



Hearing the good news

Johnston's Allegra Graziano reacts as she hears her name called as the winner of Miss Rhode Island Collegiate America in November. Graziano will head to the national competition this June in Little Rock, Arkansas. For the full story and more photos, turn to page 12. (Photo courtesy K Garcia Productions)

Planning Board set to discuss distribution facility master plan Feb. 2

By SUN RISE STAFF

The Johnston Planning Board is set to discuss a master plan review for Bluewater Property Group during its Feb. 2 meeting, as the applicant seeks to build a "six-story retail distribution facility" at 2120 Hart-

ford Ave.

According to the agenda, the building would have a ground floor area of about 823,000 square feet, with a total area nearing 3.9 million square feet. Bluewater has been associated nationally with Amazon distribution center

proposals.

GoLocalProv's Kate Nagle first reported Amazon's interest in Johnston earlier this week. The Sun Rise reached out to both Mayor Joseph Polisena and Town Council Vice President Joseph Polisena Jr., both of whom declined comment.

DiLullo concerned about district attendance, student engagement

By JACOB MARROCCO

As the school year approaches the halfway point, Superintendent of Johnston Schools Bernard DiLullo said he remains concerned about a potential "learning loss" for students at home.

During the January meeting of the School Committee, DiLullo said attendance issues have persisted among virtual learners, and the district's truancy officer has been busy. He said students may not be "as serious about the work that they have to do - particularly students who are learning from a distance."

"At the end of this month we'll certainly be beyond the halfway mark, and things are going OK. My biggest concern is learning loss for kids who are not at-

tending school regularly," DiLullo said in a phone interview on Tuesday. "Kids who are coming to school are pretty much doing what they need to do. Students who are learning from a distance, I'm concerned about the learning loss that they may experience over the course of last spring and through this fall and winter."

DiLullo said "losing too much time in the classroom" factored into his decision to return schools to normal operations after the distance learning break around Christmas. Students learned virtually starting Dec. 14 and through the first few days of the new year, but DiLullo ruled against a staggered reopening.

Elementary school students are in the classroom

four days a week, while middle and high school learners are still taking the hybrid approach with alternating kids in the building four days a week. Every student has a virtual learning day on Monday.

"I really wanted to make sure the kids came back full time as soon as they could come back full time," DiLullo said. "We really didn't see a reason to stagger the reopening. We're not seeing high levels of cases in our schools. A lot of the issues that we're dealing with are close contacts as opposed to students who have COVID, and we just felt like getting them back into the classroom was the most important thing we could do right now."

■ SCHOOLS - PAGE 11

McKee, preparing to become governor, vows to 'earn your trust'

By ARDEN BASTIA

"Today, I'd like to speak directly to the Rhode Island residents, families and businesses. And I want you to know who I am, begin to know who I am, what I believe, and why we are prepared to execute a smooth transition during these critical times ... I need to earn your trust."

With those words, Lt. Gov. Daniel McKee opened his first solo appearance as the state's governor-to-be - a Jan. 14 press conference at the Chelo's restaurant on Post Road in Warwick.

McKee placed addressing the pandemic and distributing COVID-19 vaccines as his top priorities.

"Every moment in office, I'll be thinking about how to make the state stronger for everyone that lives in the state - for our families, our residents, our small businesses, our students, everybody," he said.

McKee, 69, was raised in Cumberland and grew up in the family heating oil business. After graduating from Cumberland High School and Assumption College, where he studied political science, he took over the family business along with

his brother before getting into local politics.

Business has always taken a central role in his life. In addition to working in the heating oil business, he opened a real estate brokerage firm and a fitness center in Woonsocket.

He served two terms on the Cumberland Town Council before defeating incumbent Francis Gaschen in the 2000 Democratic primary for mayor. He went on to win the general election that year without opposition.

Then, in 2004, he lost to former state Rep. Davis Iwuc, but two years later came back to regain the mayor's seat. As Cumberland's mayor, he created Blackstone Valley Prep, the first mayoral charter school in the state. In all, he served Cumberland as mayor for six terms.

In 2014, McKee made his first run for statewide office, when then-Lt. Gov. Elizabeth Roberts was coming to the end of her two terms. After winning a three-way Democratic primary against Ralph Mollis and Frank Ferri, he went on to top Republican Catherine Taylor in the general election.

He brought a town hall



LT. GOV. DAN MCKEE

feel to Smith Hill, and since then as focused on being a liaison between mayors and the state.

At the press conference last week, McKee emphasized that he has made five successful political position transitions throughout his career, asking for Rhode Island's confidence that this transition will be just as smooth as the previous

ones.

Pandemic response

"As part of the transition, I know that I also need to earn your trust and your competence. And I intend to do that," McKee said.

He reiterated a top focus for the coming weeks and months will be a "successful pandemic response and vac-

cine distribution ... My team is focused on COVID-19, streamlining vaccine distribution, and putting us on a path to recovery."

Despite not begin present at previous COVID briefings led by Gov. Gina Raimondo and Health Director Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, McKee emphasized that working alongside the health director will not be a new ex-

perience.

"I've met this weekend with the top-line team and the COVID response. That's going to continue," he said. "I plan on being front and center with all 39 cities and towns, all the municipal leaders, we're engaging right now ... speaking to civic leaders, municipal leaders, about the role that they play in terms of keeping us safe."

His motto in the battle against the virus: "Stay positive, test negative."

McKee also addressed the much-debated topic of choosing the next lieutenant governor. It had been proposed that the General Assembly should make the selection as opposed to McKee, or that voters should fill the position.

"My understanding right now is that I'm going to make [the decision], based on conversations that I've had with leadership that I'll be making the appointment," he said. "If that changes because of the General Assembly's actions, I can't control that. I want to make it clear that no decision has been made."

McKee said the decision is

■ MCKEE - PAGE 11

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GENEROUS DONATION: Johnston Police Chief Joseph Razza, Deputy Chief Mark Vieira, and the department's command staff are joined by Ocean State Job Lot Store Leader Elia Balona, who recently provided the officers with a pallet of protective supplies. (Submitted photo)

Job Lot donates protective supplies to JPD

Thanks to the generosity of Ocean State Job Lot, Johnston police officers will now have additional layer of protection during the coronavirus pandemic.

Johnston Police Chief Joseph Razza, Deputy Chief Mark Vieira, and the entire Johnston Police Department were recently provided with a donation of a pallet full of hand sanitizer, disinfecting

wipes, and other personal protective equipment for use at their station, in police cruisers, and in the community.

"We greatly appreciate this donation from Ocean State Job Lot," Chief Razza said. "In a day and age of uncertainty, it's reassuring to know that our local business are there to show their support during these un-

precedented times."

Store Leader Elia Balona said that the store was happy to provide the supplies and hoped that they would help Johnston's officers and staff healthy. This was the second major donation to the department from Job Lot, which also recently provided masks, contactless thermometers and cleaning supplies.

POLICE LOG

The Police Log is a digest of reports provided by the Johnston Police, Rhode Island State Police and other departments.

ASSAULT

Detective Anthony Sasso reports that on the morning of Jan. 6, Jeffrey Opferkuch, 49, 75 Pocasset St., Johnston, turned himself in at Johnston Police Department headquarters on charges of felony assault on a person over 60 causing bodily injury and misdemeanor disorderly conduct.

Opferkuch was arraigned and released on \$10,000 personal recognizance with a Third Division District Court date of Jan. 11. He also has a Sixth Division District Court pre-arraignment conference date of April 15.

Opferkuch's arrest stemmed from an alleged incident that occurred on Christmas Eve at the above address. Patrolman Arthur Petteruti wrote that on Dec. 26, an unnamed party responded to headquarters to report an assault that had occurred two days prior. The man said he arrived at Pocasset Mills to visit someone, saying that when he arrived the intercom system at the front entrance was not work-

ing correctly and he could not make contact with the person they were trying to reach.

The man said that while standing outside the building, a man - later identified as Opferkuch - and woman entered using a key fob and he attempted to follow them inside, at which time Opferkuch shut the door and said, "You're not coming in." Petteruti was told that the reporting party and the man engaged in a verbal argument, at which time Opferkuch opened the door and intentionally shoved him on to the cement walkway. The man said he was not injured and suffered only minor scrapes.

Sasso later reviewed surveillance footage of the alleged incident, seeing Opferkuch raise his middle finger at one point before turning to head inside the building. Sasso wrote that Opferkuch then made an abrupt turn, handed off the box he was carrying and proceeded to confront the man. He saw on the tape that Opferkuch grabbed the man and violently shoved him to the ground.

DUI

Patrolman Kevin Brady, along with Patrolwoman Kayleigh Cooper and Patrolman Cody Weaver, responded to the area of 525 Killingly St. on the evening of Jan. 6 for a motor vehicle accident with reported injuries.

Upon arrival, Brady saw that vehicle No. 4 had rear-ended vehicle No. 3, and the impact of that collision caused two other vehicles to strike each other. Brady spoke with the driver of vehicle No. 4 - identified Fabio Correia, 36, 16 Frances Drive, Cranston - who allegedly had a strong odor of alcohol emanating from his breath. Brady reports that Correia's speech was slurred, his eyes were bloodshot and watery and his face was flushed.

Brady asked Correia if he had been drinking, to which he replied, "A couple beers." In plain view, Brady said, he saw an empty beer bottle lay-

ing on the passenger seat and Cooper found two more in the glovebox. As he was speaking with Correia, Brady said a firefighter approached him to say that an unknown man ran over to Correia's vehicle, retrieved several empty beer bottles and threw them across the street. Brady said he was unable to find the bottles.

Correia is said to have consented to standardized field sobriety tests, administered by Cooper. She reports observing a lack of smooth pursuit in his eyes, and that he lost balance and failed to complete the walk-and-turn test. He also could not complete the one-leg stand, according to Cooper.

Correia was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, first offense, .15 or greater.

LARCENY

Patrolwoman Kayleigh Cooper and Patrolman Matthew Rado responded to the Central Falls Police Department on the evening of Jan. 21 to take custody of Kevin Colpitts, 47, 254 Annie St., Pawtucket, on a misdemeanor charge of larceny under \$1,500.

Colpitts' arrest stemmed from an alleged incident that occurred on the early morning of June 14, when patrolman Anthony St. Laurent and Andrew Broccoli responded to a report of larceny of a patio set.

Upon arriving on the scene, St. Laurent spoke with the owner of the residence, who said that her dog began to bark about 20 minutes prior.

At this time, she said her husband let the dog out and realized that her patio set on the front porch was gone from the property. She also indicated no other items were stolen from the property. The stolen items are valued at about \$500. The reporting party noted that her neighbor has a surveillance system that may have captured the events.

A warrant was later prepared for Colpitts' arrest.

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Winner to be chosen February 8th

Despite pandemic, JHS music department marches on with fundraising efforts

By PETE FONTAINE

Although the COVID-19 crisis keeps up, the national award-winning Johnston High School Music Department hasn't skipped a beat as far as raising money for several important in-house programs.

The JHS music department, people like Director Ronald Lamoureux and Chorus Director Matthew Gingras will tell you, "although it's not business as usual, we've been very busy since the return to school raising revenue for a multitude of scholarships."

Most recently, for example, the Music Department maintained a "terrific tradition" and participated in the Savers Fun Drive.

Parents from the Johnston School Music Association – a well-organized support group led by president Carl Morin, vice president Bethany Littlefield, treasurer David Banno and secretary Anna Morin – have been collecting house-used clothes for the drive since last year and just last week received word that this year's program resulted in a

net profit of over \$1,000.

"I can't thank the JSMA parents enough for helping us with this initiative," Gingras emphasized. "Carl and Anna Morin housed all these clothes for the better part of last year. Dave Banno even rented a truck for us to help with the delivery to the Savers' store. It would have been impossible to do this without them."

So, as Lamoureux added with a smile on his face: "In the end, our JSMA was able to drop off just over 4,000 pounds of clothes to Savers."

Yet another important Music Department program, as the two tireless directors wanted it known, is the annual Rachel E. Carson Memorial Scholarship fundraising. The scholarship is named in the memory of a beloved JHS senior who passed away unexpectedly in 2018.

"We just had the kickoff event for the Rachel E. Carson Scholarship," Gingras announced Monday. "After Rachel's heartbreaking passing, we formed a scholarship program in her name and held what continues to be the highly-successful Crazy

Hat Day here at school."

Gingras explained students, staff and the JHS faculty exuberantly participated in the Crazy Hat Day, which continues to be nothing less than a worthwhile and fun-filled event for everyone in the school.

Moreover, because of the ongoing pandemic, many students chose to donate virtually and participate in Crazy Hat Day online. Gingras said the fundraising will culminate with a luncheon sponsored by the JSMA and explained that the music department will award two \$500 scholarships.

February will also be busy as far as raising money is concerned, as the JHS Music Department holds what could be an extremely lucrative Calendar Raffle throughout the month of February. Prizes total more than \$3,000, with drawings every day.

People who are interested in donating or participating in the raffle should please contact Gingras (mgingras@johnstonschools.org) or Lamoureux (rlamoureux@johnstonschools.org).



MIGHTY MEMORIAL: This is the graphic for the Johnston High School Music Department's annual Crazy Hat Day, which again generated money for the annual Rachel D. Carson Memorial Scholarships. (Submitted photo)

Cicilline at the center of the maelstrom

TALKING POLITICS



by
IAN
DONNIS

When U.S. Rep. David Cicilline's political obituary was being written in 2012, did anyone think he would be at the center of an effort to impeach an embattled president almost a decade later?

That sharp contrast reflects a political journey with some remarkable twists and turns. Cicilline, 59, has overcome various questions and setbacks while ushering in the post-Buddy Cianci era in Providence, winning a seat in Congress in 2010, going on to scrutinize big tech and now helping lead Democrats' second impeachment of President Trump.

The Rhode Island congressman's name appeared prominently on A1 of The New York Times earlier this week – where he also published an op-ed with his rationale for impeachment – and Cicilline remains a familiar face on cable news. There have been low points, too; in 2012, Cicilline apologized for essentially sugar-coating fiscal problems in Providence (he wound up winning re-election to the U.S. House that year by a larger-than-expected margin).

In the current moment, Cicilline's office has received multiple threats due to his support for impeachment and his Providence home remains under the watch of police, per WPRI, although the congressman is unbowed. Referring to the insurrection at the Capitol,

Cicilline wrote in his NYT op-ed, "We cannot let this go unanswered. With each day, Mr. Trump grows more and more desperate. We should not allow him to menace the security of our country for a second longer."

Looking ahead, the next chapter in Cicilline's journey remains unclear. Does he remain in the House, with Rhode Island expected to lose one of its two congressional seats? (He lost a recent bid for assistant U.S. speaker, to Rep. Katherine Clark of Massachusetts, and Republicans are a threat to regain the chamber in 2022.) Regardless of his next move, Cicilline's story has the ingredients of what could make for a compelling autobiography.

