

Rockland Trust manager renews a Hull connection

By Carol Britton Meyer

Jessica Abbott, new manager of the Nantasket Avenue Rockland Trust bank branch, has a spectacular view of the ocean from her office window. It's one of the many features she loves about working there.



Jessica Abbott

After she moved from the North Quincy Rockland Trust branch to assume her new role a couple of months ago, Abbott called her father and exclaimed about her view of the beach: "Look, Dad, I've made it!" He heartily agreed.

Abbott has had a connection with Hull since she was a child. "I grew up in Norwell, and my family always went to Nantasket Beach. It intrigued me," she said.

She has been with Rockland Trust since 2015 when she was hired, a year before the North Quincy branch opened, to help with the preparations. She recently applied for the Nantasket Avenue branch manager position and, in September, was asked to fill that role.

One of the main reasons Abbott enjoys working for Rockland Trust is its attitude toward its employees. The company, she said, "wants its employees to like what they do and who we work with."

That spirit is evident in the Hull branch, where there's a sense of camaraderie and friendship among the employees and also with their customers, who are always greeted with a friendly smile.

"I'm getting to know everyone little by little," said Abbott, who lives in West Bridgewater. "Hull is a very

tight-knit community, and everyone is very welcoming and down-to-earth."

Assistant Manager Kathy Concannon, a longtime Hull resident who has been with the Nantasket Avenue office for about 28 years, has high praise for Abbott. "We're happy to have Jessica on board," she said. "She's young, vibrant, and like a breath of fresh air."

Concannon shares Abbott's enthusiasm for the work. "I love helping people and greeting customers as they come through the door," she said, noting, "I keep a bowl of chocolate candy on my desk [near the front entrance], and when it's not there, it's missed."

Tellers include Heather Cheever, who has been with the Hull branch for eight years; Patty Panetta, who has spent many of her years with Rockland Trust in the Nantasket Avenue office; new Hull resident Lydia Cole, who has been with the bank for three months; and Hingham resident Jack Murphy, who has worked there for a year.

"Our team has a lot of fun together," Abbott said.

Cheever appreciates that Abbott brings so much energy to the job.

Cole shares Abbott's enjoyment of the view of the ocean. "I really like my work. The customers are very friendly and offer suggestions about what they think are the best restaurants and where to get a good martini!" she said.

Murphy called Abbott "very friendly and open," and says he loves the "nice atmosphere among co-workers and customers."

Among Abbotts goals in her new location is reaching out to more businesses to offer them the many services the bank provides, such as a loan for an expansion, and getting out into the community more.

One way that will be accomplished, Abbott said, is by participating in the upcoming spring "Credit for Life" event at Hull High School. "This is a wonderful way for kids to learn how to manage their finances, including how to pay their bills and transportation costs, within their income," she explained.

The Hull branch will also participate in the annual Drowned Hogs



Rockland Trust employees – new branch Manager Jessica Abbott, teller Heather Cheever, assistant Manager Kathy Concannon, and tellers Lydia Cole and Jack Murphy – greet every customer with a smile. Missing from the photo is teller Patty Panetta. [Carol Britton Meyer photos]

swim in February, which – as locals know – involves brave souls jumping into the frigid waters of Nantasket Beach to help raise money for Hull's Wellspring Multi-Service Center.

Abbott is particularly proud of the fact that the Hull Rockland Trust is relationship-based. "Our customers are part of our family," she said. "They're not just a number. We want them to feel welcome and to have a hassle-free, fun experience here."

From a popcorn machine and comfortable chairs in the lobby to a recent pumpkin-decorating contest among the staff (customers voted on which one was their favorite) to a trivia question of the day, it appears that customers not only have their banking needs met, they also have a good time doing that.

On Nov. 9 the Nantasket office donated a sum of money to the nearby Dunkin' Donuts to treat customers to a cup of coffee between 7 and 10 a.m. as a way to give back to the community.

That surprise gesture was greatly appreciated.

Other customers like the fact that the bank is dog-friendly. Kate O'Regan's foster dog, TUGG (all caps!) waited in the lobby with Abbott and Concannon while she did

her banking. "Everybody knows him, and he brings everyone such joy," O'Regan said. "He loves the beach, and we sometimes walk to the bank from there."

Along with fine customer service, O'Regan also appreciates "the candy and dog treats or a glass of water when you're thirsty."

Abbott began her career in banking when she was 17, after applying for and receiving a college scholarship in 2002 through South Shore Bank. When she attended a gathering announcing her receipt of the scholarship, she was offered a summer teller job in one of the Weymouth branches. Through her college years, she worked at a number of South Shore Bank branch offices in different positions – as a teller, customer service representative, and later as a personal banking manager before being hired by North Quincy Rockland Trust.

Right now Abbott's spare time is dedicated to attending her daughters' sports games – baseball for Kendall, 11, and soccer for Emma, 8. "It's nice to see them grow in their sports," Abbott said. "Right now all my free time revolves around my kids and our two dogs, Beauty, a shepherd mix, and Molly, a lab mix." HT

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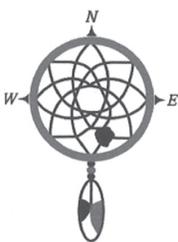
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