

'We've got to help the team'



TEAM EFFORT: Eric Lopez is seeking sponsors for runners at the Joan of Arc Athletics Club in Dakar, Senegal. (Photos courtesy Eric Lopez)

Lopez seeking sponsors, donations for runners in Senegal

By JACOB MARROCCO

Eric Lopez wants to offer Senegalese runners the same opportunities he was afforded as a kid.

Lopez, a teacher in Johnston, helps run the Academie Sportive Senegalese Pour La Relance De L'Athletisme – or the Sports Academy for Revival of Track and Field in Senegal. Lopez used to run track himself, advancing to a handful of African championships during his peak from the mid-'70s through the '90s.

He knew the struggle of growing up in Senegal, and he remembered how important running was for him. The stadium was a safe haven where he could enjoy the company of friends and mentors while doing what he loved.

"For me, track was my place where I used to go and I felt safe," Lopez said. "This is the place where there was an adult I could talk to. This is the place where I could laugh with my other friends and we could challenge each other because of our physical abilities. The young kids in Senegal, over 50 percent are below 20 years old, and we have many kids who can have the opportunity of using this way to spread out in the world, to become somebody."

He was previously featured in the Beacon Communications newspapers for leading an initiative centered on donating used iPads to the academy, but Lopez received a call recently that left him feeling he had to do more.

He heard the story of a runner who received \$2 to take the bus, but instead of spending it on transportation she saved the money and walked from the stadium back to her house to help cook dinner for the family.

It's a story that Lopez said is all too familiar, as some runners arrive for practice without shoes or wearing plastic substitutes. He has sent some money back, but the athletes needed more assistance. That led to the inception of his Sponsor Zone website, which allows people to sponsor a runner from the Joan of Arc Athletics Club in Dakar for \$20 per month for an entire year.

"She's having problems with just the basic, basic needs, but also there were a lot of issues that were going on because when they brought her in, they promised



BACK IN THE DAY: Pictured here in the bottom left, Lopez used to run track in Senegal with his teammates Charles, Paul and Joachim.



ERIC LOPEZ

SENEGAL - PAGE 7

JHS Adopt-A-Senior returns for 2021

By JACOB MARROCCO

As schools inch toward normalcy, it has been far from a regular school year for the class of 2021 at Johnston High School.

Students have been attending on a hybrid model for most of the academic calendar, with a few days of full distance learning mixed in when COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations escalated during the winter. Seniors have not been able to enjoy the perks of their final year at JHS, and

while Superintendent Bernard DiLullo said there are plans to hold some events this spring, Wendy Forbis Buono and Genevieve Ferruccio are reviving a program aimed at putting them in the spotlight.

Adopt-A-Senior became a popular concept at several high schools around the state last spring as the coronavirus pandemic took hold and abruptly canceled or altered several high-profile celebrations

JHS - PAGE 6

Hundreds of teachers, school staff vaccinated at town pod

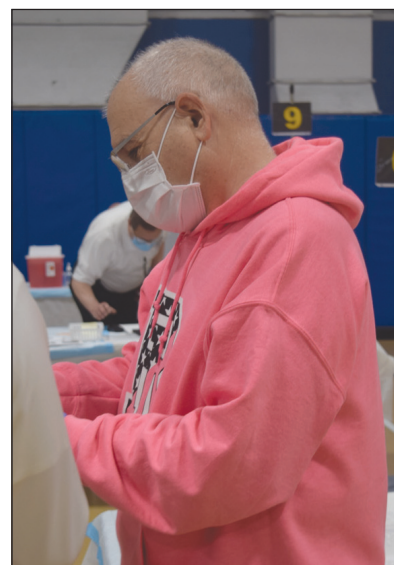
By JACOB MARROCCO

The town of Johnston gave more than 200 teachers and school staff their initial dose of COVID-19 vaccine last Friday afternoon, as Gov. Dan McKee's push to inoculate educators is well underway throughout the state.

McKee stopped by the Johnston pod at the town's indoor recreation center on Friday, chatting with National Education Association Rhode Island chapter president Robert Walsh and American Federation of Teachers president Frank Flynn. Mayor Joseph Polisena said McKee was "very impressed" with the process.

"It went very well," Polisena said Wednesday afternoon. "Once again, it was flawless. I can say there were no hiccups. We did the teachers, we did the ancillary staff ... I'm still on the phone every day trying to get the rest of the citizens done."

Superintendent of Johnston Schools Bernard DiLullo concurred with the mayor, though he added it is difficult to gauge how many staff members are left to vaccinate since some received inoculations



DOING HIS PART: Mayor Joseph Polisena inspects