

Sounds of West Africa



Trio da Kali performed as part of the Common Fence Music Series on Saturday in Portsmouth. The three musicians are from the Mandé culture of southern Mali and come from a long line of griots, or hereditary musicians. Vocalist Hawa Kassé Mady Diabaté, master balafonist Lassana Diabaté and Mamadou Kouyaté on the bass ngoni performed West African songs.

Picture above, Kouyaté, center, plays the ngoni, a stringed instrument with a long neck made of wood and stretched animal hide. Lassana Diabaté, left, plays the balafon, a type of wooden xylophone that originates from Mali.

Pictured right, vocalist Hawa Kassé Mady Diabaté has a rich, expressive voice and natural vibrato.

Peter Silvia Photography



Dooley to enter R.I. Heritage Hall of Fame

By Sean Flynn
Staff writer

NEWPORT — When Ken Dooley was growing up in Cranston, he sometimes heard his grandmother singing an ode with the refrain, “Poor Johnny Gordon,” a song about the last man executed by the state of Rhode Island in 1845.

After a career in publishing, including running his own company, Dooley researched what happened to Gordon, an Irish immigrant accused of murdering a Cranston industrialist, Amasa Sprague, in 1843.

Dooley, a Newport resident now, discovered that the jury included no Irish-Catholics, all the evidence was circumstantial, and the chief justice of the state Supreme Court instructed jurors to disregard the testimony of Irish witnesses over that of native-born Americans.

“I was convinced he was innocent,” Dooley said.

He wrote and produced “The Murder Trial of John Gordon,” a play that ran for 21

performances at the Park Theatre in Cranston beginning in January 2011.



Dooley

Former state Rep. Peter Martin of Newport said he saw the play seven times because he was so moved by Dooley’s work.

“We started the process to introduce a bill asking the governor to grant a pardon,” Martin said. “We didn’t want it granted as a favor, but because there was indisputable proof that Gordon did not receive a fair trial.”

There was a hearing before the General Assembly’s Judiciary Committee during which attorneys, historians and representatives from the American Civil Liberties Union and Catholic Church testified.

Gov. Lincoln Chafee signed the pardon later in 2011.

That’s the kind of impact

DOOLEY A5

MIDDLETOWN

Key town, school staff departing

By Matt Sheley
Staff writer

Two key staffers are leaving the town of Middletown and its School Department.

School Business Manager Raquel Pellerin recently informed the department she is taking a similar position with the Bristol-Warren Regional School District.

Town Human Resources Manager Cecilia Dursi also announced she would be leaving and going back to the Community College of Rhode Island, where she worked before taking the post with Middletown.

Town and education officials said both Pellerin and Dursi will be difficult to replace.

“She will be missed,” Town Administrator Shawn Brown said of Dursi. “She did a lot of work to get our (human resources) systems where they needed to be and from my experience, she’s been a huge asset to myself, the Town Council and the town employees.”

“Raquel has done a great

job, particularly during budget season, which as everyone knows is getting tougher and tougher every year,” School Committee Chairwoman Kellie Simeone said. “She has a way of processing and presenting very complicated information in an easy to understand way. That’s always especially helpful and I know our loss is Bristol-Warren’s gain.”

Pellerin, who has been with the district since January 2010, told The Daily News it is going to be tough to leave Middletown. But she also said she knows it is an opportunity that is too good to pass up.

“Leaving Middletown was a difficult decision, but Bristol-Warren is a great opportunity for me to grow personally and professionally,” Pellerin said.

Something that Pellerin said has always impressed her about Middletown is the true sense of community here. Her last day is scheduled for April 27.

“Middletown has such a great sense of community — always Middletown blue

DEPARTING A5

Author to present commencement address at Salve Regina

Sister Helen Prejean and local philanthropist ‘Happy’ van Beuren will receive degrees.

