



FAMILY FIRST: Thomas's daughter Laurie has been helping him recuperate after battling both coronavirus and a mRSA blood infection. (Photo courtesy Laurie Pagliarini)

'Got to hang in there'

Pagliarini recovers after battling COVID, blood infection

By JACOB MARROCCO

Seemingly nothing can stop Thomas Pagliarini, a 92-year-old Johnston fixture who ran Central Nurseries for more than six decades after returning from the Korean War.

Pagliarini enlisted just a couple months after the conflict began, being one of the first soldiers sent out of the Ocean State as part of the 445th Ordnance Ammunition Company. He earned a gold seal at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds Ammunition School, according to a 1991 program detailing his service, and supervised night operations in Haeunde.

"All the ammunition that went on the front line had to go through our train station, and I came out of the service, everything was fine," Pagliarini said during a joint phone interview with his daughter, Laurie, this week.

"It was really something that I wouldn't want to do again, but it was quite an experience."

He was released in 1952 after nearly two years in the service, receiving his honorable discharge in August the following year. Upon returning home, he became a partner with his father Alessandro at the shop, beginning a dedicated career as an arborist that later saw him become tree warden and a conservation officer in Johnston.

He remained active outside of the business, too, serving on the town's water task force and helping to build a system "that went into effect and it led right up to the Central Landfill." He also worked on the landfill's advisory board at the request of former Mayor Ralph aRusso.

He always had his nose to the grindstone, but one person was always there to

support him through his endeavors.

"I was pretty active. I was a busy guy," Pagliarini, who retired in 1998, said. "Thank God I had a real good wife [Grace], she was an angel. We were married for 62 years. I lost her three years ago. A big loss. I'm managing that. I'm 92 years old, and I'm coming through some real tough times."

Those tough times began just a few weeks ago, when Pagliarini was diagnosed with coronavirus and battled pneumonia at Miriam Hospital for more than a week. He's home recuperating with Laurie now, but he's also staying off a mRSA blood infection – though his daughter said that ailment is "on its way out."

"He's beating it all," Laurie said. "It basically happened all together. It all just came together and the doctor just thinks that it was because he was battling so

much that things kind of took a turn for the worse there. He's doing pretty good."

He may be out of the woods, but Thomas Pagliarini cautioned readers to take the disease seriously. He said fending off COVID-19 was "one of the worst experiences I've ever had."

"And I tell you, anybody gets that COVID, they've got to hang in there," he said. "They've got to fight it. They've got to fight it. It won't go away by itself, you've got to help. You start getting depressed, you start to lose it, but I stuck with it and unfortunately I had pneumonia on top of that, but I'm home now. I'm living with my daughter, she's taking real good care of me."

He said he was enjoying retirement for two decades and remaining

■ PAGLIARINI - PAGE 5

With pantry, Pietros aims to help those experiencing food insecurity

By JACOB MARROCCO

Mark Pietros knows what it's like to experience food insecurity, growing up a single-parent household where times were tough.

"That was me when I was a kid," he said. "At the time, I was the kid and I was in the family with need, and now I'm able to help and give back to other people, which is just phenomenal."

Now the Johnston Little League president is aiding those experiencing similar hardships with a food pantry run out of his office. He said Johnston has always had "great community spirit," which is on full display as the food and monetary donations have poured in.

He said he never realized the breadth of the food insecurity problem in town until he started talking to some fellow residents, which inspired him to take action

for those struggling to put dinner on the table.

"When people's neighbors are in need in Johnston that there's always somebody there that will lend a helping hand and help a neighbor out," Pietros said during a phone interview on Tuesday. "I've actually said that if we all just helped our neighbor out, then we would never need anything and that the world would be a better place if we could all just help our neighbor, and so that's what I'm trying to do."

The generosity isn't just limited to Johnston, either. Pietros said he had heard about kids in town who were "really in some need," so he decided to spearhead an effort that has gone somewhat national.

"That's kind of how that came about. I had been working with [former Dist. 43 state Rep. candidate] Melinda Lopez a little bit, she does a lot with the local school

pantries, and one time when I was donating to her, we started talking about the need in the town," Pietros said. "We posted some things on Facebook, and so now I've gotten some donations from as far away as Orlando, Florida, right now."

That surprised Pietros, who said some of the money has gone toward purchasing jackets, gloves and hats for students at the William D'Abate School in Providence. He said he has also networked with plenty of new people and that the experience overall has been "really great."

"It probably shouldn't [surprise me] because it seems like when people call out and say, 'Hey, I need help with something,' that, you know, your neighbors, your friends, friends of friends, are always there to help with kind of

■ PANTRY - PAGE 8



FULLY STOCKED: Mark Pietros's office pantry has plenty of food ready for those in need. (Photo courtesy Mark Pietros)

Speaker outlines litany of issues, topped by vaccine distribution

By JOHN HOWELL

If members of the Rotary Club of Warwick hoped for a rosy picture of the state of the state, they didn't get it Thursday afternoon from House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi.

Shekarchi put response to the pandemic and in particular distribution of the vaccine as the most pressing issue in a long line of concerns dominated by state finances. Calling himself an eternal optimist, Shekarchi is hopeful of returning to something reflective of "normal" State House oper-



K. JOSEPH SHEKARCHI

ations by June.

One definitive piece of good news over efforts to balance the state budget is that the gantries used to toll trucks won't be used for car tolls. But other avenues of raising funds, from an in-

crease in the gasoline tax to higher taxes on high-income earners and higher transfer fees on home sales exceeding \$500,000, are on the table. Shekarchi also expects an increase in the minimum hourly wage to be a major issue in the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

And while Shekarchi agreed with club members that new taxes and an increase in the minimum wage could adversely impact business, causing them to close or leave the state,

■ SPEAKER - PAGE 8

Polisena: Rec center could become vaccination pod

By JACOB MARROCCO

Mayor Joseph Polisena said Tuesday that Johnston is ready to use its indoor recreation center as a vaccination pod once more doses become readily available to the town.

Polisena, who has been administering vaccines and received his second shot the night of his interview with the Sun Rise, said the town has inoculated its first responders. He said he didn't experience any reaction to the vaccine, and repeated his endorsement that everyone – especially those with high-risk conditions – receive the shot when they become eligible.

"I know some people are

anti-vaccine people, but I mean, especially if you have a compromised immune system, you should get it," Polisena said. "I've been participating in the vaccination clinics, and obviously they want to make sure that the vaccinators are protected, too, seeing as we run into so many people ... We just don't have the amount of vaccine coming in that we should have. Hopefully, that

will get straightened out."

He said that while Johnston Senior High School would have been the original site for a vaccination pod, traffic concerns with students in class could cause a headache. The recreation center offers plenty of parking and about 27,000 square feet of space, and it is easily accessible for those with dis-

■ POD - PAGE 5

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POLICE LOG

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

STOLEN VEHICLE

Patrolmen Arthur Petteruti and Thomas Pederzani and Detective Anthony Sasso responded to Sky View Motor Inn at 2880 Hartford Ave. on the morning of Jan. 24 in reference to the well being of animals inside a vehicle.

Upon arrival, Petteruti said he was greeted by Michael Fitts, 66, of Lake Wylie, South Carolina. Petteruti said Fitts told him that the cats in the vehicle were his and he was attempting to find a shelter for them. He had been residing in his room for between three and four days.

Petteruti conducted a records check for Fitts, which showed an active warrant out of South Carolina for unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, but the warrant was not extraditable. A DMV check showed that the vehicle was entered into the system as stolen, and it was later towed away.

While on scene, Petteruti observed that Fitts had physical possession of the ignition keys in his pocket, and saw him remove his belongings from the vehicle. Fitts was arrested on a charge of felony possession of a motor vehicle.

Fitts was arraigned and released on \$5,000 personal recognizance bail with a Third Division District Court date of April 23.

DUI

Sgt. Remy Mendez and Patrolman Robert Cardoza responded to 2343 Plainfield St. on the afternoon of Jan. 22 for a report of disorderly conduct.

Upon arrival, Cardoza said he spoke with the alleged victim, who said he had responded to the aforementioned address to retrieve a vehicle from Jeffrey Lapointe, 65, 2 Chapel Lane, Lincoln, who had been doing repairs on his car. The man said that when he met Lapointe, he could smell alcohol in the car and saw three empty beer containers in plain sight.

At that time, the man became irate and opened the driver's side door, ordering Lapointe to "get the [expletive] out of my car." Cardoza said the man told him that Lapointe became angry and

reversed the vehicle while the driver's side door was still open and nearly struck him with it. Lapointe then left the scene at a high rate of speed, and the man said that as he attempted to leave the property, the vehicle swerved and crashed into the front left corner and excavator. Cardoza wrote that it caused damage to the driver's side front bumper and quarter panel of the vehicle, while the excavator was not damaged.

Cardoza said he and Mendez found Lapointe lying in mud attempting to hide under a construction trailer. While speaking with him later, Cardoza said he detected the odor of alcohol emanating from Lapointe's breath. He said Lapointe's eyes were bloodshot and his speech was slurred and mumbled. Lapointe was also swaying from side to side and his feet were unsteady while walking.

When asked if he had consumed any alcoholic beverages that day, he reportedly said, "I had about two or three beers this morning." He is said to have agreed to undergo a series of standardized field sobriety tests, but was unable to complete the horizontal gaze test and could not participate in neither the walk-and-turn nor the one-leg stand because of a recent surgery.

Lapointe was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, fist offense, .15 or greater. He was issued a Third Division District Court summons for Feb. 2.

SHOPLIFTING

Patrolman Thomas Pederzani and several other officers were dispatched to Home Depot for a larceny in progress on the afternoon of Jan. 24.

Prior to arrival on the scene, Michael Alemu, 26, Townsend, Massachusetts, was detained. On the scene, Pederzani met with the reporting party, a prevention loss officer with Home Depot, who said that she witnessed Alemu removing multiple tools from the hardware section of the store via video surveillance. The reporting party said she observed Alemu pacing tools in a box that was labeled mailbox kit, which he had taken from the store, in an attempt to conceal the property.

She told Pederzani that she watched Alemu load up the items in a cart in the store and eventually exit, passing all points of purchase. She also observed him flee the scene with the stolen property.

All of the stolen property was returned back to Home Depot personnel. A Division of Motor Vehicles check later revealed that Alemu's license was suspended. He was charged with misdemeanor shoplifting and driving with a suspended license, a violation. Alemu was released with two Third Division District Court summonses to appear May 17.

SUSPENDED LICENSE

Patrolwoman Ashley Vanbemmelen was conducting a routine patrol on Hartford Avenue on the morning of Jan. 19 when she saw a vehicle stopped in the travel lane, allowing other motorists to pass in front of her.

The registration plate came back suspended, and Vanbemmelen conducted a motor vehicle stop to speak with the driver, identified as Shantel Thornton, 31, 10 Nestor St., West Warwick. Vanbemmelen later discovered that Thornton's license was suspended earlier this month, and checks revealed this was her third offense.

After advising Thornton that she was under arrest for diving with a suspended license, she began to argue that she had already paid her fines. She presented Vanbemmelen with a court receipt that she paid her fines Dec. 30, but she never responded to the Division of Motor Vehicles to have her license reinstated. She said she did not have an upcoming appointment either. She was later released with a Third Division District Court notice to appear.

Patrolmen Manuel Perez and Arthur Petteruti were patrolling the area of 1569 Plainfield St. on the morning of Jan. 20 when Perez noticed a vehicle with no front registration plate.

He conducted a motor vehicle stop and spoke with the driver, Johnjahhaas Delgado, 25, 92 Murray St., Providence. Checks showed that Delgado's license was suspended, and this would be his third or subsequent offense. He was arrested and released from the scene with a Third Division District Court summons to appear May 10.

DRIVING WITHOUT A LICENSE

Patrolmen Michael Schiappa and Nicholas Manocchio observed a car with dark window tint on all of its windows, including the front windshield, on the morning of Jan. 20.

Schiappa conducted a motor vehicle stop in the area of 71 Greenville Ave., and upon approaching the vehicle he spoke with the driver, identified as Erick Perez, 34, 1485 High St., Central Falls. Perez told Schiappa he did not have an active driver's license and had more than three previous convictions for operating a vehicle without one. Perez received a Third Division District summons to appear Feb. 25.

WARRANT

Patrolwoman Ashley Vanbemmelen was on a fixed post on Robert Circle on the evening of Jan. 22 when she saw a vehicle with a Maine registration plate traveling northbound at a high rate of speed.

She conducted a motor vehicle stop on Simmonsville Avenue, where she spoke with the operator, identified as Kevin Conklin, 31, 40 Baker St., Warwick. Conklin advised that his license was suspended, and a records check showed he did not have an active license. He did, though, have three prior convictions for driving with a suspended license. Vanbemmelen wrote that Conklin also had an active bench warrant stemming from a charge of driving with a suspended license. He was arrested and later issued a Third Division District Court notice to appear May 17.

HAPPY VALENTINE'S

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ACTUAL SIZE



Grieco Auto Group restores JPD response vehicle



GOOD AS NEW: The Johnston Police Department's Bureau of Criminal Identification response vehicle now sports a new matte black finish courtesy of Grieco Auto Group.

Johnston Police Department detectives are now riding in style thanks to the efforts of Grieco Auto Group.

Since 2005, the department has used a GMC Savana utility van as its Bureau of Criminal Identification response vehicle to investigate crimes. The van is used at crime scenes to hold supplies and equipment used during the investigation process, such as a fuming booth to locate fingerprints or to provide power to locations without any available.

While the van only has about 15,000 miles on its odometer and was maintained in great working order, its exterior had seen better days. Paint was peeling off the van's hood and sides, and rust had appeared on its doors and wheel wells.

Rather than purchase a new vehicle, the depart-

ment explored restoring what they had.