The Cool Moose's last laugh

One suspects the late Robert "Cool Moose" Healey would be bemused by how the filling of an impending vacancy in the lieutenant governor's office has become a Full Rhode Island:

1) A growing field of candidates is vying for the pick; 2) Soon to be Gov. Dan McKee said he expects to make the choice, but wouldn't make a legal challenge if the General Assembly takes it away; 3) Common Cause of RI's John Marion offered a reminder of how the state Constitution restricts this choice to the gov; 4) cross-chamber rivalries are at play, since the House will be peeved if a senator gets the pick, and vice versa; 5) Politics 101 suggests McKee should pick an LG who would be most simpatico while giving him the best shot of retaining the governor's office in 2022; 6) given this thicket of stuff, McKee is assembling an advisory panel to vet candidates and make recommendations. The panel will include Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisen

and Rosa De Castillo, a policy analyst in McKee's office. Other picks for the panel are expected to be named this week.

Alternative reality

While a Utah liberal is among the many people arrested and charged in connection with the insurrection at the Capitol last week, there's no evidence to reinforce some conservatives' claims that Antifa was responsible.

"Antifa went in there, did some, you know, bad stuff, raised the flag for Trump and blamed it on Trump," Rep. Justin Price (R-Richmond) told me, in perhaps his only interview on the topic. "It's confirmed."

A similar view was shared on conservative news sources like Fox News and Newsmax, even though the FBI said there was no basis for Antifa responsibility. Ultimately, the belief in this ill-founded theory seems like a variation of Trump's false narrative about a stolen election.

"The Antifa narrative, designed to exculpate the Trump supporters who ransacked the Capitol – and also exonerate Trump for encouraging them – has been debunked, yet it persists," Brian Stelter wrote at CNN. "Another denialist narrative aims to downplay the severity of the attack, even as new evidence to the contrary emerges every day."

Alternate reality, part II

With polls showing that a large percentage of Republicans believe Trump's lies about a stolen election, how can public officials restore confidence in voting?

"I think we just need to continue to have a conversation about all the ways in which we protect our elections," Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea said last week on Political Roundtable.

"Clearly, this country needs to have an ongoing conversation about what measures we have in protecting and securing our democracy. It's about education, making sure that our children and our adults understand how elections happen, how the government comes into power and what are the security measures that we have for that."

Gorbea points to the absence of widespread fraud in the November 2020 election as proof that relaxed standard for mail ballots do not negatively affect elections.

Are we our own worst enemy?

Back in 1813, Oliver Hazard Perry is said to have uttered, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." Over time, given the human capacity for self-injurious behavior, that morphed (through Walt Kelly's comic strip Pogo) into, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

Now, in the aftermath of the Capitol attack, one question being asked is, "We have met the enemy – is he us?"

The New York Times reported that the mob included notorious white supremacists and conspiracy theorists. Writing at Politico, Jack Shafer said it would be foolish to mock all of the rioters as ignorant buffoons: "Based on the early arrests and news reports from the riot, the Capitol insurrectionists represent a bigger slice of white America than just the low-class knuckledraggers who rolled in from the sticks on Donald Trump's command. Many of the protesters and rioters we have met through rap sheets and press accounts are solidly middle class."

R.P. Eddy, a former counterterrorism official

who runs a private intel firm, told NPR's Dina Temple-Raston that "in hindsight he believes the problem was something he calls 'the invisible obvious' – things that sit right in front of us that we don't notice. 'The reason that they are invisible to us ... gets to our biases,' he said. 'The situation here, I'm unfortunately quite sure we're going to find, that it was very hard for these decision-makers and these analysts to realize that people who look just like them could want to commit this kind of unconstitutional violence and could literally try to and want to kill them.'"

Truth in comics

Bonus: The notion of "We have met the enemy and he is us," was crafted in the Pogo comic strip, which ran from 1948-1975, created by Walt Kelly. And there's a story with a Rhode Island connection, involving the character of Simple J. Malarkey.

"At the time, Malarkey's inspiration, Senator Joseph McCarthy, was at the height of his political power, routinely destroying reputations in the name of rooting out Communism," Ben Marks wrote in a 2015 article at BoingBoing. "Kelly should have been intimidated, but he mocked the bilious senator from Wisconsin for a year and a half, until one of the newspapers that published Pogo, the Providence Bulletin, threatened to drop the strip if Kelly didn't drop the character. Seizing upon this fresh opportunity for parody, Kelly promptly drew a new Malarkey panel, hiding Malarkey's face under a sack. 'I'm afeared us will haf'ta keep these bags over our heads, otherwise that chicken from Providence might recognize us,'

Malarkey confided to a cartoon cohort on October 8, 1954. In the context of the strip, the statement was a reference to a Rhode Island Red named Sis Boombah from the previous day's comic, but it was also a clever slap at that Rhode Island newspaper that had tried to censor him."

Watch out for pedestrians

Via news release from AAA Northeast: "Over a 10-year period, the number of pedestrians killed in motor vehicle crashes on America's roadways increased by a staggering 55 percent, according to a new report from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. The deaths, from 2009-2018, came after three decades of declines. In Rhode Island, there were 122 pedestrians killed during that ten-year period, as well as 725 in Massachusetts and 439 in Connecticut. California, with just under 7,500, accounted for the most of the 51,000 deaths Recently, AAA Northeast recognized the safety record in the town of Barrington, where through the end of 2019, no pedestrian fatalities have taken place in 60 years. 'This safety record could not have been realized without the department's vigilance in enforcement, engineering, and a holistic approach to education. For example, the Barrington public schools make traffic safety education a priority from grades K-12,' said Lloyd Albert, a spokesman for AAA Northeast."

Ian Donnis is the political reporter for The Public's Radio. He can be reached at idonnis@ripr.org. For more of his coverage, visit thepublicsradio.org and follow him on Twitter (@IanDon).



Heading to Washington

In these images, members of the Rhode Island National Guard prepare to assist the Washington, D.C., National Guard for the 2021 Presidential Inauguration on Jan. 16 in East Greenwich; and Rhode Island Air National Guard members assemble on Jan. 16 in North Kingstown as they prepare to augment civil authorities in the nation's capital. The National Guard has participated in every presidential inauguration since the inauguration of George Washington in 1789. (Army National Guard photos by PFC David Connors / Air National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Deirdre Salvas)



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Persistence pays off for Chief Razza

By MICHAEL LEVESQUE

When I sat down with Johnston Police Chief Joseph P. Razza, I had no idea that the person in front of me had such a remarkable – and unique – journey to becoming the town's chief law enforcement officer.

Chief Razza, who leads Johnston's decorated Police Department, also serves as emergency management director at a time when, according to the chief, "there's a lot on the plate. There is so much going on that there is not a day that goes by that I don't work at least nine hours and say to myself 'where does the time go!'"

Thankfully, he knew the challenges and intricacies of the office, having served as deputy chief to his friend and mentor, former Chief Richard Tamburini.

"The transition hasn't been difficult," he said, "though there's a lot going on because of COVID-19, and because of civil unrest in our state and nation."

A lifelong resident of Johnston, his late father, Pasco, was a meat cutter at local markets and also ran "Big Ray's" Farmers Market, and his mom, Joan (Venditto), was a homemaker who also pitched in at Big Ray's.

He and sister Karen had a typical Rhode Island upbringing, doing all the things kids do in our great state.

He attended Johnston Public Schools, and attended the University of Rhode Island for a year, transferring to CCRI and eventually graduating from Roger Williams University, where he received a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice and an associate degree in business administration.

During his academic career Chief Razza also launched his business career, selling fruit and vegetables door-to-door from his truck on weekends.

This entrepreneurial spirit was not unusual for the Razza family – he took over his great grandfather's business, servicing its customers on primarily North Main Street and Blackstone Boulevard in Providence, and quickly expanded the business to service 80 to 100 customers on his weekly route throughout Cranston, Coventry, West Warwick and Narragansett.

As if school and the fruit and vegetable route was not enough, he also worked part-time with his dad at the market. The chief said "these were some of the best times of my life. I got to meet

many people and made friendships that last to this day."

Obviously not afraid to work hard, he received his law enforcement degree and decided to pursue a career in policing. He said, "my parents taught me at a very early age that if you wanted to succeed in life, it required determination and hard work because nothing in life was unattainable."

The path to being a sworn officer wasn't easy, according to the chief.

"I applied and applied [to various cities and towns] and always came up short."

So, he took a position in a private security company and would not be deterred. He kept applying.

His tenacity paid off. He was finally awarded a position as a "Juvenile Program Worker" at the Rhode Island Training School.

In 1995, about six months into the job, he learned that he had been selected for a position at the Jamestown Police Department.

He attended the Police Training Academy and would become a sworn officer later that year.

He would work in Jamestown for about three years when some of his basketball buddies (the Chief is quite an athlete – having been inducted in Johnston High School's Athletic Hall of Fame) told him that there was a position opening in the Johnston Police Department and urged him to apply. He said "I hesitantly left the picturesque shores of Jamestown for the ever-flowing traffic on Atwood Avenue. Although my time in Jamestown was brief, I truly enjoyed the community and its people."

Even though he was now a veteran officer, rules required him to take a position as a "probationary officer" in Johnston.

The chief said, "I ended up on the midnight-to-eight shift, which was fine with me."

After six years, he was promoted to sergeant, a position he was very fond of because "it is where the rubber hits the road." He continued, "being a sergeant was the greatest thing. There is not a more important position in a police department than a frontline supervisor – the sergeant."

He rose through the ranks, and ultimately became deputy chief in 2017.

On Aug. 31, 2020, Mayor Joseph Polisena recited the oath of office, his wife Mandi "pinned" the badge and he became the eighth chief of the department.

The chief told me that he was

"truly honored and humbled" that Mayor Polisena had "the faith and confidence in me" to be the successor to Chief Tamburini.

Quite remarkable to think that in the 100-plus-year history of the Police Department in Johnston, there have only been eight police chiefs.

Chief Razza said it eloquently in his inaugural speech: "A lot of people, especially the devoted men and women who make up the Johnston Police are going to wonder what kind of chief I will be, and what I will be asking of them. I will tell them that integrity has been and always will be my mantra, as I will continue to lead with dedication, devotion and honor to the people of this truly great town, and I will expect the same from them."

He has support from outside the town as well.

Providence Deputy Police Chief Tom Verdi said it this way: "I've known Chief Razza for over two decades. He is a leader of great integrity, the consummate professional. Joe cares deeply about his officers and citizens of Johnston."

Chief Razza lights up when he talks about the men and women of the Johnston Police Department, a department that has both state and national accreditation, not an easy task.

He remarked, "the accreditations show that you have the correct policies and procedures in place, and that you are doing everything by the book. The public should be assured that not only are we doing police work the right way, but that we also have a level of transparency and professionalism that should be reassuring."

He gave a great deal of credit to former Chief Tamburini for "setting the high bar."

It's pretty easy to see that Chief Razza will have a successful tenure as Johnston's eighth police chief.

The kid from Johnston that went door-to-door selling fruit and vegetables and worked at his dad's market while attending classes certainly has a unique work ethic.

And, as is the case in many Rhode Island families, there is a subplot to his pathway to the chief's office.

His grandfather, Joseph Razza, was a highly respected (and colorful) detective lieutenant in the West Warwick Police Department.

I'm sure he's looking down and smiling proudly.



WHERE IT ALL STARTED: Above, Joseph Razza is sworn in back in 1998 with retired Deputy Chief Vito Scotti, Chief Richard Tamburini, his father Pasco and former Mayor Louis Perrotta Sr. Below, Razza poses with his wife Mandi during his August promotion ceremony. (Submitted photos)



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Thursday, January 28, 2021
Friday, January 29, 2021
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Dining Hall
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Permission slips are available at www.ribc.org/permission.

Antibody testing available for all donations from 12/14/20 - 1/31/21 (ribc.org/antibody). Those with COVID-19 antibodies may be invited to become a special convalescent plasma donor for patients battling COVID-19, and January donors will also receive a \$5 Dunkin' gift card and winter hat.

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The gift of life

Johnston High School students will hold back-to-back blood drives at the Johnston Senior Center on Jan. 28 and 29 in honor of National Blood Donor Month. Donations are by appointment only, and those under 16 who would like to participate need a parental permission slip that can be found at ribc.org/permission. More information on the event can be found on the flyer at left. (Submitted photo)

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A COUPLE OF KIND SOULS: Rhode Island Community Food Bank CEO Andrew Schiff receives a \$50,000 donation check from BankNewport President and CEO Sandra J. Pattie. The two companies are ready to kick off the "Kind Souls, Full Bowls" initiative, which runs from Jan. 18 through Feb. 14. (Submitted photo)



BankNewport, RI Community Food Bank link up for 'Kind Souls, Full Bowls'

BankNewport and the Rhode Island Community Food Bank are teaming up for a new campaign to raise awareness about food insecurity in Rhode Island. From January 18 through Feb. 14, "Kind Souls, Full Bowls" will encourage members of the public to make a contribution to the Food Bank to help the organization continue to distribute food to people in need through its statewide network of 159 member food pantries and meal sites.

To make a financial donation, please visit rfoodbank.org/banknewport. Those interested in donating non-perishable food items may do so from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Food Bank headquarters at 200 Niantic Ave. in Providence.

BankNewport has long-supported the Food Bank, and in 2020, committed a \$100,000 COVID-19 support grant as well as an additional \$40,000 in food insecurity grants made directly to their member agencies. To kick-off the "Kind Souls, Full Bowls" campaign, BankNewport has made a \$50,000 donation.

"The holiday season is behind us, and with it, the many food drives and fundraising activities that take place to support those in need, but the demand for assistance remains high," said Sandra J. Pattie, President & CEO, BankNewport. "As we begin the new year,

we hope that this contribution and the awareness campaign will help the Food Bank meet the increased demand."

Each month, 68,000 Rhode Islanders receive food assistance from the Food Bank's member agencies, a need that has grown significantly through the COVID-19 pandemic.

A gift - of any size - will help feed our neighbors in need during the winter months. For every dollar donated, the Food Bank can acquire up to three pounds of healthy, nutritious food.

"We're so thankful for all of the support we've received from our friends at BankNewport, including this recent gift" said Food Bank CEO Andrew Schiff. "We especially appreciate their campaign to raise awareness of our work and encourage more donations to help us meet the increased demand for food assistance for Rhode Islanders struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank has been distributing food to 68,000 struggling Rhode Islanders each month through a statewide network of 159 member agencies including food pantries, meal sites, shelters, emergency distribution programs and senior centers. This year, the Food Bank distributed 13.8 million pounds of food. The Food Bank is a member of Feed-

ing America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization. For more information, visit www.rifoodbank.org.

Founded in 1819 and headquartered in Newport, BankNewport offers a full suite of loan and deposit products and services for families and businesses throughout Rhode Island. With \$2.0 billion in assets, BankNewport is one of the oldest community banks in the United States and, as a mutual organization, is committed to the financial success of its customers, em-

ployees and communities. BankNewport has 17 branch locations, with commercial lending offices in Cumberland and Providence.

