutes from another county. Magnotta said that rentals are selling or property-owners aren’t renewing leases, factors that are pushing more people off-Cape or into homelessness with the lack of local inventory.

Program Title: Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant

Program Description: Federal authorities said the company charged with decommissioning the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station violated a regulation when it failed to use a safety measure that could have prevented workers from being exposed to low doses of radioactive materials. A recently-released inspection report from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Holtec International should have used air sampling to make sure workers didn’t come in contact with airborne radiation during a phase of the decommissioning in August of 2020. The report said six contractors experienced “unplanned intakes of radioactive material” during the removal of control rod drives from the plant’s reactor that summer. NRC inspectors said that process “posed a significant potential to spread high levels of loose surface contamination.” During the work, two contractors were found to have low levels of radioactive contamination on them after removing their protective suits. After that, workers were told to face the opposite direction when taking their gear off so they would be away from the air flow of the work area. Inspectors said that measure proved to be inadequate since four more workers also had low levels of contamination on their person the next week.

January 29 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Winter Driving

Program Description: HYANNIS – Following a stretch of winter conditions-related car accidents across the Cape earlier this season, AAA Northeast is advising drivers how to stay safe on the roads. Spokesperson Mark Schieldrop said people should stay home to avoid driving in icy conditions, but those who must drive should go slow. “One of the big issues we’ve seen as of late is people are driving a little bit faster than normal. Average speeds have increased quite a bit. Fatalities in crashes just last year reached a 14-year high, and we believe that speed is a big factor,” said Schieldrop. He added that regular upkeep for vehicles is vital to staying as safe as possible, including routinely replacing tires and brakes. “Even a tire that’s even at 50 percent of its life, which is still plenty of life left, your stopping distance can be 20 to 40 percent larger than a new, fresh set of tires,” said Schieldrop. He urged drivers to give themselves plenty of space to slowly come to a stop, as well as to accelerate, to avoid losing control of the vehicle.

February 5 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: PFAS Chemical Legislation

Program Description: Legislation that would ban the use of PFAS in products has been filed by state lawmakers. Cape and Islands State Senator Julian Cyr, who helped spearhead the effort, says the legislation would ban the substance in food packaging by 2026. It would also prohibit the sale of other products with PFAS by 2030, with possible state-approved exceptions like component parts in certain machinery. “The bill outlines a process by which we define PFAS as a class of chemicals that are regulated in Massachusetts, and then there is a process by which certain essential uses of PFAS can be approved by the state,” said Cyr. He said that he expects pushback from manufacturers, but says that PFAS has become a public health risk that cannot be ignored and will likely cost the region millions in cleanup costs in the coming years. “We needed to not address it in a piecemeal fashion. Not ‘this bill was filed to protect firefighters’ or ‘that bill w related to consumer products and food packaging,’ but to really look comprehensively at the problem and have a roadmap to get it done,” said Cyr. It will also create a remediation fund to address contamination cleanup efforts across the region, which will utilize money from both appropriations and legal action against manufacturers that are responsible for damages.

Program Title: EV Infrastructure

Program Description: The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities has approved the next phase of its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program, another big step towards getting more EV's on the road and meeting the state's goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Eversource spokesperson Chris McKinnon said Phase 2 will provide about \$188 million over 4 years to build out EV infrastructure, as well as provide \$40 million for fast-charging hubs in environmental justice communities including those in Barnstable. "When you look at Phase 1, which is what just wrapped up, on the Cape specifically I can say we installed 140 ports at 39 charging sites which is a great start for Cape Cod and we are looking to expand this greatly in the next phase," said McKinnon. Almost 20 percent of the 4,200 charging ports installed statewide were in environmental justice communities, including Barnstable. McKinnon added that the expansion to EV stations will help places like the Cape, where the local economy relies heavily on visitors from outside the region. "That's why I think this is so exciting particularly for Cape Cod, where we see folks making these Investments as well," said McKinnon. "Some of the bed and breakfasts are doing it because they recognize that customers and clientele are more and more adapting to and investing in EV's, and they want to know there's a place for them to have access to the charging infrastructure."