"The refurbishing of the van comes at a time when you need to maximize your resources," Johnston Police Chief Joseph Razza said. "It allows our dedicated officers to maximize their efforts."

Members of the department then reached out to Grieco Auto Group to see if repairs could be done.

"We have a long relationship with the department here in town, and we made a decision to donate to the town so that they would continue to have something this size to use to move material around," said Robert McAuliffe II, executive manager of Grieco Auto Group in Johnston.

According to McAuliffe and Harold Cimorelli Jr., general manager of Grieco Collision, the van required a complete strip-down of

the exterior of the vehicle and its hardware, along with some additional interior work, with attention paid to areas that had rusted. The van was then completely painted in a matte black finish. In total, the project cost approximately \$10,000.

"We're very ecstatic that the project is done and that we're able to give it to the officers to use," McAuliffe said.

With the restoration complete, the department has already put the van to use.

"It is always reassuring to know that our local businesses are ready to answer the call and aid the Johnston Police Department and the entire community," Chief Razza said. "We truly appreciate the Grieco family's generosity and their commitment to this restoration project."



BACK IN SERVICE: Johnston Police Chief Joseph Razza is joined by Harold Cimorelli Jr. and Robert McAuliffe II of Grieco Auto Group, who presented the keys to the newly refurbished Bureau of Criminal Identification response vehicle. (Submitted photos)



TIRED APPEARANCE: This GMC Savana utility van used by Johnston Police detectives, pictured several years ago, was in desperate need of an exterior restoration.



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MIGHTY MUSIC MEN: The JHS Music Room was filled with some talented troupers like Schools Superintendent Dr. Bernard DiLullo on the big bass drum, state Sen. Frank Lombardo on chimes and Johnston Fire Lt. Jon Pistacchio on guitar. Collectively, they provided valuable prizes for the upcoming Crazy Raffle.

Plenty to prizes to be won during first-ever Crazy Raffle

By PETE FONTAINE

It doesn't have one of those Powerball jackpots, but the Johnston Music Association's Crazy Raffle offers players a chance to win everything from cash to hotel stays, restaurant gift cards and even \$50 toward food shopping.

"The community has really rallied around the raffle!" exclaimed Ronald Lamoureux, the director of the award-winning Johnson High School Music Department. "And by the way, that includes everyone from business owners to our valuable town [and state] leaders."

In all, the 2021 Johnston School Music Association's Crazy Raffle features 55 prizes that will be drawn every day throughout February. Each day's winners, Lamoureux and JHS Choral Director Matt Gingras announced, "will be listed in each week's

Friday edition of the Johnston Sun Rise."

It all starts Wednesday, Feb. 1, with two drawings – a \$25 cash prize donated by CFS and a room for two at Ocean State Escape.

It's easy to see why everyone is excited about the raffle, as it will produce some much-needed revenue for the nonprofit. Last year's first-ever Card Raffle was wiped out because of COVID-19.

"If anyone needs some quality home items, our raffle has a prize for a \$50 gift card to Bed, Bath & Beyond," Lamoureux said while previewing the list. "We have foursomes to golf courses, lots of gift cards to Dunkin Donuts and places like Nino's Pizzeria and Atwood Grill ... a new prize or prizes will be drawn each day."

With that, Lamoureux touted what he called "exceptional giving" from everyone from the John-

ston School Committee, headed by Chairman Robert LaFazia, to Town Council President Robert V. Russo, council members Robert J. Civetti and Linda Folcarelli, and Johnston state Sen. Frank Lombardo III, who in year's past has donated everything from girls' and boys' bicycles to toys for the Johnston Firefighters Toys for Tots Drive.

There are four prizes valued at \$100 each, which will be drawn between Feb. 6-17 courtesy of Walmart, the Johnston School Committee, Russo and the Johnston firefighters.

On Valentine's Day, there will be just four winners for special packages beginning with Stamp Farm milk and eggs gift pack and a \$50 Stop & Shop Card; \$20 each to Brewed Awakenings and English Muffin, and \$15 to Top Nail; \$50 to Dave's

Marketplace; and \$100 in cash from the town's firefighters.

"We have calendar cards printed and each to sell," Lamoureux offered to those looking to support the raffle. "We're selling the cards for only \$10 each; we're inviting Johnstonians to purchase a card and win some valuable prizes that in the end will help support our Music Association and the many talented musicians and vocalists we have in our programs at JHS."

There is no limit to just how many Crazy Raffle cards a person can purchase, and people interested in supporting the effort should call 401-233-1920, ext. 2102; send a fax to 401-233-0031; or contact Lamoureux at rlamoureux@johnstonschools.org or Gingras at mgingras@johnstonschools.org.



PERCUSSIONISTS PLUS: Johnston Town Council President Robert V. Russo, left, and School Committee Chairman Robert LaFazia were drumming up business earlier this week for the Johnston School Music Association's prize-filled Crazy Raffle. Meanwhile, District 1 Town Councilwoman Linda Folcarelli provided some backup notes. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)



'Prayer and faith'

Mabel "Betty" Kaye, of Johnston, was born Jan. 20, 1921, and enjoys a wonderful and full life as she celebrates her 100th birthday.

Family, friends and residents of Stillwater Senior Living paid tribute to her as she became the newest member of Rhode Island's Centenarian Club.

Born a century ago to Harry Taudvin and Mabel LaPrade, she grew up on the Belknap Farm which was on the corner of Pine Hill and Greenville avenues.

She has two sons and one daughter, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

She was very active with the Belknap Community Church and attended school at the Belknap schoolhouse, which is now the Johnston Land Trust building. She spends many hours knitting, reading and keeping active with a sharp mind.

■ Pagliarini

(Continued from page 1)

"community-minded," until "this bug came along." He has therapists and a nurse dropping by the home a few days every week to help his recovery.

"They work on me and they keep me going. I'm enjoying what life I have left. Ninety-two years I've been around this place, but I know one thing - I still know what time it is," he said with a laugh.

Pagliarini has put in his

time for Johnston, and the state as a whole, over the decades. He's worked fundraisers for the American Heart Association, served as area chairman for the Woonasquatucket unit of the American Cancer Society and was previously the president of the Rhode Island Nurserymen's Association.

His list of accomplishments could fill a book, but he's especially proud of his 1991 award as one of the "outstanding entrepreneurs" in Rhode Island. Pagliarini purchased Morgan Mills - at the time, a

150-year-old centerpiece of Rhode Island's Industrial Revolution - in two separate transactions, first in 1969 and then in 1971. It was passed from the Sprague family through a couple other owners before Pagliarini bought it from a private resident in Johnston and redeveloped the business park.

"I maintained the name to keep the history, I named the street Morgan Mill Road. I thought that was quite an accomplishment," Pagliarini said. "The American Industrial Revolution started here

in Rhode Island, in Pawtucket. That was quite a thing for me, that made me feel great. I did something I thought was real worthy."

Throughout all of his successes, the one constant for Pagliarini has been family. He can't be stopped as long as they are by his side, and one doesn't have to look any further than the name of his company - Val-Gioia Properties - to see that love and commitment.

"He named that after my two daughters - one's named Gioia and one's Valentina," Laurie said.

■ Pod

(Continued from page 1)

disabilities.

"I know that our firefighters are ready in Johnston. I know that [Police] Chief [Joseph] Razza is ready and prepared for when we start to do our pods. We may be looking at our new recreational center to use as a vaccination site," Polisen said. "I had spoken with Chief Razza - technically the high school is supposed to be the pod, but if the kids are back in school, it's going to make it difficult with all the traffic and everything."

Polisen said that the firefighters and police officers in town are ready to help administer vaccines when the time comes, but he urged Johnston residents to volunteer as well. Their duties would include guiding patients inside the center and directing them where to go for shots and their 15-minute observation period afterward.

The town, much like the rest of the state, will need more doses delivered to mobilize the center. Polisen, a senior advisor on Lt. Gov. Dan McKee's transition team, said he has faith in the governor-in-waiting to "continue the progress." He also expressed confidence in the state's congressional delegation to ensure the Ocean State gets more vaccine, especially as more pharmaceutical companies get their offerings approved.

"They'll go into more people's arms as they get it, but if you don't have it, you can't give it. That's the problem," Polisen said. "[The congressional delegation has] got a push on to make sure that we get more vaccines. That's important. It'll get done, but in order for it to get done properly we

need the vaccine, and like I said, I really feel confident in Dan McKee's leadership and his ability to ensure the people are protected."

He said he has been on the phone with the Department of Health every other day checking on the status of receiving more doses. Johnston has been one of the communities hit hardest by coronavirus. The town's 23 percent positivity rate is second in the state, behind only Central Falls at 30 percent.

Later in the day Tuesday, several national outlets reported that President Joe Biden's administration would increase states' vaccine supplies by 15 percent next week.

"There was one day, I get in at 5:30 in the morning, I left at about a quarter of 5 that day. I didn't leave the office, [the Fire Department] went on 18 positive COVID cases, so we have a high rate in Johnston," Polisen said.

Polisen said McKee "wants to make sure that the rollout is smooth and steady" as he inherits the state's vaccination program from outgoing Gov. Gina Raimondo. Polisen said scientists and health experts should determine the next phases of inoculation, adding that Raimondo is "leaving behind a very good cadre of doctors" including DOH Director Dr. Nicole Alexander Scott.

McKee has made waves in the press recently for suggesting that teachers be given priority for the vaccine, resulting in some pushback from workers in other industries. He also is looking to follow the CDC recommendation of starting with seniors 65 and older, rather than 75, Polisen said.

"I don't see it as a problem," Polisen said of the rollout. "We did the H1N1 [vaccine] years ago, and that was really flawless, no

hicups there, and the problem is - as Gov. McKee said - it's the vaccine coming in. There's only 14,000 vaccines coming in a week with 1,050,000 people. If half the people wanted to get vaccinated, it could take some time. I know that the lieutenant governor's been working on it to get more vaccines in the state."

Polisen, a longtime confidant of McKee, shed a bit of light on the process of filling the lieutenant governor's vacant seat. A website was announced Tuesday allowing interested applicants to submit their candidacy for the job. Polisen said McKee will let him and the committee know when interviews can be scheduled, adding that it is all going through the lieutenant governor's office.

"I'm just taking orders," Polisen said. "I assume he's going to set a deadline, and once all the letters are in we'll be instructed by [transition chair] Joe Rodio. He's the chair of the transition team, he'll instruct us on the names and so forth on that. Through the lieutenant governor's office, the time and meetings will be set up with the prospective people that are interested."

Polisen was pleased with the makeup of McKee's transition team, saying he assembled a "very diverse group of people" that represent the "face of Rhode Island."

"He's got a very diverse transition team that are going to look at everything and send him the report, and the final decision will be made by Gov. McKee, because he has to live with the decision he makes. We've got a very well rounded, very diverse group of people, also we've got some very smart people on there - I'm not saying me," Polisen said with a

laugh. "But he's got some really bright people on it. Joe Rodio Jr. was an excellent choice, because you need someone with a legal background."

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NOW ACCEPTING NEW RESIDENTS!

SUN RISE SCOOPS

By MERI R. KENNEDY

NAMI-RI Family-to-Family course

The local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness is now accepting registration for its virtual Family-to-Family course, which begins Feb. 24.

This is a free, eight-session educational program for family members, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program, which means that research shows the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition.

NAMI Rhode Island's Family-to-Family course is taught by trained family members who have lived experience, and includes presentations, discussions and interactive exercises.

For more information on the Family-to-Family curriculum and registration requirements, visit namirhodeisland.org or call 331-3060.

Craft and arts kits available for pickup

The Mohr Library now has

winter and Groundhog Day craft and art kits available for children that may be picked up. Email Ms. Meri at Meri@mohrlibrary.org to reserve one.

Johnston Senior Center offers services

If you need any help with heating, housing and more 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 12, awards up to \$500 in financial assistance to each of the 30 talented Rhode Island students selected as re-

ipients. Qualified students must be age 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 sizes small through extra large in slate blue, sand and a few in light green.

The JHS is an all-volunteer

organization. Its museum is not staffed, but they are happy to open up by appointment for a tour of the museum, the house, and to purchase T-shirts and copies of books.

Call 231-3380 and leave a message with the color and size you would like.

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 program

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

Classes will be offered nationally on Mondays at 1 p.m. and Saturdays 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's 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.

Troop 22 looking for Scouts

Boy Scout Troop 22 Cranston is looking for new Scouts. Following all the BSA and state of Rhode Island safety protocols, the troop is meeting, hiking and camping. It has a full schedule of activities planned for the 2020-21 program year. Troop 22 is affiliated with girls' Troop 13-G, which is also looking for new members. Both units meet at the Edgewood Congregational Church, 1788 Broad St., at 7 p.m. on most Thursdays.

The program is for youth ages 11 to 18. For younger children, Troop 22 also has a relationship with Cub Scout Pack 2 Cranston. Anyone interested is invited to call Paul Kelley at 401-595-6726 for more information.

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.

SunriseScoops@aol.com. Photos in jpg format are accepted and news can include community events, promotions, academic news and nonprofit 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

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 e-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



Request for Bids Town of Johnston

Printing and Mailing of Tax Bills

Town of Johnston is requesting bids for The Printing and Mailing of Tax Bills. Bid specifications are available at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office located at 1385 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919 beginning January 29th, 2021 weekdays between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Specs are also available on the Town's website at www.townofjohnstonri.com. Sealed bids will be accepted until 10:00 am, February 17th, 2021 at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office at the above address and will be opened publicly at that time via a virtual meeting using the Zoom meeting platform. The virtual opening can be attended by going to <https://zoom.us/> and clicking on "Join a meeting". Enter the following meeting information:

Meeting ID: 829 5179 8575
Password: 959671

If you do not have a computer or mobile device-Dial in by phone: 833 548 0282 US Toll-free- 877-853-5247(Toll Free)

The Town of Johnston reserves the right to reject any or all responses or parts thereof, to waive any informality in them, or accept any bid deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Johnston will offer interpreters for the hearing impaired provided the request is at least three (3) days prior to scheduled bid opening by calling (401)553-8830.

