

# Duxbury Clipper

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

"Let no man pull you low enough to hate him." -Martin Luther King Jr.

VOLUME LXIX NO. 4

## Civil service switch off

Read cites contract negotiations with police officers as reason

By MATTHEW NADLER  
CLIPPER EDITOR

Town officials have set aside, for now, a proposal to take the Duxbury Police Department out of civil service.

The proposal had received fierce opposition from the Duxbury Police Union, which sent a strongly worded letter to town officials protesting the idea. Word of the proposal got around town when the letter appeared in Duxbury interest

groups on Facebook.

While a warrant article was considered for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting, it was withdrawn, Town Manager Rene Read said. Read told the Finance Committee at their Tuesday meeting last week that was because contract negotiations are ongoing with the patrolmen's union. "We don't want to muddy the waters." He distributed copies

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Instructor Ben Anderson holds the attention of his students. They were at the Bog in Kingston as part of a skating program offered by the Duxbury Recreation Department. See more photos on page 12.

Photo by Deni Johnson

## Mystery man

Duxbury native Edwin Hill returns to talk about first novel

By JONATHAN PAPPALARDO  
CLIPPER REPORTER

Duxbury native Edwin Hill was on a family camping trip when he had an epiphany.

They were stopped at a gas station when his parents picked him up a copy

of "7 Dials Mystery" by Agatha Christie. At the time, in 1982, he was making the transition from a child reader to an adolescent reader and enjoyed the book so much he read it five times in the backseat of the car. "I loved

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## Bingo can keep the heat on

Annual event benefits DIC outreach programs

By MATTHEW NADLER  
CLIPPER EDITOR

This Saturday night at the Senior Center, Black Tie Bingo returns.

There'll be tuxedos, appetizers, a cash bar and even the Town Moderator calling out bingo numbers instead of warrant articles. For a \$50 ticket, guests will have a chance to

win prizes and tour the Senior Center's new addition.

But there's a whole lot more going on behind the fun.

Black Tie Bingo might simply be a night out for those in attendance, but it means so much more for some Duxbury residents, those who can't afford a ticket or a tux rental.

Last year, the event raised

\$16,000 for the Duxbury Interfaith Council, which in turn distributes it to those who find themselves in need. Because even in a town where the annual per capita household income nears \$124,000, there are those struggling to make ends meet.

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# Duxbury native Edwin Hill returns to talk about his new mystery novel

Continued from page 1

the characters and the setting. It was set in the 20s, which is very exciting," he said. "I finished the book and thought, this is exactly what I want to do with my life."

35 years later, he's made that realization a reality. Last August, Kensington Publishing released his debut novel "Little Comfort," the first book in his Hester Thursby mystery series, which he spoke about Jan. 15 at the Duxbury Senior Center. Hill describes Thursby as a fiercely independent 36-year-old reference librarian who lives in a tiny apartment on the third floor of a three-apartment house in Somerville's Union Square. She shares the house with her partner Morgan, a veterinarian who lives just below her, and their dog Waffles.

The book begins when Morgan's twin-sister Daphne, who leaves them with sole custody of her three-year-old child, upends Thursby's life. Hill goes on to detail a vicious murder and in addition to Somerville, explores Beacon Hill and the child foster system in New Hampshire. Hill said one of the book's main ideas is making peace with unexpected moments in life and he uses Thursby to explore themes of loneliness and isolation.

While he characterizes loneliness as one of the "emo-



Edwin Hill.

Photo courtesy Thomas Bollinger

he discovered the world of Agatha Christie, he spent the next two to three years reading all her books in succession and in eighth grade he wrote mysteries he describes as "terrible, terrible." He went on to Wesleyan University where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in American Studies in 1993.

From there he went out west, where he lived in San Francisco and worked for a time in the liberal arts school of a for-profit university where the head of the school was the former mistress of the chairman of the board and the school's president was the chairman of the board's daughter.