Program Title: Business Boost Program

Program Description: The Local Business Boost Program has wrapped up its first round of assisting Hyannis Main Street retailers, restaurants and services make upgrades to their locations and expand their online presence. Love Live Local helped manage the program, and CEO Amanda Converse said that initiatives like it are greatly in need region-wide as the local economy still wrestles with the impacts of COVID-19, workforce shortages, and supply chain issues. "It gives them the freedom to try things that they didn't necessarily have the funds for or they were skeptical about. Or they knew they needed to try it but they didn't necessarily have the funds right then," said Converse. Some of the improvements made with the \$36,000 total invested in seven businesses were a reinvigorated outdoor dining area, upgrades to a dressing room and new websites. Most of the grants were around \$5,000 each. Converse said they hope to get the attention of state and federal lawmakers to obtain more funding to expand the program's scope Cape-wide. "Through the pandemic and through this process, we found that when we invest in our local businesses, it just levels them up. It benefits the community as a whole and it benefits municipalities," said Converse.

February 12 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: New Barnstable County Sheriff

Program Description: With ending Barnstable County’s agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, getting the department’s patrol boat out of the water, and looking to jumpstart new positions, it’s been a busy first month for new sheriff Donna Buckley. She says that she hasn’t lost sight of her initial campaign promises of focusing on mental health for inmates and reducing repeat offenders, including specialized training for staff. “We’re hoping to have a cadre of trainers that can train both our staff and make them available to people in the community, and better equip us to deal with the kind inmates coming to Barnstable County Correctional Facility,” said Buckley. She added that the trained experts could also help provide resources for family members of those incarcerated. The changes are part of Buckley’s efforts to have the department focus more on treatment and corrections rather than “policing.” “The patrol unit has been disbanded. We no longer have Barnstable County Sheriff Office employees out in Barnstable County on patrol,” said Buckley. “That gives us the opportunity to focus on our transition and focus on inmate programs and services.” As for the boat, Buckley said that it is out of the water and they are in discussions on what to do with it.

Program Title: New Cape League President

Program Description: The new president of the Cape Cod Baseball League recently gave insight on his transition to the role and his goal to keep the league as the best place for college summer ball in the country. Andrew Lang previously served as general manager and president for the Wareham Gatemen. He said leading the league will require a different approach given the new set of responsibilities. “I’m trying to get a handle on all the different committees that have been created, who’s on those committees, what those committees are actually responsible for,” he said. Lang said there will be a learning curve as he adapts to the job. He said he plans to keep educating himself about the league before trying to alter things or streamline operations. Lang was clear when asked what his top priority is for his new role. “My number one goal is to make sure that the Cape League continues to be the best college summer league in the country.” He highlighted the quality of players who come through the league, which is seen as a pipeline for players who are likely on their way to the majors. “You’re seeing a major league game, you’re just seeing it five or six years before it actually happens.”

Program Title: Barnstable Sewer Expansion

Program Description: Work for the Barnstable sewer expansion project will impact roadways starting Monday. A contractor will be collecting soil borings at various points along Craigville Beach Road to Shootflying Hill Road from 7 am to 4 pm each day. While work is ongoing, traffic will be limited to one-lane alternating around the drill locations. Police will be in the area assisting traffic. The project is part of Phase 1 of the town’s Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan.

February 19 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Cape Cod Hospital Tower

Program Description: Beginning in 2025, Cape Cod Hospital’s new tower will begin taking patients for cardiac care and cancer treatment. With four floors for radiation oncology treatments, expanded infusion bays, and recovery rooms, Cape Cod Healthcare President and CEO Michael Lauf said the new enhanced offerings are vital given the region’s demographics. “We’re getting older as a community and just by the statistics alone, the incidence of cancer increases with age. So we need a new cancer center—we need to expand the offerings that we have because people trust us and want to use us,” said Lauf. He added that the surgical and recovery rooms can also be used for ICU patients if necessary, such as when the coronavirus pandemic was at its peak. The project broke ground in 2019, starting out with a plan for six stories which were later scaled back, according to Lauf. “Actually, I think COVID allowed us to really pause the project and take a hard look at what the community really needed. And we needed four stories. I think we may have overbuilt a little bit—over designed a little bit, and it’s very important to us to do this project without any new debt,” said Lauf. Lauf said that the project has been the beneficiary of a \$125 million fundraising campaign, which he says speaks to the community’s support of local healthcare.