NEWPORT — Sister Helen Prejean, whose best-selling book “Dead Man Walking” sparked national dialogue on the death penalty and helped to shape the Catholic Church’s opposition to state executions, will address the graduating class and receive an honorary degree when Salve Regina University celebrates its 68th commencement on Sunday, May 20.

“Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States” was inspired by Prejean’s correspondence with a death-row inmate, Patrick Sonnier, at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. The book was on the New York Times bestseller list for 31 weeks and was adapted as a 1995 movie of the same name, starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn. It has also been adapted as an opera, first produced in 2000 by the San Francisco Opera, and as a play for schools and colleges.

Prejean’s realization that some of those executed were

not guilty led to her second book, “The Death of Innocents: An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions,” which was released in December 2004. She is currently at work on another book, “River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey.”

Prejean also founded the advocacy group “Survive,” to help families of victims of murder and related crimes. She served as the National Chairperson of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty from 1993 to 1995, and helped establish The Moratorium Campaign that seeks an end to executions and conducts education on the death penalty.

Also receiving an honorary degree during the ceremony will be local philanthropist Hope H. “Happy” van Beuren, co-founder and chair emerita of the van Beuren Charitable Foundation.

The foundation was established in 1986 by her and her late husband, John A. “Archie” van Beuren, with a mission to invest in the quality of life and quality of place of Aquidneck Island and its surrounding communities. For more than three decades, the foundation has contributed more than \$67 million to the Newport region.



Scott Langley photo

Sister Helen Prejean, author of the best-selling book ‘Dead Man Walking,’ will be the keynote speaker at Salve Regina University’s 68th commencement on Sunday, May 20.

Seal population is found to be stable

PROVIDENCE — The harbor seal population in Narragansett Bay has been on the rise and now seems stable, according to the results of Save The Bay's ninth Bay-Wide Seal Count.

On March 27, 21 volunteers, including the Environmental Protection Agency's Atlantic Ecology Division and Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, counted 423 harbor seals at 22 well-known seal haul-out spots around the bay.

"This survey is a valuable resource in estimating a minimum Narragansett Bay harbor seal population," said Save The Bay's volunteer manager, July Lewis. "By monitoring every year, taking into account the weather conditions, we can be alert to any sudden or significant change in the population of our state marine mammal."

Weather at this year's count was clear with temperatures of 39 to 50 degrees and

winds that varied from 3 to 16 knots.

"Variable viewing conditions account for most of the variability in our numbers from year to year — in particular, wind speeds," Lewis said. "Years with very low winds have been our blockbuster years because seals prefer to haul out in those conditions. This year had more typical winds, so the total of 423, which is average for the history of our count, is exactly what we'd expect for a stable seal population."

Dick and Sue Graefe of North Kingstown counted 69 seals at Rome Point, routinely a high-count spot for observing seals.

Other popular haul-out sites include Sakonnet Point, Citing Rock, Brenton Point, Coddington Cove, Halfway Rock and Rocky Point, where 10 seals were spotted by volunteer Janet O'Connell.

In addition to its Bay-Wide Seal Count, Save The Bay has maintained an ongoing

volunteer seal monitoring program for 24 years. The second Seal Monitoring Report, released in January, synthesizes decades of data to illustrate the migration patterns and population numbers of seals in Narragansett Bay.

A few decades ago, the seal population was much lower than it is now, due to bounty hunting in the 1800s through 1972. "Since the passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, making it illegal to hunt or harass seals, their numbers have slowly returned to their historical range. That is a great success story," Lewis said.

Save The Bay offers narrated seal cruises and nature tours that offer the opportunity to observe these mammals in their natural habitat, from a safe distance of at least 50 yards required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. Daily seal cruises depart from Newport now through April 22.

Dooley

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Dooley has had in many of his endeavors.

For the many accomplishments of his career, he will be inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame with eight other honorees in May.

"It's quite an honor," Dooley said Friday, before talking about the many other projects he has worked on or has upcoming.

