



Gloucester Daily Times

Our view: Cheers, jeers for local newsmakers

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CHEERS to The Gloucester House, the Azorean Restaurant and Bar, The Causeway Restaurant, Tonno Restaurant and Passports, local restaurants that have stepped up their commitment to serving local seafood by joining the city's Gloucester Fresh Restaurant Membership program.

The program offers its members seasonal seafood promotions, as well as guidelines for seasonal seafood availability, a listing of under-utilized species for “creative and cost-effective recipes” and other benefits.

“Right now, the market favors places that use local ingredients and products,” Lenny Linquata, owner of The Gloucester House, told reporter Sean Horgan. “The key is to provide people with a means for enjoying the local experience. And there is no better way to do that than by sampling local foods and local cuisine.”

While catering to the idea that local fish is fresh, and fresh fish is local – borne out by study released by NOAA last week – will put more jingle in the restaurant purses, the campaign should have a trickle-down effect.

Linquata told Horgan his restaurant buys its lobsters, fish and scallops directly off boats landing their catch in Gloucester. It also purchases its clams locally, as do the other member restaurants.

The new program's members also include established seafood companies such as Mortillaro Lobster Co., Capt. Joe & Sons, Cape Ann Fresh Foods, Cape Ann Seafood Exchange, Intershell, Steve Connolly Seafood, Fisherman's Wharf Seafood, Ocean Crest and Gloucester's Finest Seafoods.

Organizers said their goal now is to expand the program to restaurants throughout Cape Ann and beyond. That can only mean more business for these businesses, keeping Gloucester's fishing families solvent and the city's heritage alive.

JEERS to the state, which cannot get its act together in finding a site for a new Registry of Motor Vehicles.

For more than a year -- since the RMV closed its Danvers office at the Liberty Tree Mall -- Cape Ann's with Registry business have had to travel to branches in Haverhill, Revere and Wilmington, each about 30 miles and at least a 40-minute drive away.

Last July, the RMV considered sites in Beverly and Peabody, but rejected those and continued the search for a branch home to serve Cape Ann and the North Shore. By October, six sites were under study, and in March state officials set their sights on an empty restaurant in the Danvers Crossing plaza at 8-10 Newbury St. in Danvers.

Now the fate of that site is up in the air after it was the subject of a foreclosure auction Thursday.

What that means for the state's plan to open an RMV office there is unclear. Registry officials weren't talking last week.

Peabody State Rep. Tom Walsh told reporter Paul Leighton it is more likely that the state will begin negotiations with the owner of one of the five runner-up sites, or issue an emergency request for proposals, which would allow for a new but expedited process.

"We're waiting for those answers," Walsh said. So are Cape Ann, and we hope it doesn't take another year before a RMV office, preferably close by, opens.

CHEERS to the organizers of two events over the weekend held to make Gloucester Harbor cleaner.

"We have one goal in mind: eradicate marine pollution," said Ainsley Smith of the Gloucester Clean City Commission. The commission is a member of the Cape Ann Maritime Partnership, along with U.S. Coast Guard members, Maritime Gloucester, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program members, Seaside Sustainability and One Ocean One Love, a local, conservation-minded retail shop.

On Saturday, CAMP was aided in its mission by Hilary Richard, Erin Carney, Kayla Lemieux, Jemma Tory, and Amy Varney, instructors at Treetop Yoga on Pond Road, and by the restaurant Short & Main on Main Street. The former hosted the Commotion for the Ocean yoga class while the latter hosted an after-party, both open by donation. The proceeds were pledged to CAMP to help raise the \$14,500 needed to buy a Seabin

and marina skimmer -- both of which catch and retain floating debris, marine debris, oil and pollutants from calm marine environments.

Smith and volunteer Zach Thomas, a boatswain's mate third class in the U.S. Coast Guard, have long-term plans for the skimmers not only as harbor cleaners but as educational tools via social media and advertising opportunities.

"Marine debris affects all of us," Smith said. "Whether it's your job or how you spend leisure time, it's something everybody should care about and all work together to make an impact on."