Hill came home in 2000 to earn his Master's of Fine Arts in creative writing, which he did in 2002, from Emerson College. Since he has always loved reading crime novels, he wanted to get his M.F.A. as a crime writer. This was at a time when it was common-

Rockefeller, became a media sensation. "I loved that story," said Hill. "I thought, 'wow, this would be a great jumping off point for a novel.'"

He sat down at his computer, wrote a two-page scene and never knew what to do with it. He switched jobs in 2010, negotiated a month off to write, used the scene as a jumping off point, and two weeks in, created Thursby. Hill wrote the novel through 2014, at which point he sent out query letters and got an agent within a month. His agent shipped the book around New York and it, too, got rejected everywhere.

"I thought to myself I could either look at this like I did before, and sort of give up or get discouraged, or I could just look at this and say, 'how am I going to solve this problem?'" Hill said. "Because writing as we all know, is just solving a series of problems."

Hill studied his rejection letters and realized the story was too complicated, so he pulled the novel in 2015, spent a year revising it, sent it back to his agent, and it sold within months. "Not everyone likes this, but what I like about this novel is it takes the antagonist in the story and gives them a voice and also gives them humanity," Hill said. "I tried really hard to make it something at the end of the novel, even though the antagonist do terrible things, hopefully you have some sympathy for them. I truly believe that all people, even when they make terrible decisions are good at their very core."

He received a two-book deal with Kensington, who will publish "The Missing Ones," his second Thursby mystery, this August, and a third Thursby mystery in Sept. 2020. Hill also has a Hollywood agent, and while he hasn't received any bites yet, he could see his books as a Netflix series, with each book comprising a season.

When he's not focusing on his books, Hill is the vice president and editorial director for academic publisher Bradford/St. Martin's and he also reviews books anonymously for trade publications. In his free time, Hill, who lives in Roslindale but often returns home to Duxbury, can often be seen with his two-and-a-half-year-old yellow lab Edith Ann, who is named for Lily Tomlin's character from "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In."

Now that Hill has fulfilled the vision he had when he discovered Agatha Christie, he has some advice for those looking to go down a similar path. "Find people who are trying to do the same thing as you. Find people who have had some professional success

and chances are they'll help you. Everyone needs encouragement and you need to find the people who will give you that encouragement."

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Patsy Bruce requested an inscription from author Edwin Hill after his talk at the Duxbury Senior Center.

Photo by Julius A. Prince, Jr.

tions of being human," he said he doesn't necessary consider himself lonely. Hill grew up in Duxbury in the 1970s, a time when the town was more rural and children had more freedom. He spent a lot of time in the woods exploring the 40-acre estate behind his property; a place he used to pretend was his own. Hill, who also had a tree house, describes himself as a solitary kid often buried in the stack of books he would check out of the library each week.

He said his parents were very careful to take him and his sister Christine on month-long family camping trips where they got to see the world. Once

place to focus on literary fiction. Hill said he spent his time at Emerson "trying to sort of like jimmy this idea of crime fiction into literary fiction."

He wrote his first book, which he describes as a "mash up of genres" in 2003 and 2004, found an agent who shopped it around New York, and was rebuffed by the industry. Hill called the defeat "discouraging" and he "gave up on writing for a little while." To fill the void he got a job in publishing, the industry he still works in today.

Hill's routine changed in the summer of 2008, when Christian Gerhartsreither, the man who claimed to be a

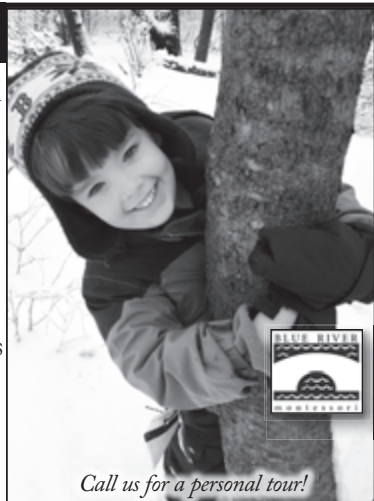
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