Joseph Chiodo, CPA
Finance Director

1/29/21



Request for Bids Town of Johnston

Personal Property Valuation Services

Town of Johnston is requesting bids for Personal Property Valuation Services. Bid specifications are available at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office located at 1385 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919 beginning January 29th, 2021 weekdays between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Specs are also available on the Town's website at www.townofjohnstonri.com. Sealed bids will be accepted until 10:30 am, February 17th, 2021 at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office at the above address and will be opened publicly at that time via a virtual meeting using the Zoom meeting platform. The virtual opening can be attended by going to <https://zoom.us/> and clicking on "Join a meeting". Enter the following meeting information:

Meeting ID: 852 7032 3937
Password: 327582

If you do not have a computer or mobile device-Dial in by phone: 833 548 0282 US Toll-free- 877-853-5247(Toll Free)

The Town of Johnston reserves the right to reject any or all responses or parts thereof, to waive any informality in them, or accept any bid deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Johnston will offer interpreters for the hearing impaired provided the request is at least three (3) days prior to scheduled bid opening by calling (401)553-8830.

Joseph Chiodo, CPA
Finance Director

1/29/21



Request for Bids Town of Johnston

Revaluation of Real Property

Town of Johnston is requesting bids for Revaluation of Real Property. Bid specifications are available at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office located at 1385 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919 beginning January 29th, 2021 weekdays between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Specs are also available on the Town's website at www.townofjohnstonri.com. Sealed bids will be accepted until 10:15 am, February 17th, 2021 at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office at the above address and will be opened publicly at that time via a virtual meeting using the Zoom meeting platform. The virtual opening can be attended by going to <https://zoom.us/> and clicking on "Join a meeting". Enter the following meeting information:

Meeting ID: 838 4686 9916
Password: 892350

If you do not have a computer or mobile device-Dial in by phone: 833 548 0282 US Toll-free- 877-853-5247(Toll Free)

The Town of Johnston reserves the right to reject any or all responses or parts thereof, to waive any informality in them, or accept any bid deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Johnston will offer interpreters for the hearing impaired provided the request is at least three (3) days prior to scheduled bid opening by calling (401)553-8830.

Joseph Chiodo, CPA
Finance Director

1/29/21

Opinion

EDITORIAL

Patience a virtue, especially with vaccine

If you thought waiting in a long line to renew our license at the DMV makes us impatient and irritable, we shudder to imagine how angry and tense the next few months may become as vulnerable populations – and those just hoping to reclaim some normalcy in their daily lives – await their turn to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

We have been critical of the prior presidential administration on numerous occasions throughout the past four years for a lack of accountability, a lack of transparency and a complete lack of perspective. We are now fully recognizing the consequences of those loathsome qualities, which fully coalesced into a lethal combination of indifference and incompetency that turned simple mask wearing into a senseless political debate, allowed the virus to surge uncontrollably, and has contributed to an astronomical death toll that continues to rise.

And now, even as a new administration has taken charge and is seeking to address the problem with a gusto that would have been greatly beneficial over a year ago, the implications of having a federal government devoid of checks, balances or public scrutiny wielding power in the midst of a global pandemic is rearing its head in another grave manner.

Against all odds, we have viable vaccines to prevent the spread of this illness – and yet we cannot produce or distribute that vaccine in numbers significant enough to actually halt the progression of the disease in a timely manner. States, including our own, are scratching their heads and wondering why they're receiving half or less than half of the doses they were told they'd be receiving, resulting in the closing or postponing of vaccination sites that should be working nonstop to inoculate as many people as possible each day.

Not even the new director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can provide an answer on exactly how many doses of vaccine is available nationwide, though it hardly seems fair to blame her – which would be akin to scolding a restaurant's evening manager who just clocked in for not knowing how many scrambled eggs were served at breakfast that morning.

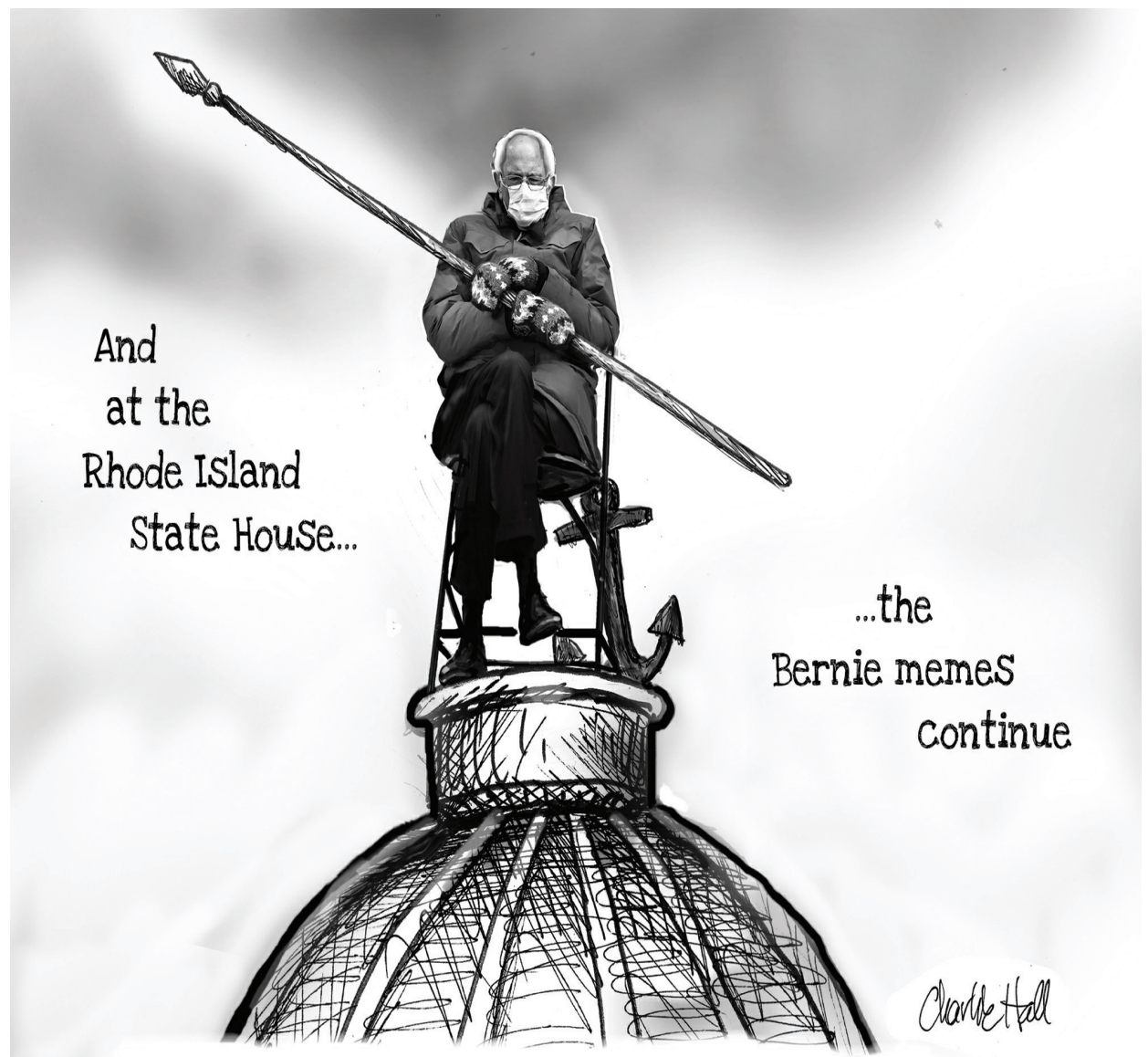
It is important to remember that this issue is not really about logistics – we have professionals in this state and across the country who are more than capable of setting up vaccination centers and getting people inoculated. Rather, this problem stems from a complete lack of federal leadership. It has become glaringly apparent that, while the previous administration indeed made a truly historic push to get a vaccine developed, there was no actual plan for administering that vaccine once it was accomplished. It is now up to President Biden and his team, in accordance with individual state governors, to pick up the pieces and coordinate what should have been ready to be implemented months ago.

This, of course, puts Lt. Gov. Daniel McKee in a very precarious position – especially as his most recent appearance in newspaper headlines prior to Gov. Gina Raimondo's nomination as Commerce Secretary was that he was unhappy with his lack of power to implement policies that were important to him and how Raimondo was freezing him out.

He may come to regret the level of responsibility he wished for, as he will now feel the full emotional weight of a populace that is scared and increasingly frustrated. His insistence that teachers and school staff should be prioritized for vaccinations – while we have no doubt came from the best of intentions – may do nothing more at this moment in time than alienate other groups who rightfully think they should be prioritized, and further muddy the water of the vaccine roll-out here in Rhode Island.

The fact remains that frontline health care workers and the elderly – those who are astronomically more at risk of developing a fatal reaction to COVID-19 – should be the top priorities, full stop. There can be a healthy debate about who gets the next spots in line behind them, but that discussion should be held with the full knowledge that it is purely hypothetical before we even get enough doses to inoculate our most at-risk people.

We can only plead for Rhode Islanders to exercise more patience, understanding all too well how difficult that is becoming as we have officially eclipsed the one-year anniversary of the first COVID-19 case in the country. Pushing and shoving and yelling at one another won't get your license renewed any faster, and it won't get you a vaccine, either.



Music performance deserves as much of state's attention as athletics

By DAVID NEVES

We are overjoyed that state leaders have worked with the RI Interscholastic League to find safe ways for our students to continue playing sports this year. By following the science, and creating guidelines and regulations that substantially mitigate any possible COVID-19 infection, they have brought this critically important activity back for thousands of students. We applaud this step.

Now, it's time to bring back music.

Today, thousands of students, families and educators are frustrated and perplexed that state leaders have not paid the same attention to our schools' bands, choruses and other music groups. These are equally important and vital for the education and well-being of thousands of students. Last year, before the pandemic, almost 25,000 students in our schools were singing and playing instruments throughout the state every week. This year, based on surveys of music teachers in almost every single school district, that total is only a little over 7,700—a staggering 70 percent reduction that reflects a stunning failure by our state's leaders.

If students can play sports, and adults can dine out safely, we can use the same science and mitigation to bring enrichment and equity to students of music. These strategies include mask wearing, distancing, and using large spaces. Unfortunately, RIDE's guidelines specific

to music performance (now a year old) were created with no consultation with the experts around music performance: not music teachers, not the Rhode Island Music Education Association (RIMEA) and not the National Association for Music Education (NAFME). Just as with athletics, there are now scientifically proven ways to mitigate, and even practically eliminate risk which should be pursued. Nationwide, and even in a number of communities in Rhode Island, bands, choruses, orchestras and other music performing ensembles are taking place, using proven mitigation practices with no reports of students becoming infected as a result.

Restoring music performance and the other arts is vital, as they are the academic subjects that people, and children in particular, are turning to in order to ease stress, find comfort, and express feelings during this challenging time. RIMEA has repeatedly sought to engage state leaders to address the concerns of students and parents over the past year. Their silent indifference was, and is, disheartening.

Teachers and school administrators should be provided with comprehensive guidance for safe music education and performance, based on the latest research.

It's time for RIDE, RIDOH, and the Governor's Office to commit to equal education for all students. We ask that they do the same for our students' music education as they did for our student athletes.

Like sports, music performance is not merely an "enhancement." For all students, and especially for those 25,000 students who were playing and singing in schools last year, their bands, choruses, and other music groups were often the most important, meaningful parts of their school days, often providing a path to the future via scholarships and academic opportunities.

Please join RIMEA in asking that RIDE, RIDOH and the Governor's Office to make a good faith effort to adjust their guidance to specifically allow for bands, choruses and other

school performance groups to be allowed to safely meet and make music again.

It's safe, it's fair – and we owe it to our students.

David Neves of Cranston was the 2002 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year, the supervisor of music for 29 years in Scituate, and the director of fine and performing arts in Needham, Massachusetts, for 12 years. He is currently the music director of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Wind Ensembles, coordinator and professor of music education at the University of Rhode Island, and advocacy chair for the Rhode Island Music Education Association.

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Obituaries

Charles R. Papa



Charles R. Papa, 85, died Monday, January 25, 2021. He was the beloved husband for 65 years of Victoria J. (Kabbas) Papa, and son of the late Frank L. and Clara (Sepe) Papa.

Charles had resided in Johnston for 62 years, formerly residing in Cranston. He was a tile installer for 60 years, and owner of C. P. Tile Company. Charles was

also a night chef at Twin Oaks Restaurant for 20 years. He had served in the Rhode Island Army National Guard for 32 years and served with the 152nd Fighter Squadron Crash Rescue and with the 143rd Military Airlift Squadron. He loved gardening, word search puzzles, talking on the phone with his lifelong friends, and enjoyed going out to lunch with family and friends.

Besides his wife, he leaves three devoted daughters: MaryAnn Carbone and husband, Robert, Frann DiMaio, and Maria Maiello and husband Alfred. He was the loving grandfather of J. Cortney Krupka (Stephen), Victoria Carbone, Giano Maiello, and the late Johna DiMaio. He was the brother of Frank L. Papa, the late Peter, Pasco "Pat", and Joseph Papa. He also leaves many cherished nieces and nephews, and his beloved dogs, Leelee, Elton John, and Mia.

His funeral will be private. To post a message of condolences, and view the tribute video, visit TheQuinnFuneralHome.com.

Sheila A. Manney

Sheila A. Manney, professional clipper of coupons, baker of cookies, terror behind the wheel, champion of the underdog, died on Monday, January 25, 2021. She was pre-deceased by her husband John Manney.