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Pitch & Prose helps musicians thrive in multiple ways

By ROB DUGUAY

Every musician is always looking for that next step to take in their career. They could be looking for the ideal recording studio to make their first album, to have more of a presence on social media, or perhaps they need help booking a gig in a world without COVID-19.

Fortunately for local acts in Rhode Island, there is an organization that can meet those needs. Based in Cranston, Pitch & Prose functions as a record label, recording studio and collaborative workshop. It's an ideal entity for anyone who is involved in music and is looking to grow in a creative sense.

I recently had a talk with founder and director Matt Maggiamo about what made him want to start this unique business, forming a roster for the record label, running workshops and looking to be more active in the local scene.

ROB DUGUAY: What inspired you to start Pitch & Prose?

MATT MAGGIAMO: Originally it started off as a consulting firm kind of in the nonprofit world while also working with some creative clients. Over time I kind of realized that my heart wasn't really in it. I had a band that played covers and Jay Ferguson, who was my bandmate, is a producer, and we started talking about this idea of running a recording studio. A couple of my clients were musicians, and over the course of some campfire chats during the summer we started talking about what we really wanted to do. We came up with this idea of building Pitch & Prose from being a consulting firm into more of a music-centric business. After two months of discussion, we came out on the other end feeling like going with what we're most passionate about, which is starting a



PURSuing HIS PASSION: Matt Maggiamo, founder and director of Cranston-based Pitch & Prose, said the organization aims to promote and support "unique voices" in the local music scene. (Courtesy of Alicya Tebo)

recording studio and a record label while taking all of that consulting energy and putting it into helping musicians.

RD: So far the label's roster includes Providence alternative rock act Heather Rose In Clover, Boston singer-songwriter Prateek and Brian Ross from the wizard rock band Draco & The Malfoys, among others. How have you gone about getting these acts involved? Do you have a certain criteria or are they all just friends of yours?

MM: It's kind of a mixture of all that. Everyone that we've signed to the label so far is either somebody we know pretty well

and feel comfortable working with or they're somebody who is in our extended network. Mostly what we're looking for is people who share our values in terms of the music community, skill sharing and a non-competitive approach that ends up being more collaborative. We're also looking for unique voices and people who are doing something that stands on its own while not being a carbon copy of what the music industry is putting out. We're trying to work with nice people who have strong values and something interesting to offer.

RD: That's fantastic. When it comes to operating

the recording studio, do you have a specialty that you embrace? It seems like the label works with a lot of singer-songwriters, so do you prefer to work with acoustic acts or do you try to be as versatile as possible?

MM: Eventually our goal is to have a broad range of sounds. We're not trying to be just an indie rock label, a folk label or anything of the sort. We want to work with people who have something unique musically. We all come from the '90s and we all grew up on alternative rock and punk, so that's what we know best. Olivia Dolphin, for instance, is one of the first people we start-

ed working with, and she primarily plays piano and sings with her music being a cross between Tori Amos and Broadway.

It's something unique and something different from what we do ourselves. We're definitely open to working with artists in any genre, and as a producer Jay is really hands-on. He abides by the '70s model where he's not just an engineer and he'll use the studio as an instrument while working with the artist before the tape is rolling to flesh out ideas. He's really thoughtful of how the music is captured and produced.

RD: Pitch & Prose also has workshops that range from virtual learning to social media advice to marketing and to in-person music classes. You've really run the full gamut when it comes to helping a musician out in numerous ways when it comes to getting their music out there and becoming more of a presence. Who runs the workshops, and do you have one that's more popular than the rest?

MM: Jay and I both run workshops. He runs the ones that revolve around sound production, while I'm on more of the promotion and marketing end of things. So far, it's been an even split between people who are just beginning to learn about home recording and people who are interested in learning how to use social media. I'm a former touring musician, I was touring full-time from 2007 to 2012, and most of why I was able to do that was building a strong following via social media and using whatever tools I had to connect with people. I broadened my base enough so I could support my touring career, and Jay has been professionally trained as an audio engineer as a parallel pursuit to his music.

We both have these skill

sets, so we try to share them. We have a record label with a small budget, so we can only support so many musicians on that level, but we want to make the skills we teach accessible to other musicians who may not be signed to the label but can benefit from the workshops we offer.

RD: 2021 has just started, and we're all hoping this year is way better than 2020 because it was a total mess. When it comes to Pitch & Prose as a whole, what do you view as a primary goal for this year?

MM: I think the main goal for this year is just to get it to a point where it's functioning and useful for the artists who work with us. I don't know how much more expanding we'll do with the roster this year, but our release calendar has already been filled out through July, so I definitely want to get a few more projects on the board for the second half of the year. We also want to develop and perfect all of the systems that we have in place, everything from the boring stuff like accounting and taxes to more ambitious stuff like expanding our audience for releases our artists are putting out. Getting recognition and being established locally is important to us as well, which is harder to do with the pandemic.

Once venues start to open up and it's safe for people to gather in public, we want to start to build a presence with local events while partnering with local organizations. We want to spotlight projects, book showcases and do all kinds of things. We have lots of ideas, but with the way things are they're mostly kind of back-end versus what we're focused on now.

To learn more about Pitch & Prose, visit pitchandprose.com, pitchandprose.bandcamp.com or like its Facebook page.

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Opinion

EDITORIAL

Governor's silence is disheartening

Gov. Gina Raimondo deserves a great deal of credit for her handling of the pandemic.

In the earliest and most anxious days of the crisis, she was a strong, steady, reassuring presence helping to guide Rhode Islanders – a marked and most welcome contrast to the unconscionable denialism and lack of leadership coming from the White House.

The governor's administration produced results, too. For some time, Rhode Island stood out nationally as a success story, a place where a decisive response – led by robust public health measures – curbed the spread of the coronavirus and averted worst-case scenarios.

We know well, of course, that the story changed a bit late in 2020. As a new, even stronger COVID-19 surge engulfed the nation, the Ocean State was no longer the positive outlier. Indeed, Rhode Island topped lists of the worst hotspots in the world, its hospitals pushed near the brink as the curve bent upward.

Certainly, a number of factors – some beyond anyone's control – contributed to the reversal in the state's fortunes. The state's population density, its large percentage of older residents, its proximity to major urban centers in Boston and New York – all have made our state particularly vulnerable to the virus throughout the pandemic.

We must also acknowledge the fatigue factor – that after months of social distancing, Rhode Islanders, like all Americans, simply cannot, or will not, maintain the same degree of vigilance.

Fatigue has also been evident in the response of Rhode Islanders to the governor and her messaging on the crisis.

As Raimondo noted from the stage of The Vets in Providence last week, there have been 125 formal COVID-19 briefings since March of 2020 – at one point held daily, then twice weekly, and for some time now, just once a week. Given the sheer amount of time and information involved, it's unreasonable to expect people not to tune out to some degree – not counting those of us in the news media, of course.

But at times, the governor has rightly drawn criticism for the nature of the message itself. For example, we recall the briefing several weeks ago in which she chastised some local school districts for opting to stick with distance learning, using eye-catching language she later sought to soften.

On balance, we feel Rhode Island has been fortunate to have Raimondo in the governor's office during such a trying time. Agree with her decisions or not, she has fully embraced the mantle of leadership while balancing a wide range of priorities and challenges. There have been failures, for sure, but no one would have navigated such circumstances without some shortcomings.

All of this made it most disappointing that the governor, now incoming President Joe Biden's nominee for Secretary of Commerce, has not answered questions since before Christmas. Last week, appearing for the first time alongside her soon-to-be successor, Lt. Gov. Dan McKee, she addressed the media for several minutes – largely touting her own record on the economy – before departing the stage. She left Department of Health Director Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott – who has also shone during the crisis – to answer reporters' questions.

We congratulate the governor for her selection as a member of the Biden administration. As McKee said, it is a point of pride for our state to have a local leader called upon by the president of the United States. We also congratulate McKee, who has a most daunting task ahead.

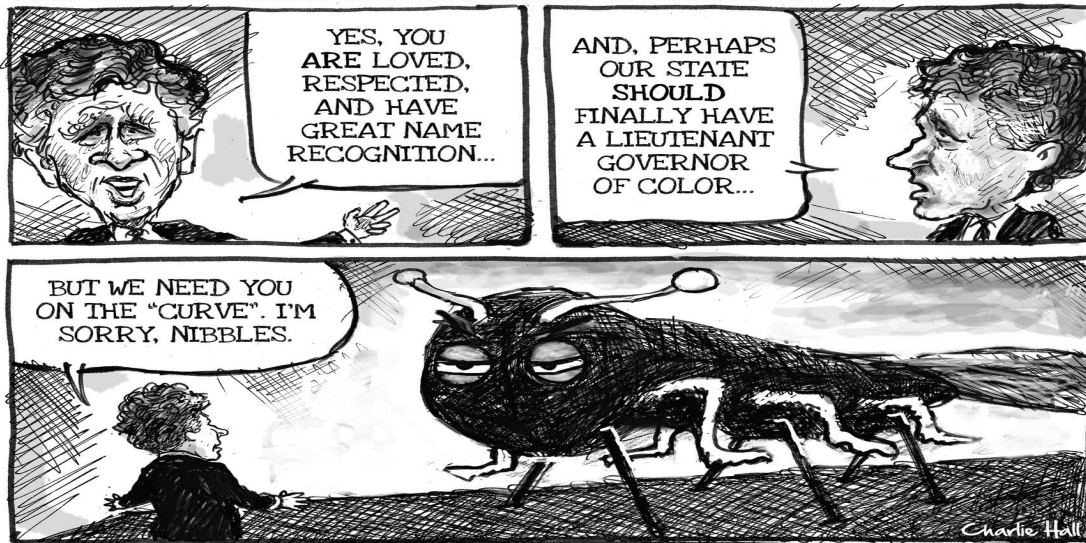
But we find it extremely disheartening, after all Rhode Island has been through, for the governor to go weeks – since Dec. 22 – without taking questions or addressing the people of the state, other than through last week's brief appearance. We understand that perhaps she is operating under the direction of the Biden team. In that case, they should reverse course and correct their mistaken directive.

As James Bessette, president of the Rhode Island Press Association, wrote in a recent statement: "People in our state, since Dec. 22, have still been infected, hospitalized and sadly, died from COVID-19, even with people, thankfully, starting to slowly become vaccinated. Businesses and people are still struggling in Rhode Island, with little clarity on what the future will hold, and elected officials addressing this with the public is crucial."

Perhaps Rhode Islanders are ready for a new voice and a new message. Barring some unforeseen development, they will get just that.

Until then, we hope our current governor breaks her silence. Vaccines and masks may be our weapons against the virus, but it is trust and transparency that bind us together in the fight.

DAN MCKEE'S SEARCH FOR HIS REPLACEMENT CONTINUES...



Save RI's taxpayers a million dollars

Rhode Island politicians love few things more than patronage.

With Gov. Gina Raimondo pursuing her national ambitions and abandoning her recently self-described "massive obligation to the people of Rhode Island," Lt. Gov. Dan McKee will become governor.

The office of lieutenant governor, with a salary of about \$120,000, a staff of seven employees, and a budget of \$1.1 million, will become vacant. Some want the vacancy filed by the Grand Committee, where the House of Representatives would dominate. Others want McKee to choose the next lieutenant governor subject to Senate confirmation. A few suggest a special election.

Meanwhile, an assortment of politicians are seeking the appointment.

Rather than arguing about who should pick the lieutenant governor or who the next lieutenant governor should be, the office of lieutenant governor should be left vacant to save the taxpayers a million dollars during this fiscal crisis. In fact, the office of lieutenant governor should be eliminated.

Over the past century, the office of lieutenant governor was left vacant on numerous occasions. In 1928, it was left vacant for a nearly a year after Lt. Gov. Norman Case became governor upon the death of Gov. Aram Pothier. In 1944, the office was left vacant for about nine months when Lt. Gov. Louis Cappelletti was appointed a Superior Court judge.

In 1945, the office of lieutenant governor was left vacant for over a year after Lt. Gov. John Pastore became governor when Gov. J. Howard McGrath received a federal appointment. In 1956, the office of lieutenant governor was left vacant for about eight months when Lt. Gov. John McKiernan was appointed a Superior Court judge. Keeping the office of lieutenant governor vacant didn't harm Rhode Island then and it won't now.

The office of lieutenant governor has been left vacant so many times because it is nonessential. For much of Rhode Island history, the lieutenant governor was a member of the part-time Senate. After a constitutional amendment was adopted in 1909, the lieutenant governor presided over the Senate.

Return to First Principles



by
STEVE
FRIAS

However, when there was no lieutenant governor, the Senate president pro tempore presided over the Senate. At times, the lieutenant governor did serve on boards or commissions. However, the lieutenant governor's duties were so limited that the lieutenant governor had no staff until about 1941 and was given only a part-time salary until 1973. In fact, during the early 1980s Thomas DiLuglio was able to serve as lieutenant governor despite maintaining a law practice and being frequently absent from the State House.

Today, the lieutenant governor's official duties are even less important. Although the lieutenant governor serves on a handful of advisory boards, the lieutenant governor no longer presides over the Senate because of a constitutional amendment that went into effect in 2003.

The office of Rhode Island lieutenant governor is not only nonessential; it is relatively expensive compared to other states. In a number of states, the lieutenant governor is part-time position with little staff. For example, in Vermont, the lieutenant governor presides over the Senate, but receives only part-time pay and has only one staff member.

In contrast, the Rhode Island lieutenant governor has a salary of over \$120,000 and a staff of seven employees. According to the Council of State Governments, the Rhode Island lieutenant governor is about the 13th highest-paid lieutenant governor in the nation. Also, based on recent information from the National Lieutenant Governors Association, the Rhode Island lieutenant governor's staff appears to be among the largest in the nation.

In the few states where the lieutenant governor does have a larger staff than Rhode Island, it is usually because those lieutenant governors oversee executive

branch agencies or departments. Furthermore, Rhode Island is one of only three states where the lieutenant governor does not preside over the Senate or is not elected with the governor as team. Because the governor and the lieutenant governor do not run as team, there is no expectation that the governor will assign important responsibilities to the lieutenant governor. Therefore, Rhode Island's lieutenant governor does not preside over the Senate, is not customarily assigned important duties by the governor and instead serves as chairman of a few advisory boards. Rhode Island pays too much for an office, which is responsible for so little.

The office of lieutenant governor is an office in search of a purpose. Over time, its purpose usually became serving the ambition of the politician who held the office. For example, Lt. Gov. Richard Licht used the office as springboard to run for U.S. Senate in 1988. Licht sought to more than double the budget his predecessor submitted and have a staff of 11 employees. Afterwards, he ran television advertisements proclaiming himself Rhode Island's first full-time lieutenant governor. Because of such ambitions, a part-time job eventually ended up having a million-dollar budget.

