

THE FAIRHAVEN/ACUSHNET ADVOCATE

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LOCAL

Spinner book captures 75 years of New Bedford's history

INSIDE

Police still investigating hit and run, A3

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VOL. XXXVII, NO. 6

Calendar...A4 Police...A3
Classified...A9-10 Public notices...A4
Health...A7 Sports...A6



SPINNER

From Page A1

textiles and then saw the demise of the textile industry as companies moved south. Chapter one, called "Stacks to Masts," also talks about the growth of the fishing industry.

Among the many other topics are a major textile worker strike, prohibition and rum running, profiles of businesses local families started, neighborhoods, music, ice cream parlors — you name it.

Asked where he'd gotten the extensive historical information, Saulniers said, "I spent a lot of time in the library." Saulniers said he also found information online, including vital statistics on small pox and tuberculosis. He said there were 250 deaths a year from TB in New Bedford until the development of antibiotics virtually wiped it out. Before those numbers were reduced to practically zero, patients were treated at the Sassiquin Sanatorium in the North End of New Bedford. Saulniers said he got these statistics from the Board of Health in New Bedford and other sources.

One part of the book that took more time than originally envisioned was the history of music in New Bedford during that 75-year period. Saulniers said he was asked to do a piece on Cape Verdeans and jazz, but he found a lot of information on local bands and classical music, too.

"I interviewed Jackie Santos who lives in Acushnet," Saulniers said, adding that a music pioneer "called Jackie the best jazz drummer in the U.S. in the 1980s and 90s."

Saulniers said he was surprised to learn that there was a Ku Klux Klan presence in New Bedford, where there was a local chapter.

McCabe said she wrote "a lot of the personal interviews" like the one on former Mayor John Markey, and chapter overviews or the long essays before each chapter that "give the reader the idea of where the chapter is heading."

McCabe, who has worked for Spinner for 30 years and also worked on the first volume, called the production of this volume "a labor of love. New Bedford is lucky to have an organization like Spinner to preserve that history. I think this is really valuable and fun."

McCabe said the second volume may be even more special to many people because "so much happened while many of us were around." She added, "It excites me every time I pick it up because I just think New Bedford has a really wonderful history. It's gritty, it has romance and it has amazing people."

McCabe said her family lived in New York when she was growing up but that she came

By Peggy Auliso
Editor

It calls itself "A Picture History of New Bedford," so I was surprised to see how much text there is. There really is a great deal to read in this second volume of the series by Spinner Publications. This one covers the years 1925 to 1980.

Having grown up in New Bedford, the first thing I did was look up the bakery my grandfather started and learn things I didn't know about it. I also saw the names of people I know in a caption on a Norwegian organization. This is an experience that is likely to be common among people who grew up here. It's one good reason to buy the book, maybe even give it as a gift.

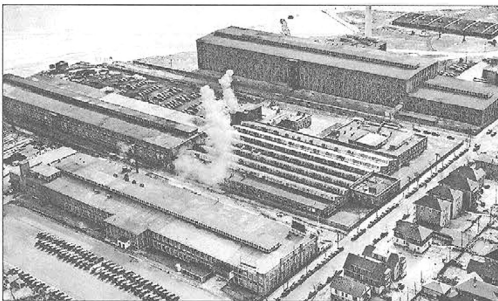
It is too much to read in one or two sittings, but after reading several chapters in the beginning, I called one of the authors, Alfred Saulniers, who grew up in Acushnet but now lives in New Bedford. I had a nice talk with him and then later connected with another author/editor, Marsha McCabe, who lives in Fairhaven. Saulniers said when he was contacted by the publisher, Joseph Thomas, he was told that a lot of the work had been done already and that the book should only take about six months to complete. That was back in 2010, Saulniers said with a laugh.

A lot happened during the 75 years in Vol. 2 as New Bedford transitioned away from whaling to

SEE SPINNER, A5



Striking pocketbook makers of Fairhaven Corporation, Coggeshall Street, May 1931. SPINNER/COURTESY OF CYNTHIA LE ROUX/SPECIAL TO ADVOCATE



The Acushnet Process Company in 1946. SPINNER/SPECIAL TO ADVOCATE



The Nordlyset (Northern Lights) Society of New Bedford at an anniversary banquet in 1941. The text says many Norwegian immigrants were scallop fishermen and that after the 1960s, many had left but a small community remained particularly in Fairhaven. SPINNER/COURTESY OF KIRSTEN BENDIKSEN/SPECIAL TO ADVOCATE

back to New Bedford during the summer. "I loved it," she said. "I'm always astounded when people take a negative attitude to New Bedford."

Among the appealing traits of New Bedford, she said, are, "It's so real. The area is so real and beautiful. It's authentic."

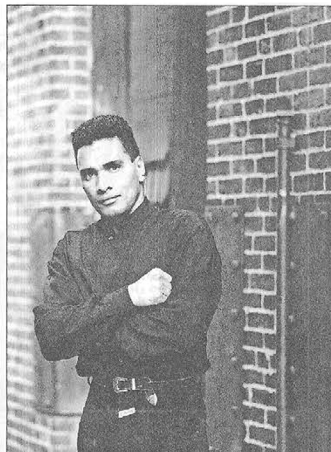
Spinner is already getting to work on volume three. Saulniers said it will start where volume two left off and

continue to the present. He said it will also talk about the future of New Bedford.

Saulniers, an economist who has worked in the Middle East and now owns the Orchard Street Manor bed and breakfast in New Bedford, grew up in the center of Acushnet and went to St. Francis Xavier school. He said he lived half a block from the Acushnet River and often used to go down there after school.

Saulniers said he's looked into the high tides over many years and learned that the water has risen about four inches over 40 years, or a tenth of an inch a year.

Saulniers said the air temperature here shows extreme warming, so much so that it has been written about in climate journals. "People don't know why," he said, adding that it's something people "need to be



Jackie Santos of Acushnet is considered one of the greatest jazz drummers. SPINNER/COURTESY OF JACKIE SANTOS/SPECIAL TO ADVOCATE



New Bedford Airport. It actually was once in Acushnet and then was moved to where Titleist is today in Fairhaven. SPINNER/SPECIAL TO ADVOCATE

concerned about" in considering the future of the city. He added that he will write about it in the third volume.

"A Picture History of New

Bedford, Volume Two, 1925-1980" is available in local bookstores, gift shops and on Amazon. It can also be bought by contacting Spinner directly.