Sheila, along with her five siblings, was born in 1935, to Bernard and Meredith Murray, in Providence RI. She grew up in a modest home in Providence. Growing up with very little taught her how to turn a dime into a dollar, a skill at which she'd excel her whole life. Sheila did not excel at suffering fools or hiding her disdain for someone who acted like one. A voracious reader, she loved mystery and sometimes semi-romance novels and the odd political or wartime book. Later in life she went back to school to become a Registered Nurse and proceeded to work many years at St. Josephs and Fatima hospital ER's. Sheila had a busy life, but no matter what she was doing she always had time to help someone. Her lifelong hobbies included gardening, reading, looking for bargains at the thrift store and complaining about all the useless politicians, both local and national. Sheila ate peanut butter, cinnamon and jelly toast for breakfast for most of her 85 years of life. She often asked one of her children, "How can you eat the same thing everyday?" Irony was sometimes lost on her.

Sheila loved to volunteer and give back to the community. She was a long time volunteer at the local library, holding book sales to help pay for programs for the residents of Johnston, which her children suspected was her way of having the programs for free. She also managed a local community garden for years, encouraging others to grow their own healthy food. She freely shared her knowledge of gardening (and life) to anyone who wanted to learn. Sheila left a legacy of caring and compassionate children to continue her work on this earth.

Sheila is survived by her seven wonderful children (and another one who turned out OK eventually). Michaela, J. Patrick, Matthew, David, Terence, Stephen, Jonathan and Joseph. She loved them very much. Everything she did, she did for her children and grandchildren. Unless it was bringing treats two or three times a week to Operation Stand Down Rhode Island where her other "children" worked. She loved visiting with the staff at OSDRI and they loved her as much if not more. Sheila is survived by her seven grandchildren: Brian, Jeremy, Leah, Kira, Lauren, Ryan and Jason. While her sons growing up were unruly and prone to getting in trouble, her granddaughters could do no wrong. She was survived by her sister, Jean, and her brothers, David and Michael and Sheila is also survived by an incredible number of close friends, who cannot be named for fear of missing somebody. Sheila was predeceased by her brothers Lawrence and Peter.

Sheila, ever the penny-pincher, decided to leave this world during Covid-19, her children believe, to avoid paying for a funeral. (If she knew what this obituary cost, she certainly would have shortened it. Sorry Mom, but this time we have to be frivolous). But, on the other hand, she always said that she "Didn't want a funeral, she wanted an Irish wake." She didn't want everybody moping around, she wanted a party. Sheila will get her celebration of life this coming summer.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you do something nice for somebody else unexpectedly, and without explanation. We love you Mom.

Her arrangements have been entrusted to Family's Choice Cremation Inc. 8 Schoolhouse Road, Warren RI 02885 401-337-5900. Online condolences may be expressed at www.familyschoicecremation.com.

Assunta D'Ambra



Assunta (Grasso) D'Ambra, 94 of Warwick passed away peacefully at her home surrounded by her family in a room full of love on January 21, 2021. She was the beloved wife of the late Americo D'Ambra. He was the love of her life.

Born in Providence she was the daughter of the late Chiara Grasso (Melino) and the late Rocco Grasso. Assunta, or Sue as she was called, was an Administrative Assistant at D'Ambra Construction for many years. Prior to that she was employed by the Warwick School Department as a lunch aid and for ARA Food services. In her younger years she worked in the Plumbing Department at City Hall Hardware in Providence. Her greatest job was that of raising her family whom she loved endlessly.

She was the loving mother of Michael V. D'Ambra, (Patricia) of South Kingstown, John A. D'Ambra, (Janet) of Johnston, the late Mary Linda D'Ambra, Jerry A. D'Ambra Sr. Of Warwick, and Lisa A. D'Ambra of Warwick. She was a loving grandmother to 12 grandchildren: Michael D'Ambra, Mary Ann D'Ambra, Cindy D'Ambra, Robert D'Ambra, Jeffrey D'Ambra, Melinda D'Ambra, McKayla D'Ambra, Jerry D'Ambra Jr., David D'Ambra, Daria D'Ambra, Holly Fricker and Brian Burk. She also leaves 17 great-grandchildren: Michael A. D'Ambra, Joseph D'Ambra, Donald D'Ambra, Jane D'Ambra, Alexandra D'Ambra, Johnny Carraturo, Joshua D'Ambra, Isabella D'Ambra, Robert D'Ambra, Jordan D'Ambra, Jaykob D'Ambra, Morgan D'Ambra, Emersynn Bosart, Felicity Fricker, Lanse Burk, and Myah and Mason Cabral. She also leaves many nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her sisters, Marie Restivo, Antonetta Grasso, and Rose Landry, her brothers, Costanzo (Gus) Grasso, Santo Grasso, Saverio (Sam), Grasso, Anthony Grasso, and John Grasso.

As much as we are saddened by her loss, we know she is dancing with her husband who she has missed for 43 years.

We were able to keep her home because she had best caregivers. Thank you Rosa, Theresa, Kayleigh and Michelle. Thank you also to her nurse, Megan of Continuum. All of you did the work of God helping to keep her healthy and at the end keeping her comfortable. You will forever be in our hearts and family, please know that Sue loved you all very much. Sue touched everyone's life in a positive way, her gentle smiles and laughs and hugs will never be forgotten and will be missed tremendously.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend her Mass of Christian Burial on Tuesday at 11 a.m. in Holy Ghost Church, 1 Knight St., Providence, (seating will be limited, social distancing and masks required). Burial will be private.

A Memorial Mass for her will take place once COVID attendance restrictions are lifted and the date will be announced.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her name to the Rhode Island Brain and Spine Tumor Foundation, 118 Dudley Street, Providence RI 02905. Visit NardolilloFH.com for online condolences.

Pantry

(Continued from page 1)

whatever you need to do, and so I really felt that going through with this whole thing that people were just always there and willing to help if somebody just said, 'Hey, I need a hand with something,'" Pietros said.

Those interested in donating or learning more about the food pantry can call Pietros at 401-533-0232. He said he accepts cash donations through the mobile app Venmo, and food can be delivered to his office at 2 Morgan Mill Road in Johnston. He said he has been driving around town some weekends to pick up packages and offerings, but he is trying to limit those excursions so drop-off is preferable.

Pietros said he hasn't been able to spread the word about his food pantry as effectively as he hoped. Some folks have come in for food, but he would like to see more as he helps those in similar situations he faced as a kid.

"I don't know if it's embarrassing of people to come forward or, I just know that there's a lot of need out there and I have helped some people, but I know there's more people than the amount of people that I've helped already," Pietros said. "Maybe more people would see it, plus we're putting stuff on social media sites and maybe people don't have access to social media or maybe they're not on Facebook or whatever. I called a couple of local churches also to try to get the word out."

Speaker

(Continued from page 1)

the speaker said with the makeup of the General Assembly has changed.

But foremost is the pandemic and the vaccine.

"The hottest issue that we're facing in the General Assembly in the last two weeks is the vaccine distribution. Who's getting it? How come we don't have enough supply? What's happening," the speaker said.

He added: "We never were built for a pandemic. We're learning as we go."

Shekarchi said the state was allocated to receive 30,000 doses of the vaccine every period, but the amount is between 16,000 and 17,000 doses. "So, we're being under supplied," he said. "We're hopeful that will change."

He said COVID has impacted all aspects of life, whether directly or indirectly. Apart from the state budget and revenues, he said it has affected "people's jobs, children in school, our health, our family members, our good friends. So it's a very real thing. And people who say there's no such thing as COVID or whatever - and they're out there, because they write to me all the time and email me asking, 'When are we going to lift the restrictions on the gyms or ... lift the restrictions on the businesses, because there's no such thing as COVID, it's just a common cold.' Well, it's a lot more than a common cold."

Shekarchi was slotted to speak for 15 or 20 minutes during the club's weekly Zoom meeting. He joined the group of 25 - including former Warwick Mayor Scott Avedisian, who had tuned in about 12:30 - and after a 20-minute summary of State House events opened it up to questions and comments.

Shekarchi personally knows many in the club. He made a point of talking about Donald Morash, a club member and Warwick Realtor who died of COVID in December. Morash was active in the community, and as chairman of the Warwick Zoning Board of Review frequently dealt with Shekarchi as he represented developers seeking zone changes and exceptions to the building codes. Shekarchi was pleased to learn of the club's plan to memorialize Morash's community contributions.

After citing the need to plug a projected \$500 million budget deficit, hopes for federal assistance and legislative pressures for new taxes and a hike in the minimum wage, Shekarchi was asked if truck tolls might be broadened to include cars.

"Absolutely, 100 percent, no ... that's not an area that we're looking at revenue. The law is very clear on that, you have to

get approval from the voters." He called the prospect of tolling cars a "myth propagated" by the trucking industry.

Shekarchi faces pressure from legislators.

While he did not label them as progressives, he pointed out many new members of the Assembly have an agenda and unless they hear otherwise from constituents they will be pressing for those agendas.

He said they want to raise taxes to fund initiatives in a variety of areas, from the environment to education.

"Whether it's raising a gas tax or raising an income tax, that is the prevailing mantra of many of the newer, younger members of the General Assembly in both houses, the Senate and the House," he said.

He added: "Everybody has a difference of opinion. But what I'm just trying to emphasize is, if you have a different opinion, you just can't be home, calling up the speaker or somebody or your local rep and saying, 'I don't want it.' You need to get active in the legislative process. But you also need to get active in the electoral process."

Marijuana and nursing home caregivers were also on Shekarchi's list. He noted that there has been a big push to address the legalization of recreational marijuana. He didn't offer a guess how it would turn out, rather calling it a two-step process.

"What we have to figure out first is, do we want to legalize the recreational use of marijuana? And the second part of that question, if we answer yes, is how are we going to regulate it? How are we going to distribute it, who's going to do it ... [a] state system, a private system, some kind of quasi-state private sector?" he said.

He cited the medical marijuana dispensaries, the growers and the cultivators, concluding, "everyone ... seems to have a stake in the marijuana game. And if we make this decision, I look at the fact that we have to make it in a very careful way that preserves the best possible outcome for the state."

Asked about the transition from Gov. Gina Raimondo to the incoming administration of Lt. Gov. Dan McKee, Shekarchi forecast that it would happen sooner than later, with Raimondo's State of the State address on Feb. 3 being her final public presentation as governor. He's optimistic over McKee.

"He's trying to do the best thing. His passion, as most of you all know, is small business, which is very appropriate ... We all want the same thing. We may want to get there differently, but we all want to succeed. So, we will look at the governor and his appointments," he said.

Obituaries

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COLLECTIBLES



The Story a Badge Can Tell



By Joel Bohy
Historic Arms & Militaria
Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers
Cranston, RI



as a private in Company I of the 9th N.H.V. Soon after, his regiment left for Washington, DC. but they were not to be there long. Confederate General Robert E. Lee had marched north and a battle was imminent. Rand participated in the Battle of South Mountain, Maryland on September 14, as well as Antietam September 16-17. He also participated in the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia that December.

While looking at a collection of police and fire badges a few weeks ago, one caught my eye. It was a small silver shield that I instantly recognized not as a badge for police or fire, but a Civil War personal identification badge!

During the Civil War there was no such thing as the "dog tag" we think of today to identify a soldier if he was badly wounded or killed. A simple stamped or cast medallion was sold by sutlers and marked with a name, company, and unit that could be worn around the neck or carried in a pocket. Some soldiers opted for something a little nicer made in silver in a variety of shapes and engraved with the necessary information. They had a pinned back to secure to a uniform and served as both identification and a stylish insignia. I have seen them in a large variety of forms based upon how much the soldier wanted to spend. Some officers of higher rank had extremely high-quality badges and there are extant examples that were made by Tiffany & Company.

Back to the one that caught my eye. It was engraved with a line around the border with "W.H.R./Co. I./9th Regt./N.H.V." I knew the 9th New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry Regiment had a history of being at some of the major engagements of the Civil War. A visit to the regimental history and National Archives records filled in the rest.

William H. Rand was from Keene, New Hampshire and 22 years old when he enlisted on August 5, 1862

The 9th ended up at Vicksburg, Mississippi for the campaigns in 1863, and Rand was promoted to Sergeant on January 1, 1864. He was back in Virginia and participated in the horrific battles at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. After the Confederate army broke out of Petersburg, he followed the army west and was detached to guard Confederate General Richard S. Ewell's army after their surrender on April 6, 1865 at the Battle of Sailor's Creek. Soon after General Lee

surrendered and the war for Rand was close to being over. His unit participated in the Grand Review of the Armies on May 23 and he was mustered out of service on June 10, 1865 and returned home.

A lot of information from such a small badge but that is what makes them so interesting. This little piece of engraved silver helps tell one mans story of the Civil War.



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By JENNIFER COATES

The early-afternoon sun streams through the windows of Little Angels Daycare, casting a soft, diffused light on a small group of children who are settling in for their daytime nap. Snuggled in their own blankets, these little boys and girls have already had a busy morning and a good rest is just what they need to re-energize for the next half of their activity-filled day.

Overseeing the infants, toddlers and pre-K children at this sweet childcare center in Johnston is a team of attentive, patient, trained, experienced and carefully-chosen teachers. Each staff member has been hand-selected by Little Angels' owner Carol Breault and the center's administrator, Sarah Tejada. They know how important these teachers are to the children into whose hands they have been trusted, and they take this trust very seriously.

Little Angels has been the life work of Breault and the passion of Tejada ~ together, along with their dedicated staff, they make a formidable team. They are devoted to the children who attend this daycare, and most especially to their families with whom they have built lasting relationships. In Carol's words: "These are like our own children. You have to have a passion for this work, and we do!"