Small businesses are closing. The budget deficit is

over \$500 million. Appointing a new lieutenant governor and spending a million dollars on political patronage is not justifiable.

The most efficient use of taxpayer money would be to eliminate the office of lieutenant governor. Instead, the secretary of state would become the governor's successor, which is the process followed in three other states. If the position is not eliminated, then the governor and lieutenant governor should be elected as a team with the expectation that the governor will assign duties to the lieutenant governor.

Either one of these changes would require a constitutional amendment. If neither change is made, then the best thing to do is elect someone for lieutenant governor who will make the only promise a lieutenant governor actually has the power to fulfill: save the taxpayers a million dollars by not hiring staff and not paying oneself a full-time salary for what is really just a part-time job.

For years, Bob "Cool Moose" Healey campaigned to abolish the office of lieutenant governor. Healey has passed away, but his idea lives on.

Steven Frias is Rhode Island's Republican National Committeeman, a historian, recipient of The Coolidge Prize for Journalism, and former Chairman of the Cranston Charter Review Commission.

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SUN RISE SCOOPS

By MERI R. KENNEDY

Johnston Senior Center offers services

If you need any help with heating, housing etc. during this cold winter or any other time, contact the Johnston Senior Center Social Services Department by calling 944-3343. Madeline or Amy will be happy to help you.

ARTS Scholarships available

Applications are now available at ppacri.org/artsscholarships for the 2021 ARTS Scholarships Program. This year marks the program's 25th anniversary! Since 1996, the program has awarded 700 arts scholarships.

The ARTS Scholarships 2021 program, sponsored by The Textron Charitable Trust and the PPAC Annual Fund Donors with support from WPRI, awards up to \$500 in financial assistance to each of the 30 talented Rhode Island students selected as recipients. Qualified students must be aged 11-14 by June 1, 2021, and reside in and attend school in Rhode Island.

These scholarships offer young artists an opportunity to participate in local summer arts education programs that will broaden

each student's experience in their chosen area of study.

Careers at the zoo

CCAP's "Jump Start" Real Jobs training program will host a workshop on Tuesday, Feb. 9, from 3:15 to 4 p.m. The career industry for the month is Roger Williams Park Zoo, and guest speakers will be presenting to youth about the industry and upcoming free training programs.

Gift cards given to all participants upon completion of the workshop. It will be hosted remotely via Zoom.

Sign up today by calling the Cranston Skills & Youth Center at 525-0869.

Support the Johnston Historical Society

The Johnston Historical Society has T-shirts available for sale in size S, M, L and XL in slate blue, sand and a few in light green.

The society is an all-volunteer organization. Its museum is not staffed but they are happy to open up by appointment for tours and the purchase of T-shirts and copies of books.

Call 231-3380 and leave a message with the color and size you would like. They will call you back to arrange pickup.

Need help with your mortgage?

RI Housing's Hardest Hit Fund Rhode Island (HHFRI) program is offering zero interest, forgivable loans to eligible Rhode Island homeowners who became unemployed or underemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are struggling to make their mortgage payments. Loan proceeds may provide eligible homeowners with up to six months of mortgage payment assistance and a mortgage will be recorded on the homeowner's property.

Learn more about the loan program and eligibility at rihousing.com/hhfri.

Johnston Parks and Recreation Department open for basketball

The Johnston Parks & Recreation Department is currently accepting registrations for its youth basketball program. Please note this season will be different than years past with the COVID guidelines set by the state.

The department plans on holding the program from Jan. 25 to April 5. Space will be limited and will filled on a first come, first served basis for each division.

For registration and additional information, visit johnstonrec.com/youth-basketball.html.

ketball.html.

News from the Mohr Memorial Library

The fine free period for all Rhode Island public libraries has been extended to March 1, 2021. However, if you have overdue books, please bring them back so other patrons can enjoy them.

Zoom-ba coming soon

MS Dream Center will offer virtual Chair ZOOM-ba Program sponsored by Maguire Disability Law with the class being instructed by Michelle Calise.

Classes will be offered nationally on Monday's at 1 p.m. and Saturday's at 11 a.m. for people with MS and their loved ones. There is no fee to participate and classes can accommodate up to 100 on a first come first serve basis.

Please contact Anne at anne@msdreamcenter.org to register for the classes and to complete a signed liability waiver, which is required of all participants.

The MS Dream Center provides a dedicated resource and support facility in which people living with Multiple Sclerosis, and their care partners, may engage in a wide variety of interactive social and educational activities, workshops and therapies. The MS Dream Center goal is to bring awareness to the disease and reach out to those living with it, empowering them and offering important respite opportunities for care partners.

ities, workshops and therapies. The MS Dream Center goal is to bring awareness to the disease and reach out to those living with it, empowering them and offering important respite opportunities for care partners.

Mohr Library extended hours

The Mohr Library has extended its in-library hours to Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., as well as Tuesday and Thursday from 4 to 8 p.m. Mohr Library is now open to the public more hours - Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4 to 8 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The library is putting some of books and videos for kids upstairs in the teen room, and staff will retrieve whatever people want, offer readers advice, and order materials if they aren't there.

Curbside service is still available during normal hours: Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Mask wearing is required and people are asked to maintain physical distance. Members of the public will be admitted as capacity allows.

Teen virtual programming during COVID-19

The Mohr Library is currently offering virtual versions of some of its teen programs as well as drop-in chats. They are all invite-only programs, so please contact the teen librarian at marissa@mohrlibrary.org to register or if you have any questions.

Art Club meets every Tuesday at 3 p.m. History Club meets monthly on the first Wednesday at 3 p.m. Drop-in chat days differ weekly, so please ask when registering.

Did you know?

One of the most influential events in U.S. happened in January.

On Jan. 1, 1892, Ellis Island opened, allowing for the immigration of over 20 million people. (Source: *January Fun Facts*)

SunriseScoops@aol.com. Photos in jpg format are accepted and news can include community events, promotions, academic news and non-profit events. Email today and see your news in our column in the Johnston Sun Rise. Please include a daytime telephone number in case we require any further information.

LEGAL NOTICES

JOHNSTON ZONING BOARD MEETING AGENDA Thursday, January 28th, 2021 at 6:30 PM VIA Video Conference

Via Computer: <https://zoom.us/j/97206424289?pwd=SzREbjA5bGhnaKRT0hRhcCjJ0ZlB3Zz09>

Via Telephone: +1 312 626 6799 or

+1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799

Meeting ID: 972 0642 4289
Passcode: 675182

NOTE: Please check out the "ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS for meetings held via Zoom" on the Town's web page under Meetings & Events. <https://www.townofjohnstonri.com/>

The Johnston Zoning Board of Review will hold its regular monthly meeting on January 28th, 2021 at 6:30 pm, by ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE. Persons interested in the following petitions are encouraged to join the Video Conference. If you require accommodations call the Zoning Office 48 hours in advance of the meeting at (401) 231-4000 ext 4117. Persons utilizing TDD equipment may contact the Town through "Relay Rhode Island" at 1-800-

745-6675. The agenda for the evening will be as follows, subject to change:

Case to be heard at 6:35 PM

File 2020-28 - Petition of Amalgamated Financial Equities X LLC, Owner/Applicant for 1 Commerce Way, AP 44 Lots 397, zoned B-2. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit. Section 340 Attachment 1 - Table of Use Regulations for existing Commercial, Retail, Restaurant, Offices to also include: Urgent Care Medical Clinic Use

Case to be heard at 6:45 PM

File 2021-33 - Petition of Nina Galvin/Matthew Markham, Owner/Applicant for 80 Golden View Drive, AP 43 Lots 98, zoned R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit Section 340 13.2 for installation of ground mounted solar panels (30 Total Panels).

Case to be heard at 6:55 PM

File 2021-34 - Petition of Michael Reid, Owner/Applicant for 114 Pine Hill Avenue, AP 49 Lots 29, zoned R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Dimensional Variance Section 340 and Special Use Permit 13.3 for a Master Suite and an attached In-Law.

Case to be heard at 7:05 PM

File 2021-35 - Petition of James and Robin Nugeness, Owner/Applicant for 21 Gano Street, AP 38 Lots 31, zoned R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Dimensional Variance Section 340 to convert existing deck into a sunroom and extension of deck.

Case to be heard at 7:15 PM

File 2021-36 - Petition of Eahan Akbar and Will Realty, LLC, Owner/Applicant for 1302 Atwood Avenue, AP 44 Lots 50, zoned R-15 & B-1. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit Section 340-75 for a Pharmacy Drive-thru window.

Case to be heard at 7:25 PM

File 2021-37 - Petition of Arthur Carulo, Owner/Applicant for 267 Simonsville Avenue, AP 28 Lots 107, zoned R-20. The petitioner is seeking a Dimensional Variance Section 340 to create an undersized lot.

2021 Zoning Board Election of Officers - Vote Required

NOTE: New items that have not been called for a hearing by 10:30 p.m. may be rescheduled for a subsequent or a special meeting at the discretion of the Board.

Per order of the Zoning Board of Review
Thomas Lopardo, Chairman

1/15, 1/22/21

PLANNING BOARD MEETING Tuesday, February 2nd, 2021; 6:00 P.M. Johnston Senior Center 1291 Hartford Ave. Johnston, RI 02919

Because of COVID-19 and the current executive order, the Planning Board will adhere to the following procedures:

- The applicant must advise the Administrative Officer 24 hours in advance of all individuals attending on the applicant's behalf. The attendee's name and phone number will be required.
- All applications are scheduled for a specific time. All parties are advised that the hearing for a specific case may start later than advertised but in no situation will the application be heard prior to the time posted. If you arrive prior to the case being called, you must wait in your car or outside the senior center and remain socially distant.
- No one will be admitted to the Senior Center until the specific case, for which they are attending the meeting, is called.
- All individuals, upon entering the senior center must register, giving name, address and phone number. Staff will screen all who enter the meeting.
- A face mask must be worn at all times. When a person is recognized to speak, the individual, upon arriving at the podium, may remove the mask to speak to the board. The mask must be put back on before walking away from the podium.
- All individuals must maintain a minimum of six (6) foot social distancing.
- No furniture may be moved by an attendee.

Additionally, the general public may be permitted subject to conditions listed above and subject to maximum allowable space (no more than 34 people total 13 of which are the Board and staff) per Executive Order 20-58. Anyone who is unable to attend the meeting in person or cannot gain access to the Senior Center because the meeting has reached the maximum number of participants, may participate in the meeting electronically as follows:

Via Computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85387804288>
Passcode: 487319

iPhone one-tap: +16465588656 or 85387804288

Via Telephone: +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592

Meeting ID: 853 8780 4288
Passcode: 487319

NOTE: Please check out the "AC-

CESS INSTRUCTIONS for meetings held via Zoom" on the Town's web page under Meetings & Events. <https://www.townofjohnstonri.com/>

OLD BUSINESS

Item 1 - Scheduled for 6:05 PM
Continuation of PB 19-34 - Johnston Center - Zoned B-3. Preliminary Plan and Public Hearing- A public hearing on the proposed development of 2113 Hartford Avenue, AP 54 Lots 34 and 80. The development will consist of five buildings which will be used for retail, office and medical rehabilitation facility.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 2 - Heard at 6:20 PM
PB 21-04 - Cherry Blossom Estates - Master Plan Review of an 8 lot Major Subdivision - Located north of 3 and 5 Granite Street AP 5 Lot 338 - Zoned R-20 - Applicant: Abatecola Realty Association, LLC - Engineer: RA Cataldo & Associates, Inc.
A public meeting on the proposed 8 lot subdivision which will have a public road of at least 700 feet in length and will be served by public water and sewer.

Item 3 - Heard at 6:40 PM
PB 21-03 - Proposed Retail Distribution Facility - Master Plan Review of a Major Land Development with Unified Development Review - Located at 2120 Hartford Avenue AP 54 Lots 39, 40, 42, 54, 61, 75, 89, 90 and 93 - Zoned B-3 - Applicant: Bluewater Property Group - Engineer: DiPrete Engineering.

A public hearing on the Major Land Development and Unified Development Review application to develop a six-story retail distribution facility with a ground floor area of approximately 823,522 square feet, and a total area of approximately 3,864,972 square feet. The applicant is seeking approval of the major land development Master Plan and the granting of dimensional variances from certain provisions of the Zoning Ordinance pursuant to Unified Development Review. The applicant is also requesting waivers from certain requirements of the Land Development & Subdivision Review Regulations.

Planning Board documents are available for review and/or purchase 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Office, 1st floor, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston. New items not heard by 9:30 p.m. may be rescheduled for a subsequent special meeting at the discretion of the Board. Facilities are handicap accessible. Inter-preter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

1/15, 1/22, 1/29/21



We want to hear from you

Johnston has lots of stories and we want to help you share them!

Send your stories and photos to
Jacob Marrocco, Editor
JacobM@rhodybeat.com

johnstonsunrise.net



submissions are not guaranteed to be published

A brother's love

Back in the Day



by
KELLY
SULLIVAN

Nearly 200 people gathered around Pawtuxet Falls, screaming, crying, fainting. It was the afternoon of Dec. 21, 1907, and they would all see something that day which they would never be able to erase from their minds.

Twenty-two-year-old Albert Henry Jackson of East Providence was a member of the Pawtuxet Canoe Club. That morning, he had visited the

clubhouse with his 19-year-old brother, Arthur Edward Jackson, and his friend Earl Penhurst Mathewson, who was also 19.

Albert and Arthur were the sons of Hannah (Clayton), a cotton weaver, and Henry Jackson, who had died 12 years earlier at the age of 47. The boys had a 25-year-old sister Ella and a brother George who they had lost in 1896 at the age of 22.

The three boys decided to take out a canoe that winter afternoon and began paddling slowly downstream. As they approached the Pawtuxet Falls, they allowed the boat to drift a little too close to the edge and, caught in the current, it was pulled over.

The boys were catapulted from the smashed-up canoe and began to yell for help as they floated in the icy river.

Some men on a nearby street heard their cries and rushed to the scene, where they saw Earl being carried down the rapids. One of the men ran to the bridge and threw a rope down, which the boy caught and was pulled to safety by.

Albert had made it onto a flat rock which was submerged in the water just under the falls. Standing there, waist-deep in the river, he was periodically engulfed in the rush of water that poured down. Arthur was suddenly washed up against the rock and Albert grabbed his wrist and pulled him up. He held his younger brother in his arms for the next hour, supporting all the weight of the exhausted boy as the falls pounded down upon them.

A large crowd was now gathering and a rope was thrown out to the brothers. Al-

bert grabbed it and wrapped it around Arthur's body, under his arms. Once it was secured, it took the force of about 50 men on shore to pull Arthur to safety.

A rope was then repeatedly thrown out to Albert and he struggled to catch it but, each time, it was blown out of his reach. Finally, he managed to grab the end and a thunderous cheer rose from the crowd. He shakily tried to encircle his waist with the rope but he couldn't move one of his legs. His foot was stuck inside a crevice and he was unable to pull it out.

