

# NEWBURYPORT LITERARY FESTIVAL

A CELEBRATION OF LITERATURE, READERS, AND WRITERS

• 21ST ANNIVERSARY •

• IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL EVENTS • APRIL 24-26, 2026

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## **Newburyport Literary Festival Announces its 21st Annual Event on April 24–26, 2026**

**NEWBURYPORT, Mass.** – The 21st annual Newburyport Literary Festival, a celebration of reading and the love of books featuring award-winning authors and engaging panel discussions, will take place April 24–26, 2026, in various locations in downtown Newburyport and online. There is no charge to attend. This year’s theme is Revolutionary Legacies. The opening ceremony is on Friday, April 24, at 6:00 p.m., at the Firehouse Center for the Arts. North Shore artist and designer Michael Updike, son of literary legend John Updike, will discuss the *Selected Letters of John Updike* by James Schiff with *The New York Times* Book Review critic Alexandra Jacobs, a life-long Updike fan. Event sponsorships are still available.

On Saturday, April 25, 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 historians will read from and discuss their work. Authors and poets include Catherine Newman, Annie Hartnett, Andre Dubus III, Marianne Leone, Gish Jen, Alan Lightman, Christine Pride, and Jenna Blum. Planned panels will focus on romance novels, humor, and immigration, and Caleb Gayle (*Black Moses*) will speak as part of a session sponsored by the Massachusetts Center for the Book. A *Melopoeia for Charles Coe* will be performed by the original Diminished Prophets, and Newburyport High School’s Poetry Soup students will read original works.

Saturday evening’s event, *Women’s Voices of Rebellion and Revolution*, features readings of women’s writing at 7:00 p.m. at the Firehouse Center for the Arts. As the U.S. reflects on 250 years as a nation, this event celebrates voices that were largely uncelebrated at the time.

Virtual programming on Sunday, April 26, runs from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and will include a writing workshop with Sara Reish Desmond, a conversation with local tennis journalist Christopher Clarey (*The Master; The Warrior*) and panels on writing for both YA and adult audiences, and the environmental mystery of Costa Rica’s golden toads, among others. Registration is required for Zoom events. Also on Sunday, at 9:00 a.m. Ghlee Woodworth will lead a historical walk of downtown Newburyport meeting at the Essex Street Inn.

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“We are thrilled to offer the Greater Newburyport community a robust range of authors, poets, and historians for our 21st annual Newburyport Literary Festival,” said Newburyport Literary Association President Jill Gross, a festival co-director along with Vice President and Treasurer Paula Breger. “All through the winter we offered events for our reading community to stay connected with us in order to continue offering the festival for no charge to our many patrons, and we are so appreciative of the support. We encourage all readers to join us for the festival, and immerse into a weekend of hearing from their favorite authors in our beautiful city.”

As part of the festival’s efforts to reach readers of all ages, 6th–8th grade pupils at Newburyport’s Rupert A. Nock Middle School will read *No Place Like Home* by James Bird of Salem, Mass., made possible by The Charles & Marianne Small Charitable Foundation, and Bird will visit the school to lead students in discussion. The Vicki Hendrickson Literary Festival Scholarship will again be offered to one senior graduating from Newburyport High School who has shown a dedication to reading.

The festival’s official bookstores are Jabberwocky Bookshop and The Book Shop of Beverly Farms. Festival tote bags will be sold for \$15 at Jabberwocky at the Tannery and at Illume Books at 10 Market Square throughout the weekend and at most festival locations. Whoopie pies decorated with the festival’s logo will be available at Chococoa Baking Co., with a portion of the proceeds donated in support of the festival.

All festival events are free except Friday evening’s welcome event immediately following the opening ceremony. Held upstairs at Mission Oak Grill, light appetizers will be served along with access to a cash bar. Tickets are \$50 on the festival’s [website](#) or by check mailed to the Newburyport Literary Association, Box 268, Newburyport, MA 01950.

The Newburyport Literary Festival is organized by the Newburyport Literary Association and is made possible through the generosity of our founding sponsors, the Newburyport Bank and the Institution for Savings. Additional support is provided by The Charles & Marianne Small Charitable Foundation, The Friends of the Newburyport Public Library, Burch Ives Family Charitable Foundation, Rotary Club of Newburyport, Hogrefe Publishing, the Cultural Councils of Newburyport, West Newbury, Newbury, Merrimac, Groveland, and Georgetown, and Bradford & Bigelow printers, along with many other supporters. For a complete schedule and list of authors, moderators, poets, and historians, please visit our [website](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Bluesky](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [X](#).