Little Angels Daycare is a place where play, fun, age-appropriate activities, stimulation, and experiential learning take place every day. The center, which has Bright Star's coveted ratings, has worked tirelessly to create a secure, safe, colorful, joyful and thoughtful environment for the over 60 children who are licensed to attend. Great effort has been made with every decision, from the state-mandated curriculum goals to the age-appropriate toys, books and activity centers, to the decorations on the walls to the outdoor playground. This is a place with predictable routines and lots



It's a typical, activity-filled day at Little Angels Day Care in Johnston as a group of inquisitive pre-K children and their teacher are happily engaged in their individual Artic sensory bins filled with shaving cream, cotton balls, Styrofoam "glaciers", snowflakes and Artic animals!

of love to go around.

During these difficult days, Carol and Sarah have done everything to accommodate those seeking childcare, beginning with their new "Referral Program." In this program, families who refer other families can receive up to 20% off their own tuition.

Also, if you work part-time, Little Angels is now offering a part-time program for new enrollees (while space is available) – call for hours and rates! Finally, newly enrolling families will receive ½ off registration and six months of free live-web camera access. Now is the time to spread the news to friends

and family who might need childcare, especially in these ever-changing and unpredictable times.

The staff of Little Angels want to assure current and incoming families that they are extremely vigilant in upholding all the CDC and Department of Human Services guidelines for preventing the spread of Covid. Your child's safety is always their first priority.

Little Angels Day Care is located at 83 Waterman Ave., minutes from Routes 6 and 295. You can reach them at 401-349-0711 or visit their website at www.littleangelsri.com. Follow them on Facebook for all the latest, updated news!

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Sports



MAKING AN IMPACT: Johnston freshman Ava Waterman in a recent game. (Photos by Alex Sponseller)

Lady Panthers look to get in win column

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Johnston girls basketball team is on the ropes early this season, dropping its first two games to Scituate, 58-31 and East Greenwich, 47-45.

The Panthers' season was supposed to tip off last Friday evening, however, moments prior to the start of the game, the contest was postponed until Sunday. Scituate rolled in the win and added to its win streak that stretches all the way to 2019.

Johnston would have a better performance the following game on the road



IN THE PAINT: Johnston's Hannah Calabro plays defense in the team's season opener.

■ PANTHERS- PAGE 13

Patience key this winter season

This past weekend marked the official start to the winter sports season, ending the hiatus that began shortly before the holidays in November.

It was great to be back out there and to reconnect with some coaches and players. It was different, as it will be for the foreseeable future, but something is better than nothing.

The kids seemed to be happy and having fun which is the most important part. At the high school level, that is what it is all about. It is great to see kids getting to see their friends, play their sports and feel some sense of nor-

My pitch



by
ALEX SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR
ALEXS@RHODYBEAT.COM

malcy. Especially for the seniors, I am happy that they are going to get to have a final season of play.

Having said that though, there was a sobering reality

■ PITCH- PAGE 13



EARNING A SPOT: Local basketball players compete at the Pirates' combine. (Submitted photos)

Pirates hold combine in Johnston

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Providence Pirates, who will be competing in the American Basketball Association, recently held its second combine to scout prospective players at the Johnston Recreation Center.

Rhode Island's newest professional sports team looks forward to becoming

a pillar of the community and has been actively searching for local talent on the court.

"Our business model is to find regional talent. We want to build our brand with local, homegrown talent. This area is under-recruited, there is incredible talent that doesn't get recognized for some

■ PIRATES- PAGE 12

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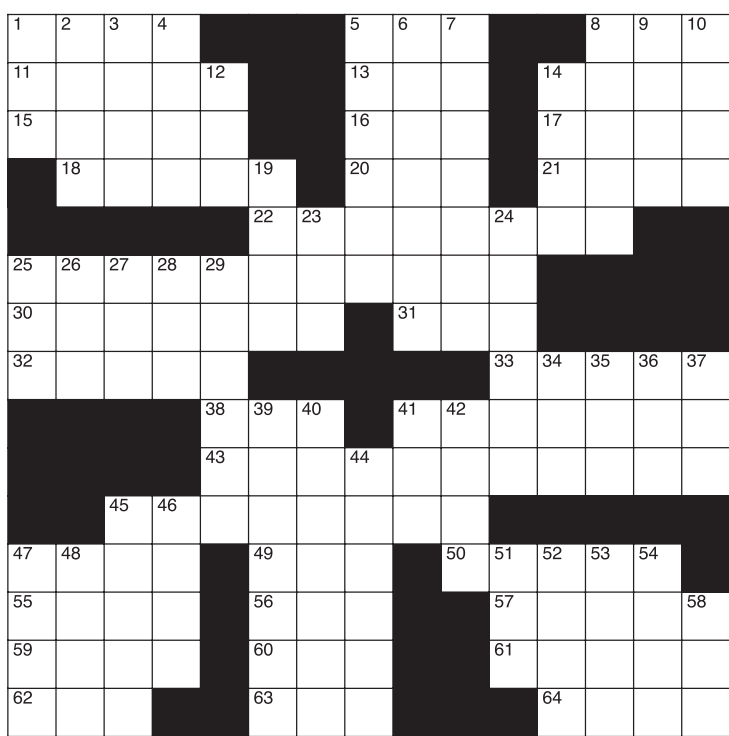
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5. Federal Republic of Germany
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11. "The Little Mermaid"
13. The common gibbon
14. Volcanic island in Fiji
15. Mother of Perseus
16. Egg cells
17. Teams' best pitchers
18. Credit associations
20. Advance
21. Hair styling products
22. Benign tumors
25. Arriving early
30. Called it a career
31. ___ Paulo, city
32. Avoid with trickery
33. Easter egg
38. Veterans battleground
41. Lack of success
43. Thing that causes disgust
45. Deep, continuing sound
47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
49. You might put it in a fire
50. Partner to "oohed"
55. Actor Idris

CLUES DOWN

2. Amounts of time
3. Aboriginal people of Japan
4. Popular veggies
5. Wedding accessory
6. Deep, narrow gorges
7. Dry cereal
8. Competitions that require speed
9. Cain and ___
10. Snake sound
12. Type of amino acid (abbr.)
14. Pattern of notes in Indian music
19. Satisfy
23. Misfire
24. Nearsightedness
25. Indicates before
26. Increase motor speed

27. When you hope to get there
28. Indicates position
29. Where rockers perform
34. Substitute
35. ___ juris: of one's own right
36. Earliest form of modern human in Europe: ___-magnon
37. Adult female bird
39. Do away with
40. Lens
41. Flattened appendage
42. Post or pillar in Greek temple
44. A medieval citizen of Hungary
45. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
46. Abba ___, Israeli politician
47. Sew
48. Evergreen trees and shrubs having oily one-seeded fruits
51. Swiss river
52. Grayish-white
53. A way to illustrate
54. College basketball superpower
58. Midway between south and southeast



TRYOUTS: Local basketball players take part in the Pirates' combine.

■ Pirates

(Continued from page 11)

reason. This gives guys a chance to showcase their skills and continue their basketball journey," said Pirates general manager Paul Rogers.

The team held a combine back in October and then one last week and scouted roughly 50 players. Twenty-four players have been selected to the training camp roster, which will then be whittled down further prior to the start of the inaugural season.

The season was slated to begin in October, but due to the pandemic, it was put on hold for the time being. The Pirates hope to see some exhibition play starting in March.

"We try to be active on social media, we already have a pretty large following. We found a lot of the guys by doing that. We also did an IGLive and a lot of the guys saw that as well. There are some guys that have played internationally but have not been able to recently because of COVID. We've been reaching out to guys like that. We have also seen a lot of guys that played Division II and Division III ball. This will give those guys an opportunity to play on a professional team, receive professional coaching and to be a part of a professional organiza-

tion. We hope to see them stay with us for a year or two and see them end up somewhere where they can make money," said Rogers.

Rogers was excited to see the turnout in the two combines and was happy with the atmosphere at each event.

"They came out and competed and it was great to see," Rogers said. "There was a real sense of brotherhood and camaraderie at the combine, guys cheering for each other and rooting for one another. Just the fact that they put themselves out there to test the waters and see if it was a fit, I applauded them. It was a great thing, there was a lot of high-level talent."

Moving forward, the team will look to finalize its roster and build chemistry quickly as it eyes its initial contests. More than anything, the Pirates look forward to becoming a staple in Rhode Island sports.

"We want to represent Rhode Island, South Eastern Mass and Connecticut well and that will be our draw. We're not looking outside of this region," Rogers said. "We want that fan support. Now that the Pawsox are out of town, this may make even more people check us out. We also want to give back to the community, we work with Help The Homeless RI, Providence Animal Rescue League. Giving back to the community is really important to us."

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CALLING THE SHOTS: Johnston point guard Emily Iannuccilli calls out a play.

■ Panthers

(Continued from page 11)

against East Greenwich, and had a chance to tie the game in the final seconds but came up short.

Despite the rocky start, coach Meghan Reall is optimistic when looking at the team's progress between the two games.

"It was definitely two tough teams to come out with, especially Scituate who is a really good team and has a few players that have been together for a while. That's kind of what I preached to the girls after that game. We had our ups and downs, we were a little bit nervous with it being the first game, and outside of my three (upperclassmen) we are a group of kids that have only been together for 10 days," said Reall.

Reall added: "We watched some film, saw some things we did well, saw some things we need to work on. The loss (against East Greenwich) was a heartbreaker. There was a lot of improvement since the first game and their confidence level was better. They played hard, hit shots when they had to hit shots, so that was a tough one. But the girls were able to see the potential that this team does have."

Tori Viau had led the Panthers, scoring a combined 35 points to this point. Ava Waterman has scored 14 through two games.

"I definitely expect (Viau) to keep doing that but teams are going to start to learn that, so she'll have to work even harder which I know she can do," said Reall of Viau's hot start. "She's absolutely a huge part of our offense. (Against EG), she kept saying, 'We

need points, we need points right now, I know we need to score,' and she did. She took it upon herself and she did. We need that, someone to put the team on their back and to hit big shots like she did."

With a shortened season, the pressure will be on in the next few games. Johnston played St. Ray's on Thursday, but the results were not available at press time.

"I told them that the things that we did against East Greenwich were the things that we are going to need to do, and we'll put the pieces of the puzzle together. We just need to keep at it, working hard at practice, and things will fit together the way they need to when it matters," said Reall. "Two games are not reflective of the type of team that we are. Positivity is the biggest thing for this year."

■ Pitch

(Continued from page 11)

this weekend.

Many, actually, most events were rescheduled or postponed to later dates. At least in the Beacon Communications coverage area. Some of the issues regarded scheduling conflicts with officials, others involved schools not being quite ready to host games, some involved the opposing schools and their own problems.

I was actually looking forward to catching some indoor track and field action on Saturday morning, but the Providence Career and Technical Institute along with the coaches association decided to not allow media for the opening events.

As happy and excited as I am to be back and to see the student-athletes have something to enjoy, it is clear how much different and tough this winter season will be to pull off.

Do I expect to make it through and see everything work out? Yes, the season is only going to be a month long, it would be pretty hard to cancel it at this point.

And yes, let me be fair, this was the first weekend and schools didn't even know if they would be cleared to host events until the middle of last week. There were going to obviously be some bumps along the way in the early going. I understand that.

But overall, I think the way this first weekend went is a sign of things to come. Nothing unexpected or drastic, but I think that it is a reminder that we need to all be patient and continue to work together to get back to normal. We have made some progress, but have a ways to go.

I'm starting with me on this. I have to be more patient. Of course, I am absolutely not complaining about the scheduling difficulties over the past

week. It's frustrating, but I am well aware of the necessity of implementing the appropriate safety precautions and making sure they are executed at each step. The risk is simply not one worth taking, so I am totally understanding of why things are choppy.

But in general, these types of issues will likely continue to come up in the next month, there is still plenty of work to be done, so let's remember to appreciate what we have and to do our best to make the most of this uncertain season.

In my opinion, with the results of this past weekend's NFC Championship game, New England finally received the answer of the Tom Brady-Bill Belichick debate. Brady was more valuable to the Patriots run of success than Belichick was.

And I do not say that lightly, I have been a Belichick sympathizer up until now.

We all know the truth, though. Neither of these guys would have been as successful without the other. Would Brady be a hall of fame player had he been drafted elsewhere? Yes. Would Belichick have been a hall of fame coach had he never crossed paths with Brady? Yes.

However, would each of these guys have reached the heights that they did, being considered arguably the best to ever do it at their respective positions? That is a much closer call.

But back to the question at hand. The reason I always sided with Bill was because he was the brains of the organization. Owner Rober Kraft put the pieces in place, but Bill was the one who really got everything organized to set sail.

Belichick has installed a stable, consistent program for the past 20 years. Prior to this past season, he found success even without Brady.

Brady fit into Bill's system perfectly

as well - a hardworking, structured quarterback with an eye for detail and was willing to put the team first.

Those are the reasons I always leaned Bill. It was his system, his program, his culture. Brady was drafted in the sixth round for a reason as well, he was not ready to hit the ground running right out of college and as we all know, this team was defense-first in the first three championship runs. The next three were Brady's years.

Now, as the Patriots are getting ready to draft the highest they have in awhile and are licking their wounds after a disappointing 7-9 season, Brady and the Bucs are getting ready to take on the defending champion Chiefs in the Super Bowl. Crazy.

It was not always pretty for Tampa Bay this year. There were some clear growing pains in the first half of the season between Brady fitting into their scheme and incorporating his own ideas, as well as just the building of familiarity with one another.

But down the stretch, this team started clicking and Brady has been playing Brady-like football. Sure, those three interceptions were not anything to boast about this past weekend, but he and the offense made enough plays to scoot past Aaron Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers and got the job done.

Now, to be fair, Brady had no excuse not to play well this year. The Tampa roster is loaded unlike any roster I have seen. Mike Evans, Chris Godwin, Rob Gronkowski, Antonio Brown, Leonard Fournette, Cameron Brate, a pair of young rising wideouts. Brady had everything he needed.

But make no mistake about it. Brady proved this year that the quarterback position is more important than the head coach. They work hand in hand and things are at their best when each is performing well, but the point has been made. Brady wins.

ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:

R	E	A	P	F	R	G	R	A	H
A	R	I	E	L	L	A	R	A	B
D	A	N	A	E	O	V	A	A	C
S	S	S	S	W	I	N	G	E	L
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R	E	T	I	R	E	D	S	A	O
E	V	A	D	E	P	A	S	C	H
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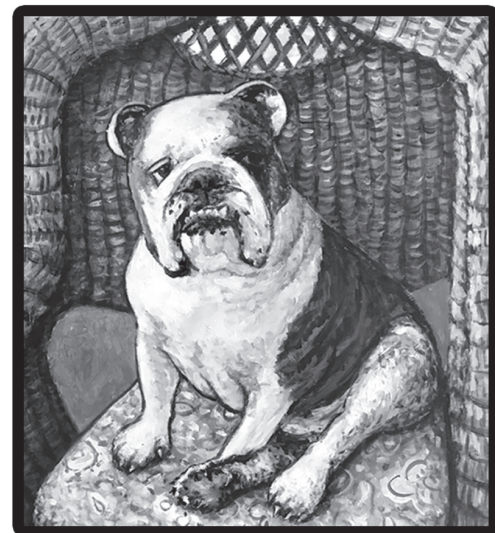
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Commission sets agenda, bass to be discussed

No Fluke



BY CAPTAIN
DAVE MONTI

next meeting may start later than originally planned.

Board meeting proceedings will be broadcast daily via webinar beginning Monday, Feb. 1 at 9:30 a.m. and continuing daily until the conclusion of the meeting (expected to be 4:30 p.m.) on Thursday, Feb. 4. The webinar will allow registrants to listen to board deliberations and view presentations and motions as they occur. To register for the webinar go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4886491769864000527>, Webinar ID# 151-774-483.

Each day, the webinar will begin 30 minutes prior to the start of the first meeting so that people can troubleshoot any connectivity or audio issues they may encounter. If you are having issues with the webinar (connecting to or audio related issues), please contact Chris Jacobs at 703.842.0790.

Striped Bass Board meeting

The Commission's Striped Bass Board will be meeting to discuss a revised draft of the "Public Information Document" (PID) for Amendment 7 to the Atlantic Striped Bass Management plan, but also to discuss discard mortality and state circle hook mandate compliance.

Capt. John McMurray, ASMFC member and president of the American Saltwater Guides Association said, "Of course recreational discards are high, as they are high in any fishery that is valued primarily as a sport fishery. We need to and we have mandated gear requirements e.g. circle hooks in bait fisheries that will reduce release mortality where it can be reduced, and yes, there should be outreach on better handling techniques, but overall, it is foolish to think we can effectively address

high discards in this fishery because people will always practice catch and release, whether it's voluntary or size-limit driven."

McMurray continued, "A 9 percent discard mortality rate isn't terribly high in my opinion, and it's simply part of the fishery and should be accepted as such. One thing is crystal clear. Turning discards/releases into harvest will drive fishing mortality higher by orders of magnitude, and that certainly isn't a solution, although some still seem to be hanging onto it."

The Stipend Bass Board is expected to take a look at a revised Public Information Documents at next week's meeting before approving it for public comment with public hearings on Amendment 7 likely held in the spring.

A few things to watch include the revisiting of the Goals and Objectives of the management plan. Capt. McMurray said, "This opens the door to completely alter how we manage striped bass, and if we aren't very vocal about our interests during the public comment period things could go bad quickly. We also need to keep a close eye on the reference point and management trigger comments. These could seriously lower the bar on what a healthy stock looks like and how the board reacts to problems in the fishery."

On a positive note in regard to Amendment 7 McMurray said, "There's also a few opportunities to really improve things. For one, we have a real opportunity to improve on how the Commission does Conservation Equivalency (CE) - allowing states to craft their own equivalent (on paper) regulations. Some states clearly use it to liberalize regulations. And for sure we can clarify some parameters around CE regulations and of



STRIPED BASS: Capt. Monti with a striped bass caught in Narragansett Bay with a circle hook using chunks of fresh Atlantic menhaden. Striped bass, circle hooks and an Amendment to the striped bass management plan will be discussed at next week's Atlantic Marine Fisheries Commission meeting. (Submitted photo)

course ask for some state accountability when they fail, which they often do."

Where's the bite?

Freshwater fishing is focusing on large and smallmouth bass. John Littlefield of Archie's Bait & Tackle, Riverside, said, "Things are kind of slow. We are in-between ice fishing, shore and kayak fishing. Not enough ice to ice fish in most ponds, but too much ice to launch a kayak or fish from shore in some places... Some anglers are trout fishing in ponds stocked by the states of RI and MA." For 2021 licensing information and a list of trout stocked ponds in Rhode Island

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/freshwater-fisheries>; and in Massachusetts visit www.mass.gov/freshwater-fishing-information.

Cod fishing. Party boats fishing for cod this winter (weather permitting include) the Frances Fleet at www.francesfleet.com, the Seven B's at www.sevenbs.com, and the Island Current at www.island-current.com.

Dave Monti holds a captain's master license and a charter fishing license. He is a RISAA board member, a member of the RI Party & Charter Boat Association, the American Saltwater Guides Association and the RI Marine Fisheries Council. Forward fishing news and photos to Capt. Dave at dmontifish@verizon.net

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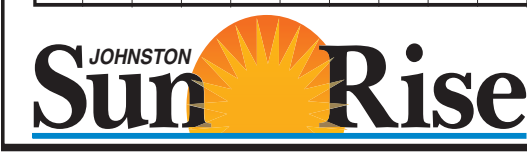
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Let's set an amazing education record this School Choice Week

(NewsUSA) - Did you ever thumb through the Guinness Book of World Records as a kid, awed by the amazing feats? This year, families can help set records in ways that may not make headlines, but will make a difference.

This January 24-30, families and educators will participate in America's largest annual celebration of K-12 school choices. During National School Choice Week, millions of students, teachers, parents, and community leaders will celebrate the importance of education and discuss what options they hope to see in the future -- and you're invited to join.

Most years, these conversations take place at rallies, student showcases, multi-school fairs, and other huge, in-person community events. This year, school choice celebrants have shown their adaptability in light of COVID-19, planning drive-in movie nights, virtual conferences, car parades, and other safe activities that are diverse and unique, just as students are.

What motivates so many Americans to celebrate School Choice Week? For



some, it's firsthand experience of how a great school fit can change a life. For others, it's the recognition that different shapes and sizes of classrooms and learning techniques help kids succeed. For many, it's a desire to celebrate inspiring teachers or innovative schools

-- traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, private schools, online schools, or homeschooling groups.

The Week's energy and momentum is an amazing reminder to focus on the good. Yes, we must absolutely evalu-

ate our children's learning options, look for ways to grow. COVID-learning disruptions revealed far many ways that our education system must improve.

But we also should celebrate schools that are doing an awesome job, the teachers who have personally checked in with families to ensure remote learning's success, and the parents who've stepped up to help their child learn to use Zoom or Webex during a frenetic time.

If you'd like to be a part of this record-breaking Week, it's not too late. You can celebrate your educational choice by thanking a teacher or sharing your family's education story on social media with the hashtag #schoolchoice week. Plus, you can find comprehensive, unbiased information about your state's options at schoolchoiceweek.com. Together, let's set a record in shining light on K-12 education.

Andrew Campanella is president of National School Choice Week and the author of "The School Choice Roadmap: 7 Steps to Finding the Right School for Your Child."

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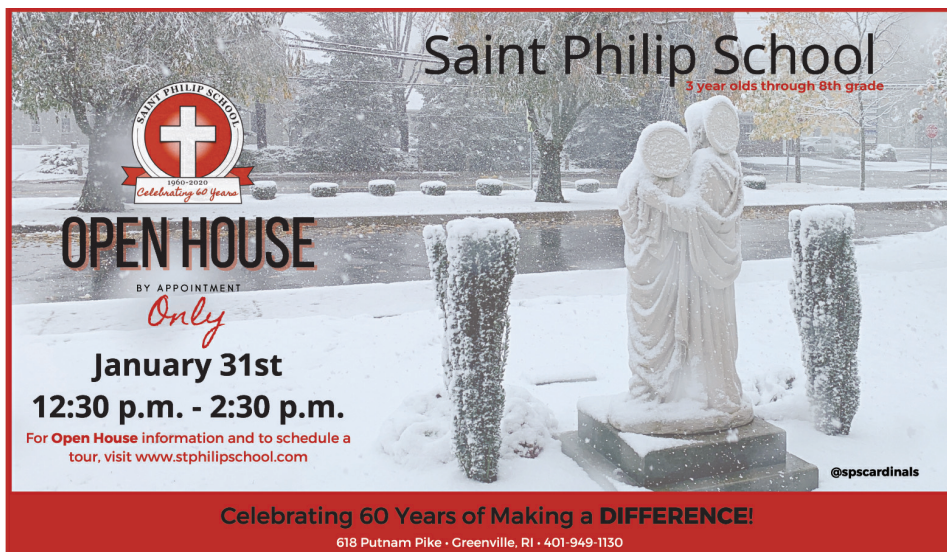
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Community giving starts at school

(Metro) - When people want to give back, many look to support national charities and other causes that they hold near and dear. Certainly these are worthwhile causes. However, giving back on a local level is a great way to help the people you see every day.

Schools are the heart of many communities. School buildings may serve as gathering spaces for sports practices or meetings for various organizations. Even though schools are likely to receive municipal funding for certain operations, budgets are frequently being cut and schools may need all the help they can get. This year the boundaries of the budget may be pushed even further as schools revamp their spaces and implement certain safety protocols to confront the pandemic. Now more than ever schools may need help. Here's how to do just that.

- Volunteer your time. Find out ways you can volunteer time at school. This may be helping teachers make copies of assignments, supervising children at recess or lunch hours, serving as a chaperone at school functions, or being a coach or mentor for afterschool activities.
- Attend and participate in fundraisers. Fundraisers are essential to help offset costs for many special events and services for students. Whenever possible, give wisely through fundraisers.
- Provide supplies for classrooms. Teachers often have to supplement their classrooms with supplies bought out of pocket. Reach out to teachers to see which items they need and do your

best to supply them.

• Join the PTA or a similar school-sanctioned organization. Many groups perform functions that facilitate strong connections between home and school. Joining and working with such organizations can improve the school experience for everyone.



- Buy "Box Tops"-affiliated products. The Box Tops for Education program donates \$0.10 per box top label collected and submitted by schools back to that school. More than 80,000 elementary schools have earned money through the program to buy equipment and supplies. Box Tops can be found on many different food packages.
 - Treat the teacher. In addition to supporting Teacher Appreciation Days and other school events, send in an uplifting note, snack or another way of showing you appreciate his or her efforts.
- Schools play integral roles in many communities, and efforts to give back can begin on campus or through school-sponsored programs.

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Worried about the COVID learning slide? 4 steps parents can take

(BPT) - School is so unpredictable this year, it's hard not to worry about the what ifs. What if my child falls behind due to distance learning? What if my kids have trouble getting back to in-person learning? It's an anxious time for many parents.

In fact, a recent Understood/YouGov survey of 2,000 parents of 5- to 17-year-olds, shows that 71% are worried that their children are facing challenges this year. For parents of kids who are diagnosed with or show signs of learning and thinking differences, that number is 79%. And nearly half (48%) of all parents are worried about their child being left behind because of the "COVID slide."

The shutdowns last spring gave parents a window into their children's learning and behavior. And for some, it raised new questions - and concerns. Questions like:

- Why is my child so daydreamy?
- Is it normal for kids to have meltdowns this often?
- Why is my child still struggling with reading?
- Do other kids have this much trouble following directions?

Nearly four in 10 (37%) parents surveyed by Understood have noticed new or different behaviors in their child during the pandemic. Trying to make sense of challenges or differences isn't always easy. But getting answers allows parents and professionals to get kids support at early as possible.

"Every child is unique, so it's difficult for caregivers to know which behaviors are normal for their age and which might be flags that something else is going on," says Bob Cunningham, executive director of learning development for social impact organization Understood. "Families are spending more time together and some may have started to notice things they didn't before. The good news is there are some easy steps they can take."

What are learning and thinking differences

Kids develop at different rates, so it can be hard for families to interpret what they're seeing. Some of these struggles can also be a sign of learning and thinking differences like dyslexia, ADHD and dyscalculia (a learning disability in math).

At least 15 million children in the United States - one in five - learn or think differently. They may struggle with different skills, including reading, writing, math, focus and following directions. Sometimes those challenges are obvious, but other times the signs can be confusing. For example, difficulty with spelling can be a sign of a reading challenge. Not being able to tell time might be a problem with math.

Because the signs of learning and thinking differences aren't always clear, Understood developed a free tool called Take N.O.T.E. in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics. It's designed to guide families to get answers about what they are seeing in their child.

4 steps to start finding answers

The Take N.O.T.E. tool centers on a simple four-step process:

- Notice if there's something going on with your child that's out of the ordinary.
- Observe and keep track of patterns in your child's behavior.
- Talk to your child, teachers, aides and caregivers about what you're observing.
- Engage with trusted professionals, like pediatricians.

"Not knowing what different behaviors or struggles mean or how to help can feel stressful and overwhelming for parents and caregivers," says Cunningham. "These four steps can help you learn more and move down a path to best help your child. Everyone who learns and thinks differently should feel



supported at home, at school and at work." Visit u.org/takenote to learn more and access Take N.O.T.E. in English or Spanish. You'll find a free digital resource with the tools to notice, observe and track patterns in your child's behavior.



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The benefits of a new approach to learning for students

(Metro) - The validity of the adage "necessity is the mother of invention" was on full display during the COVID-19 outbreak. People quickly had to learn to adapt to a new way of life, including an educational system that was transformed dramatically by social distancing guidelines.