Albert gave a weary wave to the men on shore and they pulled the rope, thinking he had secured it to himself. However they watched as the rope slipped from his hand and fell into the rushing water.

Several men climbed into

small boats, rowed to the rock and attempted to remove Albert. The attempts lasted for half an hour before the men were too frozen and exhausted to continue. The boat of one man capsized and a frantic but successful effort was made to pull him back in.

Seeing the danger of heroism, several onlookers physically restrained men who were determined to jump in and save the young store clerk. Helpless, all they could do was watch Albert finally lose consciousness. Then the sound of earth-shattering screams drowned out the rush of the falls. The water was freezing upon Albert's body, an 8-foot tall ice sculpture suddenly entombing the young man.

While those on shore screamed, fainted, shivered and prayed, night dawned and it became obvious that all

anyone could do, after the three-hour ordeal, was return to their homes. The next morning, a Captain Crandall rowed out to the rock and was able to pull the body from its frozen standing position back to dry land. Albert was buried in Pocasset Cemetery in Cranston. His gravestone is etched with the words "Brave, Patient, True."

Earl and Arthur were both taken from the falls to Rhode Island Hospital, suffering from exposure. Arthur later married, moved to Los Angeles and became a sound engineer for a movie studio. He enjoyed a long and prosperous existence, thanks to the brother who loved him more than life itself.

Kelly Sullivan is a Rhode Island columnist, lecturer and author.

McKee

(Continued from page 1)

important, but not a top priority for him compared to responding to the pandemic and improving the economy.

Charles Lombardi, mayor of North Providence and a longtime friend and colleague of McKee, said he thinks the decision should be left to McKee.

"I think you would be more successful in your work as a team," he said.

He added he's not a candidate for the post.

Lombardi has known McKee for over 20 years, and speaks highly of him.

"The constituents that he dealt with daily in the neighborhoods and spoke with, that speaks volumes," he said. "He will bring this

here. He's a great family man. His family values are second to none."

Lombardi believes McKee is the best choice for his constituents in North Providence, since McKee can "relate to the average taxpayer."

Lombardi also said with his personal background in, and strong passion for, small businesses, McKee would maintain a strong focus on helping Rhode Island's businesses through the pandemic. He acknowledged the hurdles the pandemic has presented, especially for minority communities throughout the state.

McKee suggested utilizing rapid tests to help small businesses more accurately gauge the health of their customers and employees.

In addition to the pandemic, a major issue facing

McKee will be putting together a state budget for the coming fiscal year, which he is expected to submit to the General Assembly in March. McKee says he's already met with House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi and Senate President Dominick Ruggerio.

He'll also be faced with balancing a budget, with the state currently facing a projected deficit of roughly \$514 million. McKee didn't give any details or elaborate on whether spending cuts would be in order, but stated he needed to "pin down the number" before confirming.

Last Wednesday, Raimondo publicly criticized Pawtucket schools for choosing to follow a distance-learning model through the end of the school year. While McKee

did not specify if he supported or rejected her actions, he did say that he believes "the local districts should be making the decisions and the state should be supporting those in any way that we can."

McKee expects local districts to consider any information that comes from the state and the Department of Education. McKee highlighted his first-hand experience as a school board member, serving "2,000 students from Pawtucket, Central Falls, Cumberland, and Lincoln."

Vaccinating teachers

McKee was adamant about returning students and teachers to the classroom for in-person learning, stating that "hundreds

of hours of learning time is being lost. Doesn't matter if you're high income, low income, or moderate income. It doesn't matter if you're a minority family, or a non-minority family. It doesn't matter if you go to a district public school or charter school or private school."

One priority for McKee is getting the vaccine to educators, an area in which he believes there should be a stronger strategy.

"In order for us to get the economy back, we have to get the schools back, so that means we certainly have to raise the priority level for teachers and school personnel," he said.

McKee "doesn't expect a major turnover" with Raimondo's current adminis-

tration, instead choosing to sit down in one-on-one meetings with department heads throughout the state to encourage open collaboration.

"They're not going to be strangers to me, and I'm not going to be a stranger to them," he said.

McKee also said he believes "it's time" to legalize recreational marijuana, although didn't elaborate on the regulations. He also said he agrees with Raimondo's current COVID-19 restrictions.

It is unclear when McKee would take office as governor, given that Raimondo must first earn U.S. Senate confirmation and has indicated she will remain in her current post until that occurs. But he's hoping it could happen by mid-February.

Schools

(Continued from page 1)

DiLullo said the district has seen distance learners log on for classes and fail to participate, or they will show up late. He said the virtual setup is not as "structured," and attendance and engagement issues have grown more alarming.

He added that the truancy officer has been actively contacting families whose students are absent from class, performing home visits and investigating why they aren't participating.

"Again, pretty much what we're seeing is because students are home they have a much more relaxed attitude about their classes, and it is unfortunate that the truancy court is not in session because I think that would be very helpful to the students who are not attending as much as they should, but attendance really is in an issue," DiLullo told the Sun Rise. "As I said, we have a truancy officer that keeps on top of that and she's full time and her focus right now is to be back in school."

Coronavirus cases remain low among students in the district, but staffing continues to present a problem. DiLullo said there are still numerous teachers absent for

various health reasons "that make them more susceptible to the virus."

"The good news is most of them are teaching from home so they're teaching virtually," DiLullo said. "We still need to have a substitute teacher in the classroom to monitor the class, but at least the content specialists continue to deliver the instruction and that's important. I think for consistency, for

skill level, that has been helpful that even teachers who are at home for various reasons are teaching their classes from home."

DiLullo said he has started discussing graduation options with his administration, and he doesn't expect large venues to be open and ready to host hundreds of attendees safely by June. He said they continue to examine "alternative cele-

brations," including a parade similar to the one enjoyed by the class of 2020 this past summer.

"Quite frankly, we got a lot of good feedback from last year's graduation in terms of the parade and the video," DiLullo said. "So if, in fact, we're not able to come together in June, we may look to repeat that type of graduation, because the kids really did like it, and it is

the second-best option than being in an auditorium where you can have hundreds of people gathering."

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JANUARY 25



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Obituaries

In your time of need, the *Johnston Sun Rise* will print your loved one's full obituary for a small charge. The paper also places the obituary on our Web site, johnstonsunrise.net.

Should you desire our services, kindly inform your funeral director, or call Sue Howarth at (401) 732-3100 or email sueh@rhodybeat.com for additional information. Obituary prices start at \$50. You may place the obituary in any of our other newspapers for half price. *Thank you.*

“It’s competing against the best version of yourself”

**Graziano
crowned
Miss
Rhode Island
Collegiate
America,
heads to
national event
in June**

CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT:
Allegra Graziano smiles ear to ear as she receives her Miss Rhode Island Collegiate America crown. (Photos courtesy K Garcia Productions)

By
JACOB MARROCO

Johnston’s Allegra Graziano has worn the name of her hometown across her chest during numerous competitions, an enormous source of pride for the 24-year-old perennial pageant participant.

She will get to continue that honor this June when she competes for the Miss Collegiate America title in Little Rock, Arkansas. Graziano was crowned Miss Rhode Island Collegiate America this past November, an event held for the first time in six years. The national event will feature representatives from every state, as well as Canada, Guam and Puerto Rico.

Despite the challenges of completing the competition’s requisite community service goals during a pandemic, Graziano overcame those obstacles for the right to represent her town and state on the big stage.



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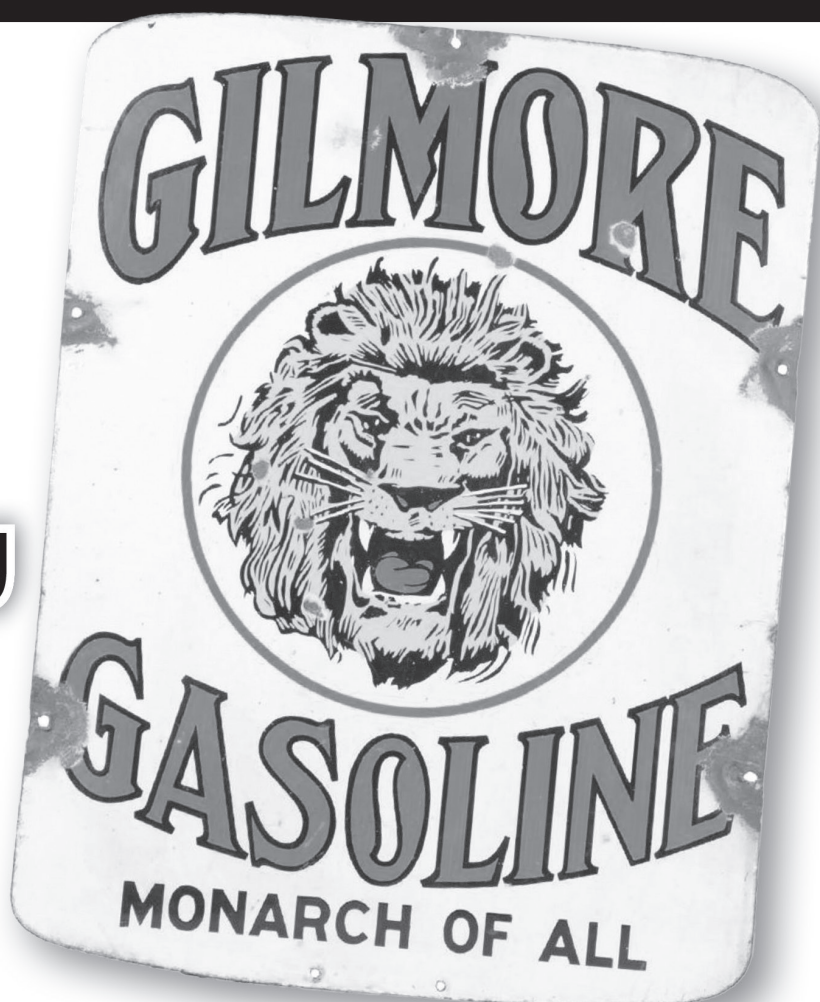
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COLLECTIBLES

“Petroliana” goes hand in hand with automobilia



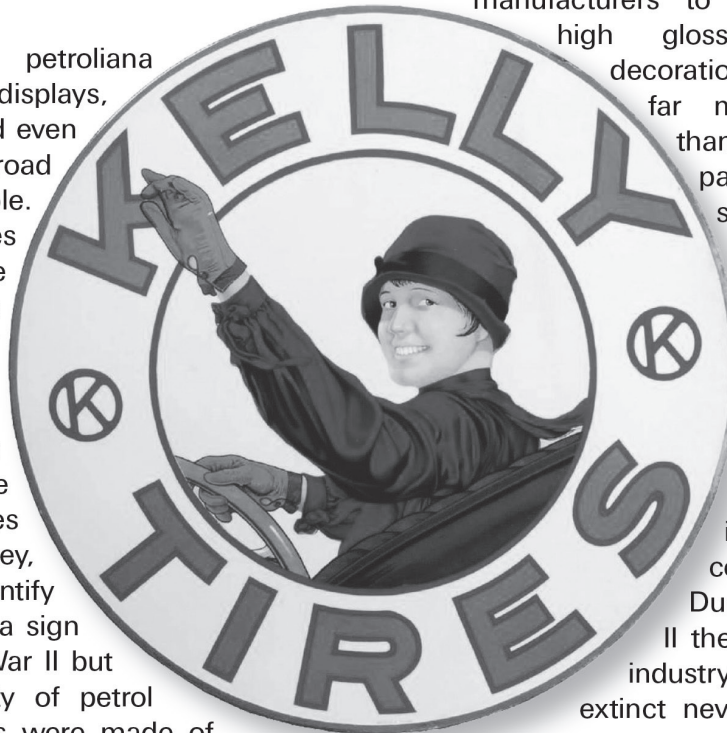
As we learned before in the antiques and auction world one of the hottest collectibles that has been and always will be is automobilia. Everybody loves their car, and when you have the perfect car you want the perfect garage to keep it in. So you might wonder, what does someone decorate their garage with? “Petroliana”, which goes hand in hand with automobilia is the field of collectibles which relates to everything of the petroleum industry. You can't drive your 1970 Corvette without gas, so why wouldn't you want a sign of the iconic Sinclair brontosaurus or Mobil Pegasus.

Within the field of petroliana everything from store displays, gas pumps, oil cans, and even old complimentary road maps can be collectible. But of all the categories within petroliana the one that drives collectors crazy is signage. Now like anything else there are signs worth \$75.00 with other's easily worth \$15,000 or more. The question is what makes the difference. Age is key, and it is very easy to identify once you get to handle a sign or two. Prior to World War II but after 1900, the majority of petrol and oil advertising signs were made of porcelain enamel on rolled iron. These signs



By Travis Landry
Auctioneer & Specialist
Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers
Cranston, RI

were dense and sturdy compared to the original American way of utilizing tin-painted and sand painted wood signage. Originally invented in Europe, the porcelain enamel process allowed manufacturers to create vibrant high gloss polychrome decorations which had far more longevity than traditional paint. A porcelain sign made in 1900 can look as if it were made yesterday if preserved correctly, but the process was very labor intensive and cost prohibitive. During World War II the porcelain sign industry became nearly extinct never returning to favor due to the need of metal



for the war effort. Outside of time passing by, the scrap drives of World War II are the largest contributing factor as to why porcelain signage is so rare today. Post World War II the signage industry transitioned predominately to silk screen printing or paint on tin, as enamel required a sturdier metal making the process obsolete. Today only a handful of porcelain sign manufactures remain, but make limited and commissioned signage for municipal and private parties. Just like animals which formed oil, porcelain petrol advertising is extinct today. So if you're sitting at home and have the vestiges of your Grandfather's Gilmore gas station wanting to cash in, the answer is auction.

Present day the petroliana and advertising market has never been hotter, with new records being set at auction every year. In example, one of the rarest and most iconic signs sought after today is a 42" diameter Kelly Tires sign. On average in near mint condition the sign sells between \$40,000 and \$50,000 with the next one always selling higher than the last. So before you put Grandpa's sign out on the lawn during your next yard sale, make sure to contact a specialist because the sign can be more valuable than the liquid gold it represents.