Program Title: Heart Valve Awareness

Program Description: Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day is set for February 22, and officials with the Alliance for Aging Research is advocating for increased understanding of the condition. The organization reports that upwards of eleven million people in the U.S. have heart valve disease, but Senior Vice President of Health Education and Advocacy Lindsay Clarke said they’re still continuing efforts to make more people recognize its presence. Clarke explained that there are a number of contributing risk factors to the condition, with older age being the most notable.

“One in 10 people over the age of 75 suffer from moderate-to-severe heart valve disease,” Clarke said. Clarke urges people to consistently get checked for heart-related issues and to be aware of symptoms like shortness of breath or chest pains. It’s suggested that health check-ups should be scheduled at least once a year, as doctors will be able to check for murmurs and other trouble.

February 26 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Independence House Grant

Program Description: The recent \$3.5 million federal grant received by Independence House will go a long way towards supporting survivors of sexual and domestic violence, according to officials with the group. Executive Director Lysetta Hurge Putnam said the money will go towards a new, larger building that can accommodate expanded services. “People need a place where there’s privacy, confidentiality, and trained staff that understand the issue deeply. During the pandemic, we could say there were virtual services but that’s not necessarily the safest way for someone who is in a domestic violence situation,” said Putnam. Independence House has provided assistance for survivors including crisis intervention care, safe transitional housing, and court appearance support for over 40 years. “Everyone that is a survivor of domestic or sexual violence may have a different need. So our work is organized to focus on what those needs are.

Program Title: Short-term Rental Forecast

Program Description: A local company has provided details on their short-term rental forecast ahead of the summer. Figures from WeNeedAVacation.com, which matches rental owners with people looking to take a trip to the Cape and Islands, show that inquiries for vacation homes through January have grown from pre-pandemic levels—even as they’ve cooled down a bit from marks in 2021 and 2022. Though they’ve slipped locally by anywhere from around 8.5% roughly 10% since last year, the company reports that rental bookings on Cape Cod for this year have jumped up by nearly 50% for Cape Cod since 2019. Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket have seen jumps of close to 30% and about 37% in that same time, respectively. COO at WeNeedAVacation.com Jim Reese noted that interest in 2023 vacation bookings has been pent up for quite some time. “These booking numbers that we’re seeing is evident not just to a strong January—but, really, a strong booking season starting at the end of August through the fall,” Reese explained.

March 5 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Hyannis Zoning

Program Description: A new look for downtown Hyannis could be coming over the next few months now that the Barnstable Town Council has approved new zoning regulations for the area. The new zoning allows easier redevelopment that encourages mixed-use buildings of housing just above retail spaces, as well as shared parking. Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District Executive Director Elizabeth Wurfbain says it will help revitalize the area following economic impacts from COVID. “This needs to happen for the downtown to survive,” said Wurfbain. “You can’t have a tourist destination support all these businesses and not have a year-round economy. And a year-round economy needs year-round housing right in the downtown.” She also adds that the area will become more walkable, especially after the removal of the one-way layout. “Any place that you love to visit that’s a great downtown often has some kind of vital year-round community supporting their commercial district.” Wurfbain said she anticipates projects to quickly take advantage of the new, streamlined permitting system for redeveloping.

