

**BY THE WAY...**

**till a lot to learn**

A brawl broke out during an anger management assembly at suburban high school. Two people were arrested and 11 students were suspended after a boxing match escalated into a riot during Thursday's assembly. Authorities said a confrontation between a student's mother and a group of girls who had been bothering her daughter led into a shouting match, which led to pushing and hitting, and the crowd of 750 students erupted into "chaos," said C. Anthony Thompson, principal of Ellawn High School. The melee began as students began to act out peacefully ways to solve conflict during the assembly, which was organized by Board Pratt Health System.

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# Port is a city worthy of ink

By H. KATHLEEN LANGONE  
SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS



**OLD TOWN TALES**

Ever wonder how and when Newburyport started to publish its own newspaper? It started just prior to the Revolutionary War, when residents only had newspapers from Salem or Boston to choose from. Isaiah Thomas of Boston, already a prominent figure in Boston journalism, brought a printing press to the bustling seaport on the Merrimack and started publishing the Essex Journal and Merrimack Packet in December of 1773. The town's first periodical had the symbols of a masthead and a Massachusetts Bay Indian as artwork on the front page and was published from King Street (now Federal Street).

The fledgling newspaper survived, though the profits were small. Henry Walter Tinges was brought in by Thomas from Boston to be his partner and actual printer of the paper. Many of the business concerns were in the hands of Tinges, who was also adept at these skills. Within a year, partly due to financial problems and interests elsewhere, Thomas sold his half of the business to Ezra Lunt.

Lunt, owning a thriving stagecoach line between Newburyport and Boston and being related to the Lunt sea captains, provided both timely local stories and news from far lands. The partnership of Lunt & Tinges became a full printing press, producing books and miscellaneous printing jobs. As war became a reality, Lunt joined the cause in April of 1775 and became a captain, who would gain great praise at the historical battles to come.

John Mycall, an Amesbury school teacher, would take over Lunt's part of the business. Mycall increased the publishing of books and pamphlets which included titles such as the "New England Primer." For a short while during the war, the newspaper was published half its size due to a paper shortage.

Shortly thereafter, Tinges left the partnership and the newspaper was renamed to The Essex Journal or New Hampshire Packet. Around this time, the office was moved to Merrimack Street, partly due to a fire that occurred at the property in early April of 1776. Also being close to the wharf and business district gave

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My Suverberg, a wildlife educator with the New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game. "The basic thing is for you not to have contact with them. And your pets not to have contact with them. We all know what your pet does when they like you. They lick you."

rees, can cost a couple thousand dollars," said Cantor. "It is still a series of shots, and it's something that, anyone who has gone through it says, they wish they could have avoided it."

Avoiding rabies is easier than getting the shots, and that's at the heart of Rabies Awareness Month. The

ior of these creatures will help you know when they are behaving oddly and when they might have rabies, said Dave Taylor, a wildlife rehabilitator in Byfield.

"It's prudent to be aware that you're not to get near an animal

ware, inoculating their pets and decreasing the chances of getting" the disease, said Marion Larson, an information and education biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. "It's imperative that people know about it."

## NEWSPAPER: Periodicals vital in city's early history

■ *Continued from Page A1*

Mycall close access to seafaring news. In 1784, the printing press was moved to Mycall's home on Temple Street.

Under the ownership of Mycall, this publication enjoyed a fruitful existence, the only problem being some subscribers not paying. Mr. Mycall took care of this problem one time with the sheriff (Philip Bagley) who chronically missed payments. After meeting one day with Mycall, the sheriff promised to pay the following day, only to be prevented by his own death. When payment was not received, the next issue of the newspaper had an elaborate obituary for Bagley, praising his many traits but mentioning his one fault being in arrears for his subscription. The sheriff promptly paid his bill, to find out to his relief this fictitious obituary was only in an issue made for his eyes only.

Mycall retired in 1794 and the newspaper stopped publication. Some competing newspapers had come into the area by that time and the next major publication was the *Impartial Herald*, whose publishers were Blunt and March.

Let's take a look at what was published in an issue of the *Impartial Herald* from November 1794, from the author's own copy. The basic contents were very similar to *The Daily News* as it is today, with sections of world and local news, editorials, help wanted ads and commercial advertisements. Back then, however, newspapers and word-of-mouth were the populace's only source of national and international news, which prompted those sections to be a much larger portion of the paper. Its total size was about two-thirds of today's paper and only four pages.

Jay Williamson, the president of the Old Newbury Historical Society, said the local newspaper was like "The Wall Street Journal" of its time. Also, he said, the actual paper was made out of handmade linen rag, being sturdy and acid-free, which is why these copies have survived so well after two centuries. He said the newspaper was most likely not directly delivered to residents, but possibly picked up either at the publisher's or the post office. In fact, this particular issue had the name of "Capt. Shepham Kent" written at the top left corner, which was probably reserved for him.

The whole first half of this issue dealt with European politics, including political unrest in France. Part of a London newspaper was directly printed in this issue, detailing attacks of the French on the British vessels. The newspaper was delivered from the ship *American Hero*, which docked in Newburyport the day of the printing. A speech by President George Washington followed the international section, addressing his devotion to the French Republic and the assignment of James Munroe as a diplomat to France.

The local news announced the "notable structure" of a bridge between Haverhill and Bradford, which was now open for passengers as of Nov. 18. On that morning, "flags were displayed and cannons discharged," while "clergy, civil and military gentlemen" were in attendance.

There was also a lively editorial by Timothy Dexter, whom Williamson cited as a "very vocal member of the community and a frequent writer in the newspaper," sometimes in a disgruntled manner. His topic in this issue started as follows: "Don't send too many LAWYERS to Congress. Why can't we send one good MINISTER."

The advertisements included one of Louis Jenkins' fine goods store at the "sign of the Golden-Ball," a soon to open dance school to be run by a Mr. Durosier and the sale of choice "strong-beer" from Robert Laird's brewery on Green Street. Blunt and March, who also ran a publishing house, had an ad for writing supplies to include "paper, quills and sealing wax."

And, finally, no local news is complete without a "recent" crime report. This issue detailed thefts from the home of a Mrs. Clark and the two thieves were sentenced to "sit upon the gallows, be whipped, and confined to hard labor" for 15 years. Obviously, punishments were a bit more severe back then.

As you walk down the streets of Newburyport today, think of these vital periodicals in the early history of our city, providing the local inhabitants with their primary view of the outside world, delivered by the chance arrival of coachmen and sea captains. If you want to read issues of these newspapers, there are microfilm copies at the Newburyport Public Library.

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