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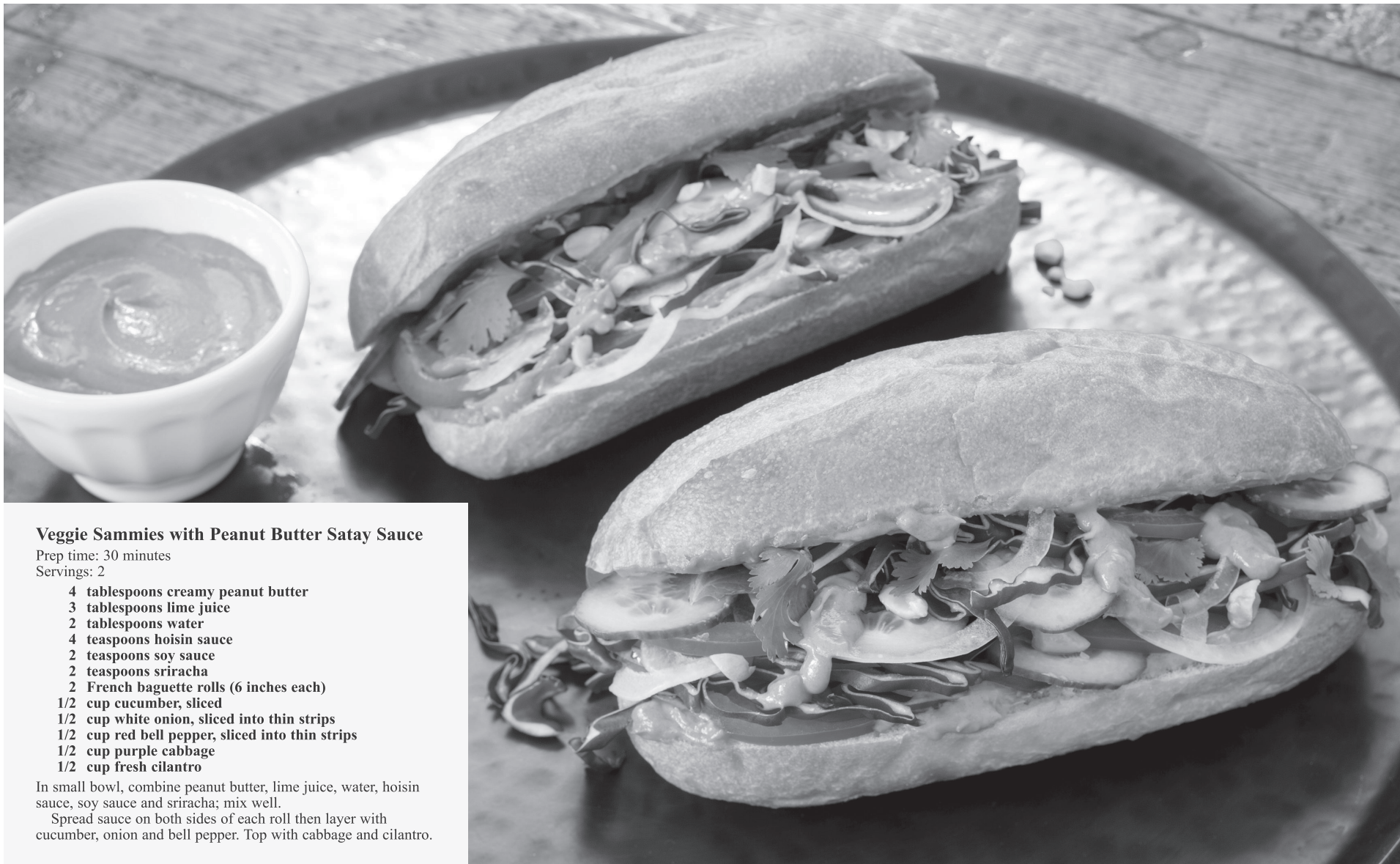


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Power Family Meals with Protein-Packed Peanuts



Veggie Sammies with Peanut Butter Satay Sauce

Prep time: 30 minutes
Servings: 2

- 4 tablespoons creamy peanut butter
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons water
- 4 teaspoons hoisin sauce
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sriracha
- 2 French baguette rolls (6 inches each)
- 1/2 cup cucumber, sliced
- 1/2 cup white onion, sliced into thin strips
- 1/2 cup red bell pepper, sliced into thin strips
- 1/2 cup purple cabbage
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro

In small bowl, combine peanut butter, lime juice, water, hoisin sauce, soy sauce and sriracha; mix well.

Spread sauce on both sides of each roll then layer with cucumber, onion and bell pepper. Top with cabbage and cilantro.

Veggie Sammies with Peanut Butter Satay Sauce

FAMILY FEATURES

Starting fresh with a new year is a chance to hit the reset button for many people, and your family can use this opportunity to rethink homemade meals while striving for nutritious (and still delicious) dishes. From snacks to the main course each evening, the options are nearly endless for planning a revamped menu with healthier ingredients.

Dinnertime can be a cinch with Peanut Butter Chicken, a simple dish that takes less than 20 minutes to make when busy evenings call for a quick solution. If a veggie-based option aligns better with your family's desires, try Veggie Sammies with Peanut Butter Satay Sauce or go full-on comfort food with Very Vegan Peanut Butter Jackfruit Chili. Snacking doesn't have to mean forgoing your dedication to nutritious choices either – these Peanut Granola Bars can be your made-at-home masterpiece for adults and children to enjoy.

These recipes from the Georgia Peanut Commission are powered by peanuts, a nutrient-rich superfood that delivers 19 vitamins and 7 grams of protein per serving for a health benefit punch in each bite.

Discover more nutritious recipe ideas at gapeanuts.com.



Very Vegan Peanut Butter Jackfruit Chili

Very Vegan Peanut Butter Jackfruit Chili

Recipe courtesy of the National Peanut Board
Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 35 minutes
Servings: 8

- 2 teaspoons oil
- 1/2 large white onion, chopped
- 1/2 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 can crushed tomatoes
- 1 can whole tomatoes
- 2 cups water
- 1 can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can green jackfruit, drained and chopped
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- cornbread (optional)
- tortilla chips (optional)
- cinnamon rolls (optional)

Heat large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add oil, onion and peppers; cook 3 minutes, stirring often. Add garlic, salt, cumin, chili powder and tomato paste, stirring to coat. Cook 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly, then stir in crushed tomatoes, whole tomatoes, water, kidney beans and jackfruit; bring to boil then reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer 25-30 minutes. Stir in peanut butter and simmer 5 minutes.

Serve with cornbread, tortilla chips or cinnamon rolls, if desired.



Peanut Granola Bars

Peanut Granola Bars

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 6 minutes, plus 30-45 minutes cooling time
Servings: 12-14

- 1/2 cup honey
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups rolled oats (quick or regular)
- 1 cup bran flakes
- 1 cup sweetened coconut flakes
- 1 cup dried fruit (raisins, blueberries or cranberries)
- 1 cup roasted peanuts, chopped

In large, shallow, microwavable dish, combine honey, butter, peanut butter, brown sugar, vanilla and salt. Microwave at 50% power 2 minutes then whisk to combine and microwave at 50% power 2 minutes.

Add oats, bran flakes, coconut flakes, dried fruit and peanuts; stir to combine. Microwave on high 1 minute. Stir and microwave 30 seconds.

Press mixture into 13-by-9-inch baking dish lined with parchment or wax paper with some extra hanging over edges to easily lift bars out. Use bottom of glass wrapped with plastic wrap to press granola mixture firmly into pan. Allow to cool completely 30-45 minutes. Cut into 12-14 bars.



Peanut Butter Chicken

Peanut Butter Chicken

Recipe courtesy of "UnsophisticCook"
Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 12 minutes
Yield: 6 cups

- Peanut Sauce:**
 - 1/2 cup creamy natural peanut butter
 - 3 tablespoons sweet red chili sauce
 - 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon soy sauce
 - 1 tablespoon honey
 - 1/8-1/4 cup hot water (optional)
 - chopped unsalted roasted peanuts (optional)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or avocado oil
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, diced into 1-inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 3/4 cup peanut sauce
- cooked brown rice
- assorted bell peppers, sliced
- chopped unsalted roasted peanuts (optional)

To make peanut sauce: In small glass bowl, whisk peanut butter, sweet red chili sauce, apple cider vinegar, soy sauce and honey until blended smoothly.

Thin sauce with hot water to desired consistency. Garnish with chopped unsalted roasted peanuts, if desired.

To make chicken: In large skillet over medium-high heat, drizzle oil. Add diced chicken then pour soy sauce over top. Saute about 10-12 minutes until chicken is fully cooked.

Serve with peanut sauce, brown rice and colorful sliced veggies. Garnish with chopped unsalted roasted peanuts, if desired.

spotlight ON BUSINESS

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By JENNIFER COATES

Winter in New England has been a mix of both sunshine and rain, with little snow to speak of. While there are still months to go before we will see the crocuses peek up through the winter's thaw, we can still rejoice in the color and beauty that surround us every day – even, and especially, in the middle of a pandemic!

John Dick, a longtime florist and the owner of Atwood Florist in Johnston, is one of those people who brings color and beauty into homes, chapels, meetinghouses, businesses ~ wherever people are in need of some sunshine in the middle of winter. His bright and cheerful shop on Atwood Avenue is home to flowers, flowers, and more flowers ~ colorful flowers that bring joy to every space and that lighten every mood. This is where John works his magic every season and for every occasion.

As Valentine's Day approaches, John has created an extra special way to bring color back to this otherwise monochromatic time of year while at the same time keeping the "crafter" inside of every one of us busy. Think DIY Valentine's Day Heart Wreaths! Think roses, Cupids, hearts, X's & O's, teddy bears and everything romantic!

With tight Covid restrictions in place, John has had to postpone his planned "Second Annual Wreath Making" classes, but he has arranged for eager crafters to make their wreaths at home with his complete wreath-making kits. The kits contain everything you need to make one of these beautiful and custom-made creations. There are two options to choose from.

The first option is a playful tulle wreath with a heart-shaped Styrofoam base and lots and lots of tulle! Pink tulle! Red tulle!



Call today to get your DIY Valentine Wreath-making kit from Atwood Florist. The kit comes with everything you need to satisfy your craving to craft and to decorate your home at this wintery time of year. The kits can be delivered or are available to pick up. Call 274-7300 today!

Romantic and flirty tulle! You can embellish these gorgeous wreaths with a selection of sweet accent pieces that John has provided. (No glue is needed) (\$30)

The second option is a heart-shaped wreath made of mossy grapevine to be decorated with silk roses, ribbons, pearls, and more accent pieces (and a healthy dose of hot glue!) Each wreath is a visual masterpiece that you can proudly say you made all by yourself! (\$40)

Both wreaths are 20" tall and 2" thick ~ they are truly statement pieces that will beautify the décor in your home. Give John a call today to order one of your kits so you can enjoy

your wreath all winter long ~ they are available for pickup OR delivery!

In addition to these festive wreaths, don't forget your loved ones on February 14th. Call today to order your floral bouquet and show your loved ones how much you care.

Atwood Florist is located at 1041 Atwood Avenue in Johnston. Call John Dick at 401-274-7300, visit the website at www.atwoodflorist.com, or follow Atwood Florist on Facebook. They are open Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm and Saturdays from 9:00am - 2:00pm.

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5 Ways to Design with Authentic Materials

FAMILY FEATURES

Creating a welcoming and relaxing space may be easier than you expect when you give natural materials a leading role in your design. Elements like natural stone, wood, fiber, metals and even plant life can allow you to express a sense of unique personal style that is broadly appealing.

Most inviting rooms share one quality: ample natural light, which creates a subtly vibrant and energetic ambiance. Other aspects of an enticing design may be less obvious to the casual observer. Special touches like custom craftsmanship lend a special aesthetic to furnishings and decor, and bring authenticity to your home.

Similarly, items that are made in America using an artisanal approach can elevate the character of a room when compared to things that are mass manufactured. For example, choose a single piece of artwork from a talented artist rather than multiple pieces of mass-produced art from a retailer.

You can incorporate natural and hand-crafted materials into your spaces in countless ways, but these ideas can be achieved regardless of what your budget may be.

Natural Stone: When many people think about designing with stone, features like countertops or flooring come to mind. Incorporating stone in more unexpected ways can make an even bigger impression. You might choose a coffee table or end tables that are made of stone or feature stone accents. Accessorizing with stone also introduces an earthy appeal; think agate bookends or decorative items like sculptures.

Hardwood Flooring: The floor is often the largest design element of a room, so utilizing authentic materials for your flooring makes a strong statement about the overall tone and feel of the room. An artisan-crafted hardwood flooring option like Carlisle Wide Plank Floors is crafted individually - one board at a time - so the emphasis is on the natural beauty of the wood. You can choose a completely custom look, from wood species and grade to texture and color, or make your selection from a collection of popular tried-and-true finishes.

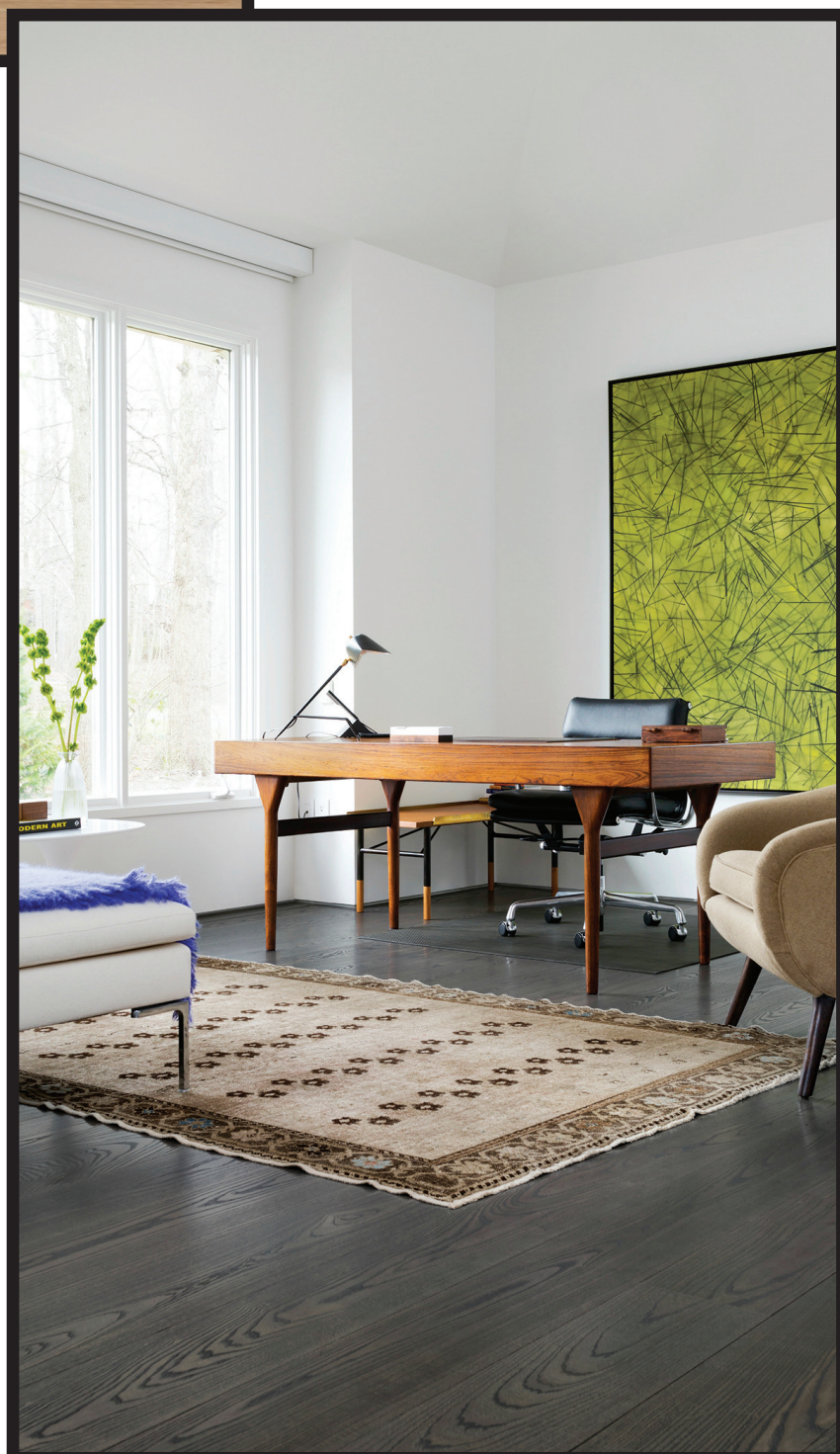
Natural Fiber Textiles: Careful attention to detail is important for a cohesive design, so be sure to keep thinking natural when selecting textiles. Linen and rough cotton fabrics bring distinctive textures that maintain an organic vibe. Natural textiles can also be quite durable, making them practical selections for often-used spaces. Elements to consider include window treatments, fabric components of any furnishings and accents like pillows or throws. Jute or wool rugs and textile artwork may also work well with this motif.