Martin welcomed Dooley's upcoming induction.

"Ken has certainly earned the right to be recognized by the hall of fame for all he has done," he said.

Dooley was the screenwriter and executive producer of a film that was to be called "Bellevue Avenue," set to go into production in 2013. He planned to portray life among Newport's wealthy class during the Gilded Age. However, at the last minute, the financiers pulled back.

"Hopefully, someday," Dooley said. "A lot of people really liked it."

Scott Molloy, a professor of labor relations at the University of Rhode Island, was a consultant for the film project and was tasked with making sure the historical details were correct. Malloy provided biographical information about Dooley for this article.

Dooley was born in Providence in 1931, grew up in Cranston and graduated from La Salle Academy and Providence College.

"Ken spent much of his career employed by the media

giant, Prentice Hall in New Jersey, as an executive vice president of the Bureau of Business Practice from 1960 to 1977," Malloy wrote. "He oversaw 600 employees and issued 125 newsletters about health, safety and personnel relations, as well as books and films. As part of that assignment, he founded Madison Productions, where he produced 75 training and motivational projects."

Dooley also completed award-winning documentaries in the mid-1980s about the lives of sports legends Arnold "Red" Auerbach of the Boston Celtics and Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers.

Dooley remains passionate about his subjects and said in the phone interview Friday that he was upset that some people in Boston criticized efforts to honor Auerbach during Black History Month in February this year.

"He hired the first black NBA player, hired the first black NBA coach, Bill Russell, and was the first to have an NBA team with five black starters," Dooley said. "He was the Branch Rickey of the NBA."

Rickey was the Brooklyn Dodgers co-owner who broke Major League Baseball's color barrier by signing black player Jackie Robinson after World War II, first for a minor league team and then with the Dodgers.

Dooley co-founded his own publishing company, Institute for Management, in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, in 1977. He expanded his earlier work about basketball into a

biography called "MBA: Management by Auerbach," which sold more than 100,000 copies in 1992.

Dooley, who became friends with Auerbach, said the former Celtics coach asked him to remove the part in the book that compared him to Rickey.

"It's true, though," he said.

Dooley has served as a senior editor for Progressive Business Publications in Malvern, Pennsylvania, a leading publisher of management newsletters — one of his many writing-related jobs.

Dooley has been involved in other projects in recent years.

Robert "Bob" Thorpe, an older brother of one his Cranston friends, Gil Thorpe, joined the 39th Fighting Squadron of the Fifth Air Force in World War II. The 20-year-old Thorpe was shot down on May 28, 1944, over New Guinea, crashing into the sea. The Air Force declared him "missing in action" and then "killed in action" after the war. The family never knew what happened to him.

Dooley, after his retirement, met Gil Thorpe again after a 40-year separation and started to dig. Using the Freedom of Information Act, with assistance from Martin, Dooley put together a 1,300-page dossier about Bob Thorpe's death. He found out that 2nd Lt. Thorpe had been immediately captured by Japanese forces on the island, interrogated, tortured and beheaded.

"The heinous commander was arrested after the conflict and tried before the Yokohama War Trials," Malloy wrote. "The officer pleaded guilty and

hauntingly praised the courage of young Bob Thorpe. He was hanged exactly five years to the day after the brutal murder of the Cranston airman. No one, including the family, knew about this turn of events."

Dooley and Martin worked together so that Bob Thorpe was awarded the state's highest military honor in 2013 and a stone marker at the state's Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Exeter.

Dooley wrote a Guest View op-ed on the Thorpe story that was published in The Daily News on Sept. 13, 2014. At the time, he was working on a book on the topic, called "Relentless Pursuit," which was published in 2015. Martin contributed to the book.

"If Ken's work ever ceases, a flagstone he installed at the Irish Famine Memorial to John Gordon tells all about him," Malloy wrote. "It reads, 'Forgiveness is the Ultimate Revenge.'"