Program Title: Massachusetts EV Expansion

Program Description: The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities has approved the next phase of its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program, another big step towards getting more EV’s on the road and meeting the state’s goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Eversource spokesperson Chris McKinnon said Phase 2 will provide about \$188 million over 4 years to build out EV infrastructure, as well as provide \$40 million for fast-charging hubs in environmental justice communities including those in Barnstable. “When you look at Phase 1, which is what just wrapped up, on the Cape specifically I can say we installed 140 ports at 39 charging sites which is a great start for Cape Cod and we are looking to expand this greatly in the next phase,” said McKinnon. Almost 20 percent of the 4,200 charging ports installed statewide were in environmental justice communities, including Barnstable. McKinnon added that the expansion to EV stations will help places like the Cape, where the local economy relies heavily on visitors from outside the region. “That’s why I think this is so exciting particularly for Cape Cod, where we see folks making these Investments as well,” said McKinnon. “Some of the bed and breakfasts are doing it because they recognize that customers and clientele are more and more adapting to and investing in EV’s, and they want to know there’s a place for them to have access to the charging infrastructure.”

March 12 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Cape Cod's Second Summer

Program Description: Local experts are saying finding enough employees will likely be the biggest challenge for local businesses this summer. The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Chair David Troutman said more permanent residents after COVID and a growing shoulder season is great for the local economy, but more has to be done to make a sustainable, year-round workforce. “The business is there. It’s a question of being able to maintain the workforce and as much as you expect people to leave a bit in the fall or specifically in the winter—the fact is you’re losing staff at that same rate and those are huge limiting issues,” said Troutman. Chamber CEO Paul Niedzwiecki said a lot of the growth can be traced back to the pandemic, as many who could do their work remotely chose to make their home on the Cape. “There has been a huge COVID-19 population shift. It’s a different place and especially on the Upper and Mid Cape, we are becoming more of a year-round community,” said Niedzwiecki. The Cape has also seen a major blow to its summer workforce in the form of J-1 visa changes that now require businesses to provide adequate housing in order to employ J-1 students, however the Chamber has created a new Housing Coordinator role to help alleviate the issue.

Program Title: Mashpee Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year

Program Description: The Mashpee Chamber of Commerce recently announced the recipients of its 2023 Citizen of the Year and Unsung Heroes awards. The Citizen of the Year award was given to Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club in Mashpee Ruth Provost for her work in serving families, children, and teens in Mashpee and across the Cape. The Unsung Heroes were chosen among essential workers serving the public’s needs.

The award recipients were as follows:

Dr. Matthew Donlan of Donlan Counseling Services.

Dr. Sam Kothalanka, a Psychiatrist at Community Health Center.

Aphrodite Purdy, Wellness Teacher at Mashpee High School.

Cathy Taylor, Director of Services at the Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled.

David Aldrich, Stop & Shop Assistant Manager.

Demetrius and Katherine Becrelis, First Verse Preschool.

Amy Signs, Bus Driver for Mashpee Public Schools.

Tammy Gray, Administrative Assistant at the Town of Mashpee Building Department & Mashpee Kiwanis Club.

Nicole Spencer, Executive Director of Heroes in Transition.

The award winners will be honored at the Mashpee Chamber of Commerce’s Annual Meeting Dinner at The Club at New Seabury on March 23 at 5:30 pm.

The public is invited to attend the event.

Program Title: Septic Tax Credit

Program Description: A tax credit for septic system replacement could be doubled under Governor Maura Healey’s recently proposed tax relief plan. The increase would be from \$6,000 to \$12,000, as well as shorten the distribution time from four years to three, said Association to Preserve Cape Cod Executive Director Andrew Gottlieb. “Everybody realizes what needs to happen and that we need rapid improvement in our wastewater treatment in order to get the water quality returns that we need in order to maintain the economic well-being of the region,” said Gottlieb. “Everybody’s working cooperatively in good faith to try and bring those resources to Cape Cod.” He added that the credit only extends to septic system replacements, but he hopes to see it extended to sewer hook-ups as the Cape invests in wastewater infrastructure. “Working with our legislative delegation and the administration, we can craft a way to both expand the value of the tax credit to more residents, for more purposes on the Cape, without becoming a budget breaker for the Commonwealth,” said Gottlieb.