Plant Life: Vegetation is a central element to landscape design, so when your goal is to create an inviting indoor space with a connection to nature and the outdoors, it makes sense to incorporate plants as part of your design. Options vary greatly, so it may take some work to narrow your selections. If the rest of your space reflects a specific region, choose plants native to that area. You'll also want to consider lighting and watering requirements as well as the level of care you're able to dedicate.

Metals: Adding metallic components like iron, copper, gold or silver to your space can bring everything from an edgy style to graceful beauty. While furnishings and accessories are common ways to incorporate metallic flair, also think in terms of lighting and hard features like railing spindles and window treatments.

Get inspired with more ideas to create an inviting, authentic space at wideplankflooring.com.

Source: Carlisle Wide Plank Floors





GETTY IMAGES

5 Ways to Make Your Home Eco-Friendly

FAMILY FEATURES

An earth-friendly approach to your home isn't just good for the environment. Making minor adjustments with sustainability in mind can enhance your enjoyment and comfort while reducing expenses related to energy consumption.

Harness the sun's rays. There's a reason bright rooms with plenty of natural light tend to be warmer: that light carries heat. Although the effect is less in the winter than in the summer months due to the sun's position in relation to the earth, those rays can help warm a room. Throw back the curtains and let the light stream in. Not only will you capture some natural warmth, a bright, airy room requires less electric light, so you'll save on electricity, too.

Swap out cleaning products. While daily cleaners are often top of mind when considering your health and the environment, don't overlook other types of cleaners, such as your laundry detergent. An option like all Free Clear Pure Liquid Detergent is 99% bio-based and provides a plant-based clean. It's hypo-allergenic, which makes it a good option for sensitive skin, and is from the makers of the No. 1 recommended detergent brand by dermatologists, allergists and pediatricians for sensitive skin. Learn more at all-laundry.com.

Get smart about technology. Not only do smart devices add convenience to your home, they can be highly effective tools for helping manage energy usage. Programmable thermostats are especially useful because you can set them

to automatically adjust temperatures when you're away from home, but other devices like smart lights can also be programmed to recognize motion or adjust at certain times of day to reduce energy consumption in unused spaces.

Manage water usage. Many people don't realize how much water they're wasting at home. Consider that the Environmental Protection Agency estimates about 30% of each household's water goes to the toilet and chances are good you're literally flushing away that natural resource. Manage your water usage by only running full loads of dishes and laundry, eliminating leaks, reducing shower times and switching to a low-flow or other eco-friendly toilet.

Improve air quality. It may not be the first thing you think of when it comes to clean air, but your flooring plays an important role in your home's air quality. In addition to improving ventilation and opening windows for natural air circulation, you can take other steps to naturally boost your air quality without relying on energy-dependent filtration systems. The carpet in your home can contribute to poor air quality, so be sure to vacuum frequently to minimize dust, dander and other allergens.

Simple adjustments can make a big impact on the earth and your monthly energy expenses. Start with an audit of your home so you can begin taking steps toward an eco-friendly environment.

Source: all

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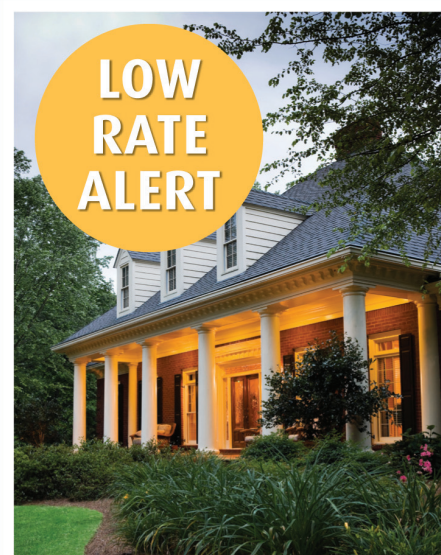
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Did you know?

Investing in a home renovation project not only requires money, but also time and patience. While contractors, architects and designers can estimate how long a project may take, it is impossible to anticipate all of the scenarios that can affect that estimated timeline. Information from the real estate firm Keller Williams indicates an average kitchen remodel involving installation of new countertops, cabinets, appliances, and floors can take three to six months. But if ductwork, plumbing or wiring must be addressed, the job may take longer. A midline bathroom remodel may take two to three months. Adding a room to a house can take a month or two. The home improvement resource Renovation Junkies offers similar estimates, with the average home renovation taking between four and eight months. Homeowners need to consider time when planning their home projects. METRO



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Sports

RIIL sports to begin on Friday

By ALEX SPONSELLER

On Wednesday, the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Rhode Island Interscholastic League announced that the high school winter sports season would

be cleared for inter-school competition on Friday.

The original schedule was set to begin on Friday, Jan. 15, but was pushed back while the league awaited to receive clearance. Now, schools will be allowed to compete

starting Friday, except for boys and girls basketball, which will be waiting until Saturday due to scheduling conflicts with officials.

"Most importantly, we're excited for our kids and for these athletes for this year to be able to have

this opportunity. It has been a long haul for all of us, I want to give a huge credit to our schools because they have to implement all of these safety protocols and they have to do the work to make sure the environment is safe for kids.

"We're just trying to do everything we can to support our schools," said RIIL Executive Director Mike Lunney at a press conference on Wednesday.

Due to the late start, the end of

RIIL- PAGE 22



TIPPING OFF: Johnston's Hunter Remington. (Photos by Ryan D. Murray)

Panthers ready for DII

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Johnston boys basketball team enjoyed a big year last season, reaching overtime of the Division III Championship while being led by a large

senior core.

Although new Panthers will have to step into larger roles in 2021, they are not short on experience or talent and have an even greater challenge ahead as they move up to Division II.

Not only will the starting lineup be a bit different, but so will the coaching staff, as interim head coach Mark Livingston and his assistant Mike

PANTHERS- PAGE 21

What a great sports area

The Rhode Island baseball community lost one of its greats recently, as Mario Pagano of Cranston passed away at 77 years old. His claim to fame was being one of the best high school athletes in the history of the city then going on to pitch for the Boston Red Sox farm system for six years. He was inducted into the Cranston Athletic Hall of fame.

In the past few months, this city has lost a handful of great former athletes. If you have been keeping up with the *Herald*, I am sure you have seen many of the stories.

First off, my condolences to the Pagano family. I never knew him personally, but from speaking with his family, I admired how invested he was in his children and grandchildren. It is one of those heartwarming stories of a man passing down his love of sports to his family behind him and making a long-lasting tradition.

Receiving first-hand knowledge from a former pro is invaluable, so I am sure that his loved ones will carry on his athletic legacy wonderfully, while remembering him as the ultimate family man.

When thinking back on

My pitch



by
ALEX SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR

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RHODYBEAT.COM

the different deaths that have occurred recently, the first thing that I felt was sadness. Reporting on these stories is never easy, you always feel for those close to the subjects.

But something else hit me, though.

I look back at the impact of these individuals, the successes that they have had, the memories that they have made and been a part of. Cranston has a truly incredible athletic history, one that is understated.

This state has such a rich sports history, and although I am always sad to report these types of stories, it does make me feel fortunate to cover athletics in such a sports-driven place. Rhody loves its sports and celebrates them with passion. As a sports

PITCH- PAGE 22

Baseball legend Pagano passes

Former pitcher leaves legacy of greatness in Rhode Island

By ALEX SPONSELLER

Cranston sports legend Mario Pagano passed away recently at the age of 77.

Pagano was one of the most prolific athletes to come out of Cranston. He was a three-sport athlete at Cranston High School, playing baseball, basketball, and quarterback for the football team.

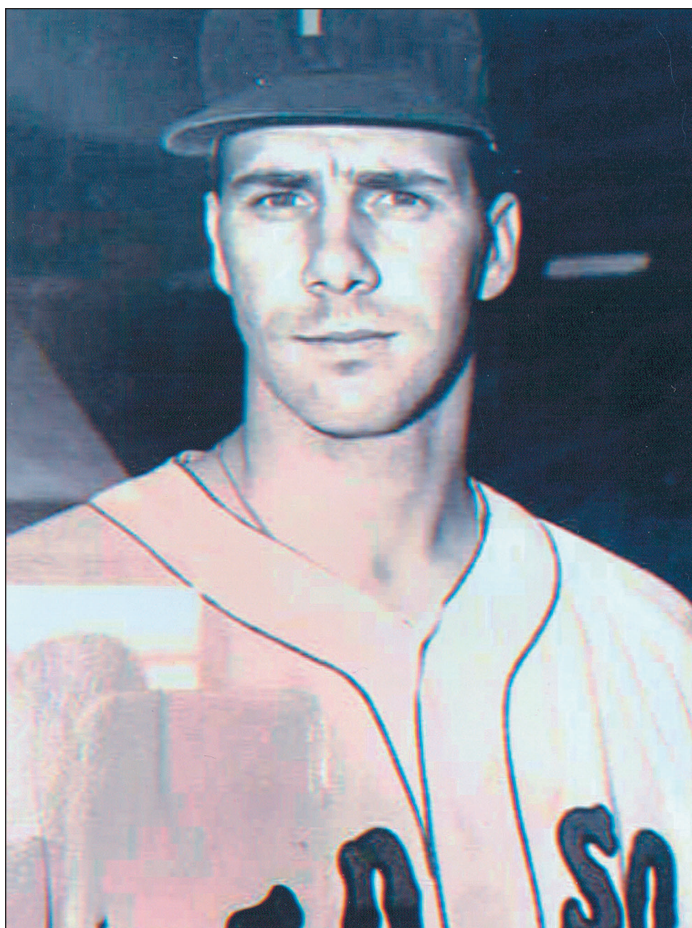
In 1961, during his senior season, Pagano broke the state record by recording 30 strikeouts in a game that lasted 15 innings. He would later be inducted to the Cranston Athletics Hall of Fame.

After his graduation in 1961, he went on to be drafted by the Boston Red Sox and competed in the farm system for six years.

As a young pitcher, he competed against many greats and got to know Red Sox legends like Tony Conigliaro and George Scott. In 1964, he recorded a 14-7 record and was considered to be one of the top pitching prospects in the organization. However, he was called to serve in the National Guard which forced him to put his baseball career on hold prior to making the trip to spring training.

"He came from a very athletic family and a great background in the Red Sox

PAGANO- PAGE 21



LEAVING A LEGACY: Mario Pagano (pictured at left) during his playing days in the Boston Red Sox farm system. Pagano recently passed away at 77 years old, and leaves a legacy of athletic success that is being carried on by his children and grandchildren. Pagano was a three-sport athlete for Cranston High School in 1961, and went on to be inducted into the Cranston Athletic Hall of Fame while enjoying a six-year career in the minor leagues as a pitcher. (Submitted photos)



LEADING THE WAY: Johnston forward Thomas Zednik.

■ Panthers

(Continued from page 20)

Bedrosian get set to lead the way.

"The coaching change is not a big one, I've been here for the past five years and Mike has been coaching at the middle school as well as helping with varsity last year. The main thing with the coaching last year, after Dan (Mazzulla) passed away we were able to retain a lot of the staff. For the most part, we try to run the same program from the middle school through varsity. We're going to try to keep the culture the same and the way we play the same," said Livingston.

Returning players include forward Thomas Zednik, who emerged as one of the top players in the division last season.

"Thomas is hungry, and with football being cancelled this may be his only season this year. He's going to be a leader this year, he has shown that in practice, he has helped the younger kids. He has been catching them up to speed. We expect him to have a big year," said Livingston.

Filling out the other starting spots will be Hunter Remington as well as Justin and Derek Salvatore.

"They definitely got a lot of experience playing deep into the playoffs last year, they

got to play in big crowds and that will carry over into the year. These guys are definitely going to take that experience into this year," said Bedrosian of the team's readiness to take on this upcoming season.

Like other schools, scouting and day-to-day preparation will be tough considering the ongoing pandemic and the restrictions that it has forced, as well as the regular schedule changes. Despite this, Bedrosian feels that there could be some benefits as well.

"The scouting may be a little bit easier this year since everything will be on tape, we'll be able to watch everything. We won't be able to do much classroom work, but the kids will be able to go home and watch what we're up against," Bedrosian said.

As the season gets set to tip off this weekend, Livingston hopes to see his club play with a chip on its shoulder and embrace the underdog mentality.

"The biggest challenge will be to play consistently," said Livingston. "The talent will be better from top to bottom and we aren't going to have a night off this year. I actually like them feeling like (they're underdogs), having them think that they're overlooked coming up from DIII, I think that will help them keep that edge day in and day out."

■ Pagano

(Continued from page 20)

(organization). He roomed with some famous ball players like Tony Conigliaro, he met some pretty great people. There were a lot of great memories," said his brother, Anthony, of his time with the Red Sox.

After six years in pro baseball, Pagano retired and returned back to Rhode Island. From there, he would work in the automobile industry in finance and continued to stay active playing slow pitch softball. He taught his children the game, who went on to teach their own kids. In his later years, Pagano's passion became watching his grandchildren competing in their sports.

"He was very popular in Cranston and he was a hell of a ball player. He and the broth-

ers were all great athletes. After he retired, he continued to play sports, he played a lot of slow pitch softball oftentimes with other great former baseball players in the area. I can't tell you the number of teams he played for. He just loved the sport, and now his kids and grandkids are playing and are good players," said Anthony.