The induction ceremony for Dooley will take place Saturday, May 5, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick, beginning at 6 p.m.

Other honorees include former Rhode Island U.S. Reps. Patrick Kennedy and Ronald Machtley, Judge Francis J. Darigan Jr., longtime newscaster Patrice Wood, Ronald Picerne, James P. Riley, Rudolf E. Tanzi and attorney Spencer Viner.

Reservations for the event can be made by calling 556-6174 or emailing somravanh@gmail.com.

Flynn@NewportRI.com

CALENDAR

TODAY

LIVING LITERATURE PERFORMANCE — Tiverton Public Library, 34 Roosevelt Ave., Tiverton, 7 p.m. Living Literature will stage a 60-minute presentation of the book "The Hate U Give" by Angie Thomas. 625-6796, Ext. 121.

TUESDAY

POETRY AND MUSIC — Jamestown Art Center, 18 Valley St., Jamestown, 7 p.m. Poetry readings by former poet laureate of Rhode Island Lisa Starr, David Dragone and guest editors of Crosswinds Poetry Journal, with music by cellist Ted Mook. \$10; \$8 for JAC members, students and seniors. jamestownartcenter.org, 560-0979.

WEDNESDAY

TEEN ORIGAMI PROGRAM — Newport Public Library, 300 Spring St., Newport, 4 p.m. "Origami, or the Art of Extreme Paper Folding." Free. 847-8720, Ext. 206, or newportlibraryri.org. **AUTHOR TALK** — Bazarsky Lecture Hall, Salve Regina University, 100 Ochre Point Ave., Newport, 7 p.m. Aquidneck Land Trust and Aquidneck Community Table will host "Food and Culture in Our Gardens," a talk by American Book Award-winning author Patricia Klindienst. Free. aquidneckcommunitytable.org, 849-2799.

"DARK SECRETS OF THE LUSITANIA" — Community College of Rhode Island, 1 John H. Chafee Blvd., Newport, 7:30 p.m. National Geographic video on the latest archaeological expedition

to the Lusitania shipwreck. F. Gregg Bemis Jr., owner of the Lusitania, will answer questions. Free; sponsored by the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project. rimap.org.

THURSDAY

BOOK LAUNCH — Jamestown Arts Center, 18 Valley St., Jamestown, 6 p.m. For artist and author Mary-Kim Arnold's "Litany for the Long Moment." Guest readings and light refreshments. Free. 560-0979, jamestownartcenter.org.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL — Middletown High School, 130 Valley Road, Middletown, 6-8 p.m. Food, fun, dancing and international festivities along with a showcase of the Capstone project of student Jackie Lopez on salsa and bachata. Donations accepted. 846-7250.

FRIDAY

PHOTO SCANNING — Newport Historical Society Resource Center, 82 Touro St., Newport, 3-6 p.m. Anyone with original photographs taken in Rhode Island between 1800 and 1939 can have them scanned at the Pediment Group's photo scanning session. Photos will be considered for publication in the forthcoming book "Rhode Island Memories: The Early Years." Limit 10 photos per family. Free. Submission forms and full guidelines at pediment.com. **BINGO BENEFIT** — Vasco da Gama Hall, 15 Fenner Ave., Newport, doors open at 5:30 p.m., games start at 6:30. To benefit the Brain Injury Association of Rhode Island. Food and prizes. 228-3319.

MUNICIPAL MEETINGS

MIDDLETOWN

TODAY
Conservation Commission, 5:30 p.m., Town Hall.

TUESDAY
Personnel Board, 4 p.m., Town Hall.

Beach Commission, 4:30 p.m., fire station.

NEWPORT

TODAY
School Committee-City Council Liaison Subcommittee, 1 p.m., public library, Stride Room.
Energy and Environment Commission, 6 p.m., public library, Program Room.