More than 76 million students are enrolled in United States schools, per the latest Census Bureau information. In 2018, 2.12 million students were in Canadian postsecondary institutions alone. In a matter of days, millions of students who once attended classes in-person were forced to transition to virtual learning instruction. The process showed just how flexible learning systems can be, and how virtual instruction may become more than an emergency protocol in the future.

Schools utilized systems like Google Classroom, Canvas and virtual meeting apps to connect and learn. While in-class lessons provide the socialization and one-on-one interaction that can be vital for students' academic success, there are many different reasons why virtual instruction can be a key component of learning models as well. When virtual learning is used in conjunction with traditional teaching, students may have a more well-rounded experience. Here are some potential benefits that may unfold as more data is collected.

- Pace: Virtual learning affords students the chance to work on lessons at

a pace that fits their individual needs. Students can go back and re-read or re-work problems until they're satisfied they have learned their lesson. Lessons can be slowed down or sped up depending on proficiency, creating a customized educational experience.

- No more weather days. Many school districts include snow or extreme weather days into their calendars, adding on extra days at the end of school year to meet the specified number of educational days. Remote learning can take over in these times and

keep school districts from having to pad calendars.

- Convenience: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later to provide students the best chance to get

the amount of sleep they need. Still, most adolescents currently start school before 8:30 a.m. Remote learning enables students to complete their assignments when it works best for them. This may help them get more sleep, too.

- Apps: Learning apps are a new wave of educational tools that have helped buoy virtual instruction. Primary school students or those with individual education plans may benefit the most from reinforced app skills that match their learning pace in fun ways.

Virtual home instruction may become a large part of the educational landscape even after it's no longer a social distancing necessity.



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COVID-Safe Wintertime Activities for Seniors

As winter settles in, many seniors are challenged to physical and mental well-being, while dealing with social distancing, isolation, cabin fever and boredom.

Staying safe from Covid-19 has left many seniors feeling the monotony of daily life during a pandemic. And winter's sometimes gloomy outlook can bring fresh concern from older adults and their loved ones. But even though things look quite a bit different than they used to, there's still plenty of opportunity for seniors to engage their spirits and enjoy the season. Check out the following COVID-safe winter activities to help foster enthusiasm and engagement for yourself or the senior in your life.

Look to the Stars

Long winter nights, particularly those with clear skies, can be some of the best times to partake in the awe and wonder of stargazing. In fact, winter skies can bring the brightest stars. Constellations like Orion, Taurus and

Canis Major are in full view. Cold air holds less hazy moisture than warm air so it's a prime time to look to the the night sky. Study up on your astronomy.

Soup

Winter is a great time to experiment with new recipes for soups and stews. Try traditional options like chicken noodle soup and beef stew, to more adventurous selections like white bean, butternut squash, split pea or carrot ginger, there's an array of choices to try out.

Put Pen to Paper

Studies have shown the act of letter writing has tremendous benefits for both the writer and the recipient, according to AARP. This winter, consider finding a pen pal. It's been said that the very act of writing can help improve memory function, decrease the symptoms of certain medical conditions and evoke greater feelings of happiness. This is

a fun way to stay connected, start a new relationship and partake in the joy of writing and receiving.

Out in the Garden

Don't let the chilly weather put a damper on your gardening. Certain vegetables actually taste better after being exposed to frost. These include varieties like kale, brussel sprouts and cabbage.

Winter is also a great time to perform any necessary pruning of fruit trees, vines, deciduous shrubs and ornamental trees. And it's the perfect opportunity to begin planning the new year's blooms and harvests. Consider plotting out your garden spaces, ordering seeds and summer bulbs, and building your garden design.

Stretch it Out

The practice of yoga has long been known to help people manage stress and anxiety, improve flexibility and coordination, support

mental clarity, increase strength and promote overall physical health. Often, when we think of yoga activities, we envision young, able bodies stretching and contorting in difficult positions. The truth, however, is that yoga can be practiced by people of all ages and abilities, and has become quite popular among the senior population in the form of chair yoga.

An exercise that can be done sitting on a chair or standing on the ground while using the chair for support, this modified, gentler variety of yoga can be a great outlet for both physical activity and meditative needs over the cold winter months. If you're a beginner, there are some basic chair poses, or "asanas," you can look into trying. Consider signing up for a virtual class or accessing some literature to help you get started.

Staying engaged this winter is all about finding joy in new and old activities, all while practicing them safely.

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RETIREMENT SPARKS

by ELAINE M. DECKER

Banned Words & Phrases 2021

This is my tenth foray into preparing my own list of words and phrases to be banned in the coming year. The fact that many of my previously banned entries are still in popular use has not dissuaded me from giving you ten new ones for 2021.

Every banned words list this year that has a shred of editorial gravitas should include “woke,” even though people seldom agree on what it means. If you’re woke, you supposedly pay attention to social and racial justice issues. As with anything controversial, the meanings of these aspects of justice change depending on your politics. During the 2020 election, pundits on both the far left and the far right hijacked woke for their own purposes. In 2021, wake up, folks, and stop woking!

I’m thrilled to toss into my lexiconic dumpster the catch phrase “tick tock,” the lazy man’s way of saying “the clock is running.” After years of popping up in TV programs, it’s wormed its way into media interviews. Newsflash. The clock is always running. Say what you mean: “We’re running out of time,” because—tick tock—time has run out for using that phrase.

I HAVE A HUNCH

I’m weary of people defending their prognostications and far out opinions by saying “I have a hunch.” As far as I’m concerned, you might as well just say “I have an itch.” Scratch it in private; don’t share it with us. Especially if you have no medical expertise and are publicizing your hunches about what to do during a pandemic.

My next three entries come courtesy of

Senator Amy Klobuchar.

The question Who does that? started with Klobuchar and has been picked up by other politicians. We know “who does that,” because you just quoted their objectionable behavior. If you mean no reasonable or sentient being would do that, say so.

WOKE

Senator Klobuchar popularized the now banned word “receipts” to assure would-be voters she’d accomplished things she claimed to be capable of. “I have the receipts!” became the battle cry of many candidates who felt their CV wasn’t convincing enough on its own. It reached such a frenzy that I expected one of them to actually hold up a fistful of papers. As it turned out, that gesture was co-opted by a certain press secretary, brandishing a handful of affidavits to prove election fraud.

“I see you” is often heard from a politician trying to convince an audience that she’s “woke” when it comes

to their concerns. According to the NY Times, actress Jane Alexander refused to use that phrase in the play Grand Horizons that opened in early 2020. Of course you see us if we’re in front of you. And don’t try to get around this ban by substituting “I hear you,” because I don’t feel

TICK TOCK

WHO DOES THAT...

you on this one.

Dog whistles employ coded language to get a target group to support a certain position while avoiding negative attention and without riling up the opposition. The whistles sound normal to most of us, but they communicate something else to the intended audience. “Defend family values” is a good example. Reverse dog whistles convey something that is not true, but evokes a knee-jerk reaction to a particular phrase or label. Used out of context, “defeat socialism” is one of these. Let’s put a plug in either type of dog whistling.

BREAKING NEWS

The phrase “circular firing squad” refers to people engaged in internal conflicts and mutual recriminations that are self-defeating. It must have been invented to describe Democratic primaries and I’d like to retire it once and for all. The only thing more self-destructive would be eating their young, which QAnon actually claims that they do.

I can’t believe it has taken this long for me to jettison CNN’s famous catch phrase “Breaking News.” When all of your news is breaking and you repeat it all day long, pretty soon none of it is breaking. It’s like seeing “sale price” on a grocery shelf for months on end. CNN, if it ain’t breakin’, don’t “Break” it.

“So They Say” is a nuanced variation on “people are saying,” a phrase I banned in 2017. “So they say” usually comes after whatever is supposedly said, whereas “people are saying” comes before. If you think you can sneak this by me as a substitute, guess again. If you can’t tell us who “they” is, you can’t cite them coming or going.

As a breast cancer survivor, I’ve been using the phrase “not my first rodeo” since my recent diagnosis with lung cancer. I’m determined to put this in my rearview in 2021, so I don’t plan to need the rodeo phrase much longer. Giving it up now is a small price to pay if Tom Selleck stops saying it in those reverse mortgage ads that carpet bomb the TV. A girl can dream, can’t she?

That’s my list for 2021. I trust I can count on all of you to comply.

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Elaine M. Decker’s newest book is Retirement Downsizing—A Humorous Guide. Her other books include Retirement Sparks, Retirement Sparks Again, Retirement Sparks Redux and CANCER: A Coping Guide. Her essays appear in the anthologies: 80 Things To Do When You Turn 80 and 70 Things To Do When You Turn 70. All are available on Amazon.com. Contact her at: emdecker@ix.netcom.com

SO THEY SAY

Turn Your Hobby into a Business

Secretary of State Nellie M. Gorbea and the RI Department of State staff invite you to the second annual "From Passion to Profit: Turn Your Hobby into a

Business" series. Sign up to hear from the Business Services Division, partners like SCORE, the Small Business Development Center, and local business owners on their journey from transforming their hobby into a small business. All four sessions will be recorded and made available to all registered attendees; you do not need to register for all four to be added to the mailing list.

Session 1: Wednesday, January 20 from 6-8 p.m.

“Where do I start?” Learn from someone who’s been there before. Hear from business owners who successfully turned their hobby into a business and attend a roundtable discussion with local mentorship and business resource organizations.

Session 2: Wednesday, January 27 from 6-8 p.m.

Choose a Platform and Price Your Product

Compare online marketplace platforms and learn how to competitively price your product.

Session 3: Wednesday, February 3 from 6-8 p.m.

Build an Online Presence and Market Your Business

Learn how to boost your social media presence to connect with customers.

Session 4: Wednesday, February 10 from 6-8 p.m.

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- recently had a major loss or change
- are a caregiver
- lack a sense of purpose

Ideas for staying connected

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Volunteer. You'll feel better by helping others.



Stay in touch with family, friends, and neighbors in person, online, or by phone.



Consider adopting a pet. Animals can be a source of comfort and may also lower stress and blood pressure.




ACCORDING TO DON

by DON FOWLER



Is Florida Some Kind Of Heaven?

While we hunker down for another cold winter, dreading the next snowstorm and eagerly awaiting spring, many of our snow-bunny friends and neighbors are enjoying the warm Florida sun.

Many older Rhode Islanders have chosen to make the Sunshine State their permanent residence.

"Some Kind of Heaven", a recent movie at the Avon explores life at the 31 square mile The Villages, America's largest retirement community, referred to as "Disneyland for Retirees" is home to over 130,000 senior citizens.

We watched as seniors drove their golf carts around the enormous facility and took part in countless activities such as aerobics, pickle ball, line dancing, swimming, golf, and just about any activity for seniors you could imagine.

They attend lessons on cooking, finances, self improvement, relationships, and a variety of hobbies.

The Villages is a self contained community in central Florida that provides all of the services for living your "Golden Years" without ever having to leave the area.

While the movie shows the whirlwind of daily and nightly activities available to its residents, it also focuses on some residents who have not found the Utopia they were looking for.

Retiring in Florida certainly has the advantages of warm weather, availability to the ocean, and being around people of your age.

On the down side, it takes you away from family and friends and the many institutions and attractions that were an important part of your life.

We have friends who moved to a smaller planned community in Florida who are attracted to the weather and the nearby beach, but quickly missed their many relatives.

They enjoy the amenities of the pool and recreation building, but are not as thrilled about the many rules that are strictly enforced by the governing Board of Directors.

"We actually become involved in politics," Tim told me. "I was elected to the Board, and soon discovered that the other Board members were also retired CEO's, and everybody wanted to be in charge."

Years ago my son moved to the Tampa area (In August!) and could not cope with the humidity, heat and 5:00 p.m. thunder showers.

Florida, and The Villages, is an acquired taste. Some may enjoy spending the winter there, while others choose to make a permanent adjustment.

For me, I'll take Rhode Island any day.

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STRESS AND COPING WITH COVID-19

Information adapted from CDC



Stress is Normal

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

People who may respond strongly to stress

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
- Children and teens
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use



Stress during COVID-19 may include:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs



Things you can do to support yourself

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media.
- Take care of your body.
- Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
- Try to eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Utilize Available Resources to manage Stress

- [CDC](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health](#)
- [Fresno County Department of Public Health](#)
- [Helping Homebound Children](#)
- [Parents Guide to Coping](#)
- [CA Public Health Guide](#)
- [What to do if you are sick](#)



YOUR TAXES

by MEG CHEVALIER

2021 Tax Filing Season Begins Feb. 12

IRS outlines steps to speed refunds during pandemic

The Internal Revenue Service announced that the nation's tax season will start on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021, when the tax agency will begin accepting and processing 2020 tax year returns.

The Feb. 12 start date for individual tax return filers allows the IRS time to do additional programming and testing of IRS systems following the Dec. 27 tax law changes that provided a second round of Economic Impact Payments and other benefits.

This programming work is critical to ensuring IRS systems run smoothly. If filing season were opened without the correct programming in place, then there could be a delay in issuing refunds to taxpayers. These changes ensure that eligible people will receive any remaining stimulus money as a Recovery Rebate Credit when they file their 2020 tax return.

To speed refunds during the pandemic, the IRS urges taxpayers to file electronically with direct deposit as soon as they have the information they need. People can begin filing their tax returns immediately with tax software companies, including IRS Free File partners. These groups are starting to accept tax returns now, and the returns will be transmitted to the IRS starting Feb. 12.

"Planning for the nation's filing season process is a massive undertaking, and IRS teams have been working non-stop to prepare for this as well as delivering Economic Impact Payments in record time," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. "Given the pandemic, this is one of the nation's most important filing seasons ever. This start date will ensure that people get their needed tax refunds quickly while also making sure they receive any remaining stimulus payments they are eligible for as quickly as possible."

Last year's average tax refund was more than \$2,500. More than 150 million tax returns are expected to be filed this year, with the vast majority before the Thursday, April 15 deadline.