Pagano spent the last two decades in Billerica, Mass. However, he made sure to make the trip to watch his grandkids play, and loved every minute of it.

"It was very special to him, his bond with his children and his grandchildren. He never bragged about himself, but he was always bragging about his grandchildren," said Anthony. "He went to all their games, he didn't live close by but he made sure he would get to all of their games. He was just a real good person all-around, very humble."

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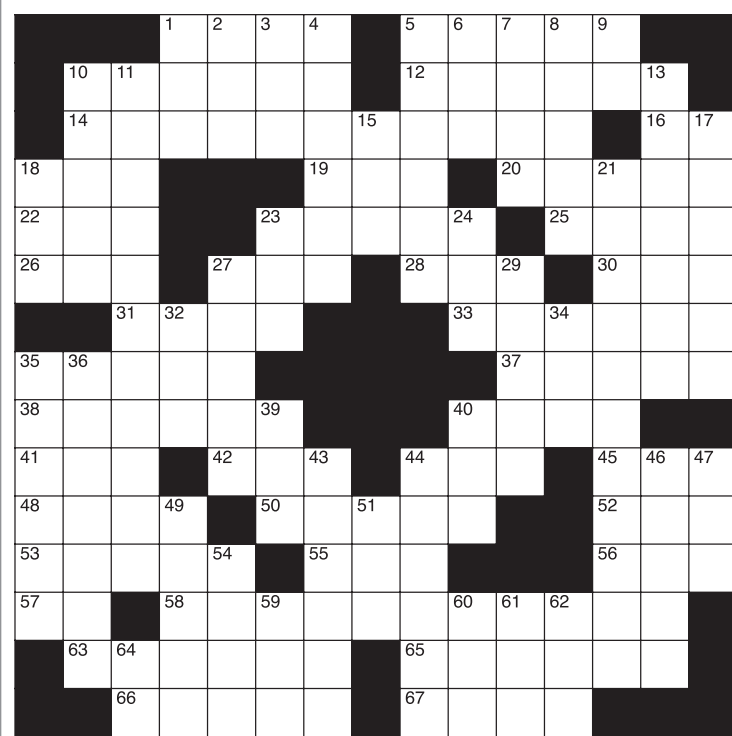
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
5. 2014 Winter Olympics host
10. Soft fabric
12. Covered in flowers
14. Works at a college or university
16. Keeps us cool
18. Corpuscule count (abbr.)
19. Similar
20. Birthplace of Muhammad
22. They ___
23. Preamble to a book
25. Southern China people
26. Hair product
27. The woman
28. Partner to cheese
30. One point north of due east
31. Round Dutch cheese
33. Be in awe of
35. Christmas song
37. Emits coherent radiation
38. Something that is comparable to another
40. Monetary unit
41. The cutting part of a drill
42. Resinlike substance secreted by certain insects
44. Touch lightly

CLUES DOWN

1. Nowhere to be found (abbr.)
2. Not new
3. Brew
4. Stain with mud
5. Chief or leader
6. Luke Skywalker's mentor ___-Wan
7. Type of sauce
8. Sharpens
9. Priestess loved by Zeus
10. Jean Henri ___, French entomologist
11. Regulates supply of fuel
13. Disturbing and horrifying
15. Equal (prefix)
17. Hosts film festival
18. Tattered piece of clothing
21. Rich desserts
23. Unique motor (abbr.)
24. Disfigure
27. Chemical substance
29. Slang for famous person
32. Department of Labor
34. The A-team rode around in one
35. Beach cabin
36. Living things
39. Gun (slang)
40. Disconsolate
43. Stroke gently
44. Actress Richards
46. "Cletus Hogg" actor
47. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
49. Brazilian mountain range
51. Upset
54. One with supernatural insight
59. Insecticide
60. Taxi
61. "Much ___ about nothing"
62. Cannister
64. Popular clothing retailer

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RIIL

(Continued from page 20)

the season will be pushed back until Feb. 28, except for hockey, which is expected to conclude within a week of that date. The league is eyeing postseason tournaments for all sports as well as state championships. Basketball will only be holding divisional championships.

As for fans, schools will not be permitted to allow spectators at games, however, public arenas will

be in charge of making that decision in conjunction with the host schools.

"Our principals committee made a policy that said that there are no spectators on on-campus gymnasiums, and for all off-campus ice rinks and arenas, we're going to leave it up to those facilities and schools to make the call to allow spectators," said Lunney.

Other items mentioned during the press conference were testing of athletes as well as live streaming of events. Although the state will not be requiring COVID testing, it is

urging schools to go through weekly testing throughout the winter. Many schools have already adopted the policy.

The RIIL is also recommending schools to livestream events as much as possible to provide fans with the ability to view and to lessen attendance at games.

As for the third season - which is supposed to include football, volleyball and wrestling - the RIIL is still hoping to begin things in the final week of February, but states that the schedule is still fluid and could

change due to the projected overlap. Football and wrestling have still not been cleared to play based on their category as high risk sports.

"We've stated all along that our intention is to offer every sport this year, we've got some challenges ahead to do that but that's our intent. What we're going to be doing now is taking a look at where we are at as a starting point, making this a meaningful season for those kids, then looking forward to the rest of the school year," said Lunney.

Lunney added: "In a normal year,

we give these opportunities to kids because it's an extension of their educational experience. From a mental health standpoint, kids have been cooped up in their house, they have been through pauses, have been through seasons that have been interrupted, quarantined, that affects kids in many different ways. It's the connection to school and being involved in those school activities that benefit them in the long run. These opportunities are once in a lifetime."

Pitch

(Continued from page 20)

journalist, that's so inspiring.

Things will be different in the local hockey landscape this winter as the Pilgrim and Toll Gate boys teams are joining forces and creating a co-op.

This will be the third co-op in Warwick, with girls hockey and gymnastics being the others. Let me take a moment to give you my thoughts on the transaction and what it means moving forward.

First off, I think this is a great thing for the city. It has been fairly well received to this point, as it should be. Without these two teams banding together, they may not have been able to have a team at all. Toll Gate's numbers were better than Pilgrim's, but neither team had great depth in numbers and each appeared to be only a season or two away from being in real danger.

So, from just a black and white, straightforward perspective, we have to be happy with this decision because we ultimately did not have any other choice.

Pilgrim was down to an estimated 11 kids ... 11 kids. When I was first told that number, I was shocked.

I knew that the team's numbers were trending down and that private schools and prep programs were snagging kids away left and right. But, especially considering

how much success this team has had, I had no idea what it had become endangered to that extent. I couldn't believe it.

There is no way that you can comfortably dress a varsity program with 11 kids. The kids would be run into the ground by midseason, there would be virtually zero room for injury, and considering the ongoing pandemic, it would have been near impossible to have a hockey program with 11 kids.

Even Toll Gate, the numbers weren't great, and if they were, they would have been able to have a junior varsity program as well. This wasn't a situation where one team was totally fine and was forced to inherit another. Each team needed each other at the end of the day.

Let's start with the negatives.

Of course, this is an inner-city rivalry which will now be caput. I have to admit, though, as much as I usually love the Pilgrim-Toll Gate rivalries, hockey just didn't seem to burn as hot as some of the other sports. Between the two schools being in different divisions and only playing in non-league action, it was more ceremonial than meaningful.

Don't get me wrong, give me a rivalry no matter how you chop it up. With this specific sport, though, I am not terribly disappointed to see the rivalry go.

The other issue is also the merging of players and coaches.

Peter Stringfellow (Toll Gate's coach) and Mike Boyajian Sr. (Pilgrim's coach) have been assigned as co-head coaches. In some, if not most situations, having two leaders can spell trouble. However, there seems to be a mutual respect between the two in the early going. Neither was slighted in the decision, it is what it is and I think they both recognize that and are trying to make the most of it. I'm sure each brings some fresh perspective to the other as well.

As for the kids, many of them know each other through living in the same city, competing against each other, or even playing on travel or youth programs together. From what I have been told, the kids have been gelling nicely and are ready to share a bench.

However, let's be real here.

At some point this season, there will come a time when one of these guys is going to have to take control and the other will have to concede some power. When that time comes, how will each react? I honestly believe that two head coaches can co-exist and have success, but there will be a dynamic in play.

Also, there will be a dynamic with the kids.

What is going to happen when Boyajian gives the Toll Gate player minutes over one of "his guys" and vice versa? What will happen when Stringfellow gets on a Pilgrim player more than one

of "his guys." Once again, I do believe that this arrangement is going to work and things will be just fine, I am just saying that I do believe that this team will need to be prepared for that in the early going.

Once again, let's be real here.

This is high school hockey. No one's job and livelihood is at stake, it's ultimately supposed to be for fun. Especially with the times we're in, more than ever, this should be all about giving the kids a chance to compete and enjoy themselves while playing their sport.

I don't expect there to be much headache or controversy because every single person - coaches and athletes - is there for the same reason: To play the game and have fun doing it.

At the end of the day though, we're all human, and ego will likely come into play at some point.

Now, the positives.

Other than the fact that it ensures that kids will be able to play, I do think the added depth will pay dividends across the board.

Kids will be able to be rested and it will also make practices more competitive with kids fighting for minutes. Iron sharpens iron.

Not only that, but it will also give the coaches more bodies, more skillsets to work with, and will only make the team more versatile in its approach and what it can do. I just think that each team is better off in

the long run when it comes to success on the ice.

Then there's the junior varsity program which is debuting this season as well.

Hockey is a tough sport. It's not a sport where you can just lace up the skates and hit the ice right away. It takes time, experience, practice to truly be able to compete at the high school level.

Think about how tough it would be as a freshman with limited experience having to go against seniors with four years under their belt? Not only would it be overwhelming, it would be dangerous. Only the best players can make that leap.

The introduction of a junior varsity program will keep the less experienced kids safe while also allowing them to get their feet wet in the sport before being fed to the wolves. Having that stability will also help the varsity team succeed, because it will limit the number of underclassmen that will need to be relied on to make an impact. They can take their time, learn the ropes, and be ready to go as sophomores or juniors.

There are pros and cons with this whole situation, no doubt. But at the end of the day, kids will now get to play hockey worry-free moving forward and be safer in doing so. The trending numbers are still concerning, but at least this solution will provide the city with some stability for the time being.

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Angler input on nation's fishing law requested

No Fluke



BY CAPTAIN
DAVE MONTI

Last month United States Congressmen Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael), Chair of the Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee, and Ed Case (D-Honolulu), subcommittee member introduced a discussion draft of a bill to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), the primary fishing law of this nation. The discussion draft addresses climate change impacts on fishing as well as other important fisheries conservation issues. Angler and fishing industry input on the discussion draft has been requested by Jan. 31, 2021. The plan is to receive input on the discussion draft and then introduce a revised bill.

Overall the bill is very good for fish, fishermen and habitat. It is the most comprehensive bill of its type I have seen in recent years and is badly needed to make this nation's fishery climate ready. This weekend I took the time to review the bill and pull out some key issues that I believe greatly impact anglers in New England.

The bill has a robust section on climate change and possible solutions to address stock movement up and down the coast. Species allocation and jurisdiction challenges on what region should manage a stock that has shifted to another area are addressed in the bill. These guidelines will be needed more and more as warm water fish move north into our area in greater abundance such as black sea bass, scup and summer flounder and cold water fish like winter flounder and American lobster move further north to deeper, colder water.

The bill proposes that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) should step in to settle disputes if Regional Councils cannot decide who is responsible for a species' Fisheries Management

Plan (FMP) when stock movement occurs. A related issue of seats on Councils where states have no representation is address in the bill too.

Traditionally Rhode Island's Congressional delegation has advocated for Rhode Island gaining a seat on the Mid-Atlantic Council. Much of the fish we land in Rhode Island is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council. This includes summer flounder and squid. Our state lands more of these fish than most other states. The discussion draft tries to address this issue by having the New England, Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Councils having seats on each other's council. The idea has merit but needs work to put it more in line where species have moved.

The discussion draft focuses on access as a key component of those receiving Working Waterfront Grants and the aim of using electronic recording and citizen science to complement fisheries data is a good one. With proper planning additional surveys can provide more robust data to manage stocks and encouraging Electronic Technology (ET) use particularly when it is used to assess climate change impacts is a good idea too.

Presently the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Harbor Light Software and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation are engaged in a recreational angler electronic recording pilot to record catch and effort on smartphones and tablets. The pilot aims to compliment recreation catch and effort data from NOAA (MRIP) and explore what motivates anglers to record catch and effort.

And lastly, the discussion draft initiative of mandating the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and NOAA to engage in a cooperative agreement to fund additional stock assessments associated with offshore wind farm development is a good recommendation. Enhanced cooperation between BOEM and NOAA is needed, and more stock assessments (and funding) can only help fish mangers.

Thank you Congressman Human and Case for getting this MSA discussion draft out for comment.

For a copy of the bill, a bill sum-



EXTREME: "Skishing" is an extreme form of surfcasting where the angler wearing a wet suit floats in the water and is able to swim, cast and fish. Julio Silvia, seen skishing for striped bass, will be guest speaker at a January 25 RISAA Smart Surfcasting seminar. (Photo by WhyKnotFishing.com)

mary, and how to comment visit <https://huffman.house.gov/msa>

'Smart Surfcasting' seminar with Julio Silvia

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association will hold a Smart Surfcasting seminar on Monday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m. with expert surf fishermen and blogger Julio Silvia. Silvia said, "If you want to catch big fish or lot of fish from shore, then learn smart surfcasting." The seminar will address how to fish the entire water column, how to select the proper gear and a host of fishing strategies and tactics all which have proven to catch fish from shore.

Silvia perfected "Skishing", which is an extreme form of surfcasting where the angler wearing a wet suit floats in the water and is able to swim, cast and fish. He will talk about surfcasting from shore in general but is also an experi-

enced kayak, boat and Skishing surfcaster.

Visit the January 25 event calendar at www.risaa.org to pre-register for the event, once you register you will receive an email with your special pass code. RISAA members attend free, non-members will be asked to make a \$10 donation to the RISAA scholarship fund in advance of the seminar by calling the RISAA office at 401.826.2121 (or consider a membership for \$55 a year and attend all seminars free plus receive their information packed monthly magazine).

Give Right Whales Room

North Atlantic right whales are on the move along the Atlantic coast of the U.S. NOAA is cautioning boaters and fishermen to give these endangered whales plenty of room. NOAA is also asking all fishermen to be vigilant when ma-

neuvering to avoid accidental collisions with whales and remove unused gear from the ocean to help avoid entanglements. Commercial fishermen should use vertical lines with required markings, weak links, and breaking strengths.

Where's the bite?

Freshwater fishing in ponds stocked with trout has been very good in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Ted Oven of Northeast Trading Company, North Attleboro, said, "With no ice on local ponds the fishing activity has been slow. We sold just a couple of boxes of worms all week." For 2021 licensing information and a list of trout stocked ponds in Rhode Island visit <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/freshwater-fisheries>.

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