

## TRANSPORTATION

## Hy-Line asks for increase in passenger limits

By PETER A. SUTTERS JR.  
INDEPENDENT WRITER

The only private company to provide ferry service to the island is seeking changes to its licensing agreement with the Steamship Authority.

Citing the rising cost of fuel and stagnation in the number of people coming to Nantucket, Hy-Line Cruises is asking for passenger limits on certain trips to be raised, as well as relief from paying a fee on all passengers it carries after it reaches 250,000 for the year. The Hyannis-based company is also asking permission not to run the Great Point over Daffodil Weekend.

The Nantucket Port Council has voted to recommend that the SSA board of governors accept the schedule change and the increase in the number of passengers, but not the relief from the license fee.

The SSA board of governors meets on March 18 and is scheduled to vote on the matter.

A Massachusetts state law mandates that all private ferry service going to and from Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard be licensed by the Steamship Authority. The law was enacted to ensure the

Steamship Authority would always remain in operation so that residents of the islands would not be left without ferry service if a competing company had up-front success at the expense of the SSA, but later failed and left no one running boats between the islands and the mainland.

The current license agreement the Hy-Line has with the Steamship Authority limits to 200 the number of passengers it can carry on eight of the 12 trips it makes daily from Memorial Day through September. On the remaining four trips, the Hy-Line can take 300 passengers. The request from the Hy-Line is for all 12 trips to have 300 passengers.

"I don't think increasing the cap will have a dramatic impact," said Hy-Line vice president of operations Murray Scudder, who said the limit is not reached that often. "We're not turning away large numbers of people," he said, "but every ticket sale helps."

The current agreement with the Hy-Line also calls for a fee to be paid on all passengers carried after the 250,000th passenger of the year. The limit is typically reached in late September or early October and \$175,000 to \$200,000 is sent to the SSA annually.

The port council felt if the passenger cap were raised, the SSA would lose out on even more revenue.

"We feel they are going to hit the number earlier if the limit is raised," said Nantucket Port Council representative Nat Lowell. "We wanted to take a wait and see approach. Run an analysis on the numbers and see where it takes us. Don't get me wrong, we need the Hy-Line and I think we have been working with them every year to make improvements, but let's just see where this goes first."

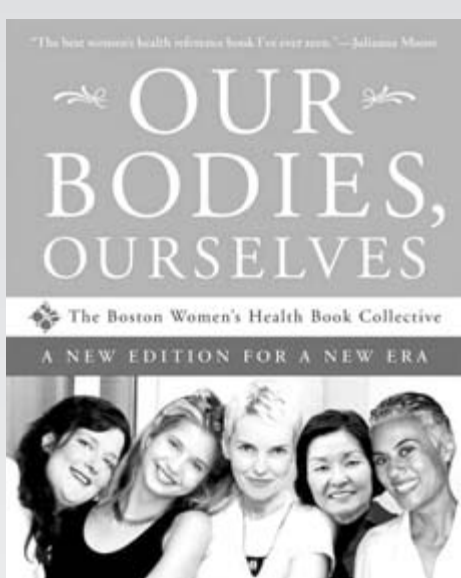
Lowell noted the current licensing agreement expires at the end of the year and the license fee can be negotiated when the renewal process begins.

Scudder did not see raising the limit having a dramatic impact on when the limit would be reached. "I think a couple of bad weather days in the summer would have a much greater impact," he said.

SSA general manager Wayne Lamson is seeking input from the public on the matter and will take comments until this Friday. Comments can be mailed to the Steamship Authority, P.O. Box 284, Foot of Railroad Ave., Woods Hole, Mass. 02543 or by e-mail at [wlamson@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:wlamson@steamshipauthority.com). ■

## A Women's Gathering

4th Annual  
Celebrating National Women's History Month



### OUR BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE

Friday, March 28

6~9 p.m.

Sherburne Hall/PI:N

11 Centre Street

Join us for an evening of social networking featuring an illustrated talk with Judy Norsigian, executive director and co-author of *Our Bodies Ourselves*, also known as the Boston Women's Health Book Collective. Her program called, 'Our Bodies of Knowledge,' will emphasize how women can take care of themselves, present opportunities to re-examine our self-image, health care practices, emotional well-being and stress.



Norsigian has appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show, The Today Show and Good Morning America.

#### The evening includes:

6 p.m. Reception with wine and heavy hors d'oeuvres

7 p.m. Introduction and Norsigian's talk

8:15 p.m. Q&A with a wrap up and sales of the three versions of 'Our Bodies Ourselves'

Co-sponsored by A Safe Place, The Nantucket Atheneum and The Nantucket Independent

**SUGGESTED DONATION: \$25**

For information, call The Atheneum at 228-1110, ext. 118,  
or The Independent at 228-1654, ext. 103

## Rep. Turkington voted with Nantucket in mind

By PETER A. SUTTERS JR.  
INDEPENDENT WRITER

Eric Turkington logged a half million miles driving to and from Boston the last 20 years representing Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and parts of Falmouth on Beacon Hill.

He went through three cars — the latest currently has 345,000 miles on it. The thing is, not one of those miles was logged on Nantucket.

"I never brought a car to either island," said Turkington, who announced last week he will not seek reelection to an eleventh term as State Representative to the Cape and Islands. He said he will run instead for the office of Barnstable County Register of Probate.

Turkington often fought for causes that were extremely unpopular on the mainland, but were seen as basic rights on Nantucket. Most famously were the "Steamship Wars," when New Bedford wanted to become a full member of the board of governors and have SSA vessels leave from its port, dangling a carrot in front of Woods Hole, which Turkington represented, saying the move would alleviate some of the truck traffic going through the small, seaside community.

"There was a balance that needed to be struck," Turkington recalls. "I just thought the islands' interest outweighed the mainland. This is how you live and it's important to retain your control. They call it a lifeline to the islands. That is more than just a figure of speech. Sometimes the job involved taking on issues that were unpopular with your friends, but it had to be done."

One of Turkington's fondest memories of a battle he fought for Nantucket was when he was a freshmen representative trying to change a law that allowed people to pay back taxes on abandoned land, and claim it as their own.

Working with Turkington for the last 10 years as Nantucket's legislative liaison is Tim Madden, who has thrown his hat into the ring to replace Turkington. "I told him I hoped he decided to stay, least of which was due to the fact he has done so much for the island," said Madden. "But I said, if he decided not to run, I would be and I would like to have his support."

Madden said he will be running as an Independent, but has Democratic points of view on many issues and voted in the Democratic primary the last two times. Turkington, a Democrat, has not yet decided if he will endorse any candidate for the office.

In addition to Madden, Democrat Cheryl Bartlett, former Nantucket Selectman and current director of the Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund, is weighing her options. ■