Departing

Continued from A3

— and the community comes together in good and bad times," Pellerin said. "It was so great being part of that community. During challenging budget times (with the loss of state/federal aid), I feel I played an important role in continuing to move the district forward. Year after year of budget reductions really makes you look at the way you do business, striving to be as efficient as possible while still focusing on district priorities."

As for advice for her successor, Pellerin said never forget why you come to work each day.

"Never lose sight of the role you play in public education, working as part of a team with the goal of ensuring success for all students of Middletown public schools," Pellerin said. "As school business administrators, we need to be an advocate for children and the financial decisions that we make should always be in the best interest of a child's education."

Approached prior to Monday's Town Council meeting and through email, Dursi declined to discuss her departure. Her last day is expected in about a week.

Officials on both sides said the goal is to fill each vacancy as soon as possible. There also has been discussion about how the positions are handled and if there is a

possibility for changes.

Council President Robert Sylvia said he'd like to see the town outsource the human resources position — not as an indictment on Dursi, but to save money.

"Like I said to her (Monday) night, I wish her the best with her career and moving forward," Sylvia said. "What I'm saying has nothing to do with the job she did."

"Personally, I like the idea of outsourcing our HR function, something that could be paid for by both the town and schools through a joint agreement. We'd both get great service, you pay a flat fee, you don't have to worry about vacations and benefits. It's worked really well where I work and for a lot of other businesses."

In recent months, the town and schools have been talking about ways to combine departments to potentially save money and offer better service. Maintenance, finance and technology have all been broached as part of that process.

Someone said if there's a chance to do better and save, she'd be willing to take part in the discussions.

"We've talked about finance and other areas that we can look into," Someone said. "If there are functions that are overlapping, I see no reason we can't look into these items, but it's important for us to maintain our school-based business manager."

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LOCAL BRIEFS

St. Michael's to hold admissions events

NEWPORT — St. Michael's Country Day School, 180 Rhode Island Ave., will hold three admissions events in April.

Each night will focus on a particular age group, sharing insight into the kindergarten, lower school and middle school programs.

◆ Middle school night is Tuesday from 6-7 p.m. for grades 5-8.

◆ Kindergarten night is Wednesday from 6-7 p.m. for children who will be 5 years old by Sept. 1.

◆ Lower school night is Wednesday, April 25, from 6-7 p.m. for grades 1-4.

Registration is encouraged; contact Erin Schmidt at eschmidt@smcds.org or 849-5970, Ext. 302.

For more information, visit smcds.org/admissions-events.

Newport library schedules art events for teens

NEWPORT — The Newport Public Library, 300 Spring St., is offering three art events for teenagers.

On Wednesday at 4 p.m., teens are invited to learn "Origami, or the Art of Extreme Paper Folding."

"Painting with Rebecca Killian" will be held on Tuesday, April 17, at 2:30 p.m. Registration is required.

On Thursday, April 19, at 2:30 p.m., the library will host "Wax On, Wax Off: The Fine Art of the Melted Crayon Art." Registration is requested.

All programs are free and held in the library's Program Room. For more information, call 847-8720, Ext. 206, or visit newportlibraryri.org.

Spring Life of the Mind Salon Series takes place Wednesday

NEWPORT — The Redwood Library and Athenaeum, 50 Bellevue Ave., will present a series of lectures titled "Spring Life of the Mind Salon." Each evening starts with a wine-and-cheese reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by the lecture at 6 p.m. Admission is free for members and costs \$10 for non-members.

The lectures are as follows:
◆ Wednesday: "Can Higher Education Solve America's Economic Crisis?" by Donald J. Farish, president of Roger Williams University.

◆ Wednesday, April 18: "The Death of Expertise" by Tom Nichols, professor at the Naval War College in Newport.

◆ Wednesday, April 25: "Teaching Machines to Think" by Michael Littman, professor of computer science at Brown University.

◆ Wednesday, May 2: "The Lives of the

Men Who Created the Redwood Library" by Brandon Aglio.