Under the PATH Act, the IRS cannot issue a refund involving the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) before mid-Febru-

ary. The law provides this additional time to help the IRS stop fraudulent refunds and claims from being issued, including to identity thieves.

The IRS anticipates a first week of March refund for many EITC and ACTC taxpayers if they file electronically with direct deposit and there are no issues with their tax returns. This would be the same experience for taxpayers if the filing season opened in late January. Taxpayers will need to check Where's My Refund for their personalized refund date.

Overall, the IRS anticipates nine out of 10 taxpayers will receive their refund within 21 days of when they file electronically with direct deposit if there are no issues with their tax return. The IRS urges taxpayers and tax professionals to file electronically. To avoid delays in processing, people should avoid filing paper returns wherever possible.

Tips for taxpayers to make filing easier

To speed refunds and help with their tax filing, the IRS urges people to follow these simple steps:

- File electronically and use direct deposit for the quickest refunds.
- Check IRS.gov for the latest tax information, including the latest on Economic Impact Payments. There is no need to call.

- For those who may be eligible for stimulus payments, they should carefully review the guidelines for the Recovery Rebate Credit. Most people received Economic Impact Payments automatically, and anyone who received the maximum amount does not need to include any information about their payments when they file. However, those who didn't receive a payment or only received a partial payment may be eligible to claim the Recovery Rebate Credit when they file their 2020 tax return. Tax preparation software, including IRS Free File, will help taxpayers figure the amount.

- Remember, advance stimulus payments received separately are not taxable, and they do not reduce the taxpayer's refund when they file in 2021.

For additional information, please visit www.irs.gov.



SENIOR ISSUES
by LARRY GRIMALDI

You Know You Might Be Getting Older When...

(With Sincere Apologies To Jeff Foxworthy)



Jeff Foxworthy gained popularity with his, “You might be a red neck, if” comedy routine poking self-deprecating, good-natured fun at uniquely southern customs and habits. With that concept in mind, the inspiration for this column title, “You Know You Might Be Getting Older When,” suddenly popped up while I was listening to the song “Sunny” by Bobby Hebb on the 60s radio channel. Since I will celebrate my 72nd birthday in February, here are the first 21 answers that came to mind, (with sincere apologies to Jeff Foxworthy),

You Know You Might Be Getting Older When...

- All of your “anniversaries,” (wedding, high school, and college graduations, etc.) start with the numbers in the 50s.
- Your children are all in their 40s and you have four grandchildren (and one due in August).
- Your granddaughters have their drivers licenses and will be college freshmen in the fall.
- You have to explain Elvis, the Beach Boys, the Eagles, psychedelic rock, folk and protest music, disco, Baby Boomers, Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew to them.
- Revisiting the town Little League field to catch your grandson’s baseball game and seeing the sons and daughters of kids YOU coached in Little League. (It’s called the Full Circle Syndrome).
- The kid at the counter in Dunkin’ Donuts AUTOMATICALLY gives you the senior ten percent discount without asking.
- The doctor’s receptionist AUTOMATICALLY asks for your Medicare and senior health insurance cards.
- Come October, you anxiously await the announcement of the Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment and the new Medicare Part B premium.
- Bending down to tie your shoes qualifies as morning stretching and fitness exercises, while secretly considering Velcro and slip-on footwear, and recalling the days when you had to get up from the couch and rotate the knobs on your black and white television to change the channel (today, that would be classified as “cardio”).
- You push the thermostat up two degrees because it seems a little cool in the house at 70.
- Cash registers had buttons and levers.
- The local gas station and car repair garage would give you time to pay your bill by keeping your tab in a file box and listing weekly payments on the back of the bill.

- There were long lines at the bank every Friday to cash your paycheck. (“Direct deposit” was the money you put into your pocket).
- The busiest grocery shopping time was Friday night.
- Your parents went to the laundromat every Saturday.
- Mortgage and loan applications contained less pages than War and Peace.
- A REAL, LIVE person answered customer service calls and inquiries.
- Your father wrapped the garbage in newspaper, tied the package with string, and put it in a REAL metal can until garbage collection day.
- Baseball cards were traded, pitched, or put into the spokes of your bike to make it sound like a motorcycle and were NOT viewed as an investment.
- Midnight Mass in my home parish at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence consuming more than two hours because the Bishop presided over a concelebrated service with a celestial squadron of what seemed like 100 priests (to a nine year-old altar boy like myself).
- Tuning into your favorite radio or television program did not require a degree in electronics, a masters in computer technology, and a Ph.D. in “Cloud” exploration.

*BONUS: You can remember when people used to say, “There is no difference in the nation’s political parties.”

I hereby grant unconditional literary license and full copyright permission for you to create your own Top 21 “YOU KNOW YOU MIGHT BE GETTING OLDER WHEN...”list. Have fun!

Larry Grimaldi is a retired freelance writer living in North Providence. Comments can be e-mailed to lvgrimaldi49@gmail.com



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Staying Mentally Healthy

During this extraordinary time of isolation and stress, mental health has become an important topic to discuss. Seniors are under stricter visitation guidelines depending on what state they live in, and whether they are at home or in senior living. Regardless of your living situation, maintaining good mental health is vital to your overall health.

What is mental health?

- Mental health is our perception of psychological and emotional well-being.

- Good mental health helps us cope with stress, disappointment, and grief. It doesn't mean that we don't experience these feelings. But it does mean that we can cope and recover.

- Research has shown that mental health can be adversely affected by social isolation and loneliness. Loneliness can contribute to depression and anxiety.

Lack of social engagement can lead to increased problems with thinking and memory. It can also cause a worsening of medical problems.

The Importance of Social Distancing During COVID-19

Social distancing is the idea that when people stay apart (6 feet) they are less likely to be exposed to the virus. COVID-19 is spread through respiration. This includes coughing, sneezing, or otherwise touching surfaces where the virus lives for several days. The Centers for Disease Control has the most updated information on the virus and recommended precautions during the pandemic.

We now know that some people may have the virus but may not have any symptoms, which means that everyone must follow safe hygiene protocols. Many assisted living communities across the country are requiring a mandatory 14-day quarantine for anyone who leaves the community. This would minimize their chances of passing the virus to someone else if they are confined to their apartment or room.

How to Keep Seniors Mentally Stimulated

Now that we have a better understanding of the importance of staying mentally and socially stimulated, let's look

at some activities to make this possible. This will require ingenuity and a little courage too!

Fun Ways to Connect with Technology

Technology can be unfamiliar and frightening territory for many seniors. But what better time to learn than now? To take advantage of the many social platforms, it will require you to get a smartphone, laptop, or iPad. Here are some of the more popular options for staying connected with technology:

- Facebook. Facebook is the largest social networking platform in the world, and with good reason. Using Facebook is a good way to stay connected with friends and family. You can share ideas, repost articles of interest, post photos, and more. You can even follow news outlets to get up to the minute information.

- Facetime. Facetime is a video and audio calling service. You will need an iPhone, laptop or iPad to use it. Like Facebook, it is free. Seeing your children or grandchildren can be immensely reassuring and fun.

- Email. Yes, good old fashion email is still a great way to communicate with people. If you really want to impress your grandkids, learn to text.

Stimulating Mental Activities

Being alone can make it tough to stay mentally engaged, but mental engagement is more important than ever if you are without a spouse or other person to be with. Consider these options.

- Games. Word and card games can keep your mind active. Consider jigsaw puzzles, crossword puzzles, and Sudoku. Don't forget about online games like solitaire, Words with Friends, and hundreds of others.

- Using the internet to travel. It is now possible to travel right from your chair. Visit museums, other countries or cities. Check out Travel and Leisure's 12 Famous Museum Tours. Here is another collection of museums and other travel sites including some National Parks. And if you haven't tried Google Earth, you must give it a try. Fly to any part of the world that appeals to you and before you know it, hours have passed by. You can do this from your smartphone, computer or iPad.

- Reading. Reading is an under appreciated activity. It can stimulate the imagination and take you to places you have never been to before. Use a kindle or the good old fashion library.

- Writing. If you can write, try it out. Whether it is journaling or a story you have been burning to tell, now might be the time to do it. Perhaps this is a good time to write your personal history for your children and grandchildren.

- Humor. Although humor may not seem like a mentally stimulating activity, it is a mentally healthy one. Watch movies or funny television shows. Subscribe to Netflix or Hulu to expand your options and view from the comfort and safety of your home.

How Caregivers Can Help Seniors Stay Engaged

Caregivers are in a unique position to help facilitate and enhance the suggestions we have outlined here. To take it one step further, they can help make many of these activities possible. Let's look at how caregivers can provide invaluable support in keeping seniors engaged.

- Help with technology. Caregivers can teach seniors how to use a smartphone, laptop or iPad in the privacy of their home. It can take time to become comfortable and familiar with technology if you have never used it before. Caregivers can show seniors how to use social media apps to maximize their potential to bring people together.

- Companionship. Caregivers can fill that vital gap of socialization. Whether it is talking about family, life history, current events, or feelings. Conversation helps people feel connected and appreciated. It stimulates the brain in positive and meaningful ways.

- Playing games. Having someone to play games with opens up a whole new world of possibilities. These could be card games, board games, sharing a puzzle, or learning online activities that are mentally stimulating.

Being alone during the COVID-19 pandemic does not mean your mental health has to suffer. By attending to your mental and physical health, you can thrive under these conditions. A caregiver can be an enormous help during these difficult times.

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Save Time with Simple Sweet Potato Recipes

FAMILY FEATURES

Time is of the essence in many kitchens across the country, especially during this busy season when everything seems to happen at once. Whether it's in-person or virtual school responsibilities, extracurricular activities, work deadlines or family obligations leaving you with less time, creating delicious and nourishing meals for loved ones that you can be proud of doesn't have to take up an entire morning or evening.

When time is short and your family is hungry, you can turn to Honest Earth Mashed Sweet Potatoes from the potato experts at Idahoan. With no artificial colors, flavors or preservatives, they are made with simple ingredients, including sweet potatoes, brown sugar and real butter. They're a good source of vitamin A and rich in fiber, antioxidants and minerals, including potassium and iron, making them a perfect addition to nutritious family meals.

As the first product of its kind, Honest Earth Mashed Sweet Potatoes save precious prep, cook and cleanup time because they come ready to heat in just 60 seconds right in their convenient, microwavable pouch. That means your family can say "good morning" to a creative breakfast like Sweet Potato Waffles with Whipped Cream and Berry Compote in just a matter of minutes.

As dinnertime draws near, turn to an American classic and the nostalgic taste of comfort food – Sweet Potato Casserole with Pecans and Toasted Marshmallows – to warm you and all your loved ones from the inside-out. Requiring just a few ingredients, it's an ideal solution for busy weeknights when you need a shortcut that doesn't sacrifice quality or taste.

For more information and time-saving recipe ideas, visit Idahoan.com/sweet.



Sweet Potato Waffles with Whipped Cream and Berry Compote

Yield: 4 large waffles

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs, separated
- 3/4 cup 2% milk
- 1 pouch Honest Earth Mashed Sweet Potatoes
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, plus additional for brushing on waffle iron, divided

Berry Compote:

- 1 cup raspberries
- 1 cup blackberries
- 1 cup blueberries
- 2-3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 dash lemon zest or juice
- whipped cream

Preheat waffle iron to medium heat.

In medium bowl, whisk flour, baking powder and salt.

In separate bowl, blend egg yolks (reserve whites), milk, sweet potatoes and 2 tablespoons oil until smooth.

Add flour mixture to egg and milk mixture; blend until no clumps remain.

In separate bowl, whip reserved egg whites until stiff peaks form. Fold egg whites gently into batter.

Using pastry brush, oil waffle iron then add batter and cook until waffle removes easily. Repeat with remaining batter.

To make berry compote: Wash raspberries, blackberries and blueberries. Drain but do not dry. In small saucepan over medium-low heat, warm berries. Add sugar and lemon zest or juice. Cook until berries have broken down and juice reaches low simmer. Serve warm over waffles and top with whipped cream.

Sweet Potato Casserole with Pecans and Toasted Marshmallows

Servings: 2

- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1 pouch Honest Earth Mashed Sweet Potatoes
- nonstick cooking spray
- 1 1/2 cups miniature marshmallows

Position oven rack in upper one-third of oven. Preheat oven to 350 F.

In blender, blend pecans into sweet potatoes.

Divide between two 1-cup ramekins sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Sprinkle with marshmallows and bake about 15 minutes, or until marshmallows are toasted and browned.



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Alzheimer's Association Rhode Island Chapter welcomes new director of public policy and communications

The Alzheimer's Association, Rhode Island Chapter is pleased to announce and welcome David R. Carlin III as the association's new Director of Public Policy and Communications. Carlin will serve as the principal staff for grassroots advocacy efforts, government affairs and communications efforts in Rhode Island. Reporting directly to the executive director, he will promote the mission of the Alzheimer's Association in Rhode Island by building and mobilizing grassroots advocacy, interacting with policy makers and coalitions, building media relations, and communicating the Association's issues and priorities as a public speaker and resident expert to the media.



Mr. Carlin comes to the association with more than 22 years of experience in business, government affairs, public relations, communications and financial services. Most recently, he worked with the Northern Rhode Island Wholesalers and Service Store Association and was employed prior to that by the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce as Vice President of Government Affairs and chief lobbyist. Early in his career, Carlin worked in financial management, including several years at the Smithfield, Rhode Island offices of Fidelity Investments as an institutional investment advisor. Carlin has been married to Patricia (Trish) Lynch Carlin since 2001, and they live in

the home they own in Newport, RI. He is an active member of St. Augustin's Church in Newport, serving as a religious education teacher, lector and past co-chair, along with his wife Patricia, of the parish Catholic Charity Appeal. He is a past, two-term member of the Newport School Committee. The mission of the Alzheimer's Association is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

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