***For immediate release***

**Newburyport Literary Festival Celebrates 20 Years**

**and “The Importance of Being a Reader”**

**at In-Person and Live Stream Events**

**April 25–27, 2025**

**NEWBURYPORT, Mass.** – The Newburyport Literary Festival (NLF) will celebrate its 20th year of bringing award-winning authors, engaging panel discussions and lively entertainment to Newburyport on April 25–27, 2025. The festival’s theme is “The Importance of Being a Reader.” The opening ceremony is on Friday, April 25, at 6 p.m., at the Firehouse Center for the Arts. Dawn Tripp, author of *Jackie, A Novel,* will be in conversation with historian and author Kate Clifford Larson (*Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter*). A light supper with cash bar will immediately follow at The Grog Restaurant, 13 Middle Street, Newburyport. Tickets for the supper are $25/person, available online at [newburyportliteraryfestival.org](http://newburyportliteraryfestival.org) or by check, made out to the Newburyport Literary Association, Box 268, Newburyport, MA 01950.

On Saturday, April 26, festival events will begin at 8:30 a.m. with Breakfast with the Poets and continue throughout the day. A wide range of distinguished biographers, poets, novelists, and other authors will read from and discuss their work, including many returning participants. Authors and poets include Alison Espach, *The Wedding People*; Courtney Sullivan, *The Cliffs*; Alan Lightman, *The Miraculous from the Material: Understanding the Wonders of Nature*; Joan Wickersham, *No Ship Sets Out To Be A Shipwreck;* Martin Espada, *Jailbreak of Sparrows*; Rachel Hadas, *Ghost House*; and Associate Professor Kellie Carter Jackson, Ph.D., *We Refuse: A Forceful History of Black Resistance*. Panel topics include mystery, debut, short-form, and book banning, as well as a session sponsored by the Massachusetts Center for the Book. Students from Newburyport High School’s Poetry Soup group will read original poems before introducing noted local poet and original festival member Rhina Espaillat.

Saturday evening’s event begins at 7 p.m. at the Firehouse Center for the Arts. Festival chair Vicki Hendrickson and Jabberwocky Bookshop owner Sue Little will be honored for their longstanding commitment to the festival. Authors will share thoughts and readings related to “The Importance of Reading” theme including Hendrickson, Mateo Askaripour, *This Great Hemisphere*; and audiobook reader Peter Berkrot, who will read from works by the late short-story master Andre Dubus.

Virtual programming on Sunday, April 27, runs from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and will include a writing workshop with Steve Almond (*Truth Is the Arrow, Mercy Is the Bow: A DIY Manual for the Construction of Stories*), and panels featuring women in myth with Jennifer Saint (*Hera: A Novel*; *Elektra*), writing about apocalypses and independent publishing, among others.

As part of the festival’s continued efforts to reach new audiences, 4th and 5th grade pupils at Newburyport’s Edward G. Molin will read Jarrett Krosozcka’s *Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute*, made possible by The Charles & Marianne Small Charitable Foundation. Krosozcka will visit the school on May 23 and lead students in discussion.

“Encouraging people to read, to seek out new voices, new places, different conversations, and experiences is a very satisfying endeavor,” said Vicki Hendrickson, founder and director of the Newburyport Literary Festival. “Reading is mostly about developing your humanity, defining your relationship to those whose lives you can only experience through reading, and having a better understanding of all of life—nature, physics, philosophy, music, art, and our fellow human beings. Our theme of ‘The Importance of Being a Reader’ cannot be overstated. I’ll be forever grateful to Newburyport and the neighboring communities for their support of a festival that celebrates authors, books, and readers.”

All festival events are free except Friday evening’s supper. Registration is required for Sunday’s virtual events. Official bookstores are Jabberwocky Bookshop and The Book Shop of Beverly Farms. For a complete schedule and list of authors, moderators, poets, and historians, please visit our [website](http://www.newburyportliteraryfestival.com). Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NewburyportLitFest), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/nbptlitfest/), [Bluesky](https://bsky.app/profile/nbptlitfest.bsky.social), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/newburyport-literary-festival/), or [X.](https://twitter.com/nbptlitfest)

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