◆ Wednesday, May 9: "The U-Boat in Newport Harbor" by historian Brian L. Wallin.

◆ Wednesday, May 16: "Solution to the Mystery of Newport Tower" by Jørgen D. Siemonsen, chairman of the Norse Research Committee.

Call 847-0292 for reservations or register online.

Pennfield hosts presentation on parenting in cyberspace

PORTSMOUTH — The Pennfield School, 110 Sandy Point Ave., will present "Some Doors Aren't Meant to Be Closed: Parenting in Cyberspace" by Andrea DiFilippo of Social Judo on Wednesday at 6 p.m.

DiFilippo, a licensed clinical social worker with more than 20 years experience, frequently appears on TV and radio as well as weekly Facebook Live to discuss the impact of smartphones on today's children and the real consequences of unsupervised use of the internet by children.

After the presentation, DiFilippo and Dr. Matt Philips, a prominent neurosurgeon in New England, will lead a question-and-answer session.

Reserve a seat at pennfield.org/news/2018/03/parenting-cyberspace. For more information, 849-4646.

Blogger to discuss the intricacies behind gardening

PORTSMOUTH — The Portsmouth Free Public Library, 2658 East Main Road, will host a presentation by Neal Sanders, the author of the blog The Principal Undergardener, on Wednesday, at 6:30 p.m.

The talk, titled "Gardening Is Murder," covers questions including: Why do gardeners turn to the internet to find outrageous solutions to simple problems? Why does the introduction of one plant into a garden start a game of musical chairs that result in the displacement of at least two other plants? And why do we have garden benches around our yards if no one ever sits on them?

Sanders is also the author of 12 mysteries and will discuss where he gets his ideas for his stories, many of which center on garden clubs or horticulture.

The presentation is co-sponsored by the Portsmouth Garden Club.

The presentation is free and open to the public but seating is limited. Sign up online at portsmouthlibrary.org or call 683-9457.

Award-winning author to speak at Salve

NEWPORT — Aquidneck Land Trust and Aquidneck Community Table will host



Klindienst

a talk by American Book Award-winning author Patricia Klindienst on Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the Bazarsky Lecture Hall at Salve Regina University, 100 Ochre Point Ave. The talk is titled, "Food and Culture in Our Gardens."

Klindienst has written extensively about the immigrant experience and will discuss stories from her book, "The Earth Knows My Name," which details the experiences of 15 Americans who transmit their cultural heritage through their gardens.

Tickets for the free event are available on the Aquidneck Community Table website, aquidneckcommunitytable.org. The event is underwritten by a grant from the 1772 Foundation. For more information, call 849-2799.

Sailor Dawn Riley to speak at Seamen's Church Institute

The Seamen's Church Institute Speaker Series will host sailor Dawn Riley for a lecture on Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the institute, 18 Market Square, Newport. A complimentary wine reception will precede the lecture at 6:30 p.m.

Riley, CEO of America True and a past president of the Woman's Sports Foundation, was the first woman manager of an America's Cup sailing team from 2004-2007. She has raced on four America's Cup teams and on two Whitbread Round the World teams. Since 2010, she has worked with the nonprofit sail training center Oakcliff Sailing in Oyster Bay, New York.

Registration is required, and admission is free or by donation. The suggested donation amount is \$10, and all proceeds benefit Seamen's outreach programs. For more information or to register, call 847-4260 or email Tara Gnolfo at tara@seamensnewport.org.

CCRI to show screening of Lusitania shipwreck

NEWPORT — The Community College of Rhode Island, 1 John H. Chafee Blvd., will host a screening of the National Geographic video "Dark Secrets of the Lusitania" on Wednesday from 7:30-10 p.m. in the auditorium.

This video describes the latest archaeological expedition to the Lusitania shipwreck. After the viewing, F. Gregg Bemis Jr., owner of the Lusitania who is featured in the video, will answer questions about the expedition.

The free event is organized and sponsored by the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project. For more information, visit rimap.org.