March 19 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Big Brothers Big Sisters

Program Description: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cape Cod and the Islands is holding their Erase the Wait campaign throughout March. The mission is aimed at partnering local kids with mentors who have a positive impact on their lives, according to Regional Director for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cape Cod and the Islands JR Mell. Mell noted that more kids have been entering the program than ever before. “This our biggest challenge in our agency’s 49 year history: to challenge ourselves and the community to sign up 72 volunteers during the month of March,” Mell explained. Over 40 adults have already joined the mission in March, which Mell attributed to a strong drive within the community. He added that this push is vital since it gives kids another long-term adult figure to support them as they continue to grow. “Just to let them know and to be that additional support is really all our program is about,” Mell continued. The campaign will culminate with a free event on March 31 at Hog Island Beer in Orleans for those who may want to join the program. Mell encouraged anyone with any interest to attend and learn more about what it means to be a volunteer.

Program Title: Barnstable County Broadband

Program Description: Barnstable County Commissioners have seconded the need recently raised by the Assembly of Delegates for state assistance in providing last-mile broadband internet connection to the Cape. At the most recent meeting of the board, Commissioner Ronald Bergstrom said with remote work and virtual meetings here to stay, the Cape’s business and local government are also starting to feel the effects of inconsistent Internet. “We have all had frustration with the lack of high-speed internet here on the Cape, especially on the Outer Cape. More and more people are relying on it. I know we have employees that work remotely several days a week, so this is a critical issue for the economy of the Cape,” said Bergstrom.

Program Title: Machine Gun Range Debate

Program Description: Barnstable County officials have reaffirmed their opposition to Joint Base Cape Cod’s proposed machine gun range. Board of Regional Commissioners Chair Mark Forest said an updated letter was in need, with a new administration gearing up under Gov. Maura Healey. Forest added that the Public Land Preservation Act, passed since the project was first proposed, would prevent the range being built in the conservation area. “Since back in September 2021, there has been new legislation enacted into law that protects Article 97 land. The reserve is Article 97 land—it is state designated conservation land. So any significant changes require the approval of the legislature.” A key point of contention for opponents of the range has been its location: just above the Cape’s Sole Source Aquifer. “Underneath the reserve is the largest freshwater aquifer on Cape Cod. So the drinking water for Bourne, Falmouth, Mashpee, Sandwich, Barnstable and Yarmouth all flow from the reservoir that is beneath that property. And that particular range is in the middle of the highest most point,” said Forest.

March 26 – Sunday Journal Program

Program Title: Tickborne Illnesses Increase

Program Description:

A recent CDC report has indicated a significant increase in cases across the Northeast of Babesiosis, a disease spread through tick bites. Cape Cod Cooperative Extension Entomologist Larry Dapsis said although it has only recently been reported as endemic in northern states such as Vermont, it was already native to the Cape region. He added the disease is only found in ten percent of deer ticks, but can cause serious illness for the Cape’s largest demographic.

“The big difference with Babesiosis compared to Lyme, is most of the cases of Babesiosis are people in their 50’s and older, and in particular people that are immunocompromised,” said Dapsis. “That’s where we see most of the cases.” With a warm winter and continued mild temperatures lasting into the shoulder season, Dapsis added that changing climate is encouraging ticks to spread farther and stay active longer. “Our winters are getting shorter in duration, they’re getting milder except for a few spikes, changes in precipitation patterns, that’s all going to tip the scales in favor of higher risks of these tick borne diseases.”

Program Title: Cape Symphony Passport Concert

Program Description: On April 1 and 2 the Cape Symphony will be presenting their “Passport Down Under” concert. The concert will be conducted by Australian Carolyn Watson and will take the audience on a provocative musical journey that includes rarely performed symphonic music from Australian composers and Aboriginal music created by the world’s pre-eminent didgeridoo musician, William Barton. Watson is an award-winning Australian conductor, Director of Orchestras at the University of Illinois, Music Director of the La Porte County Symphony Orchestra in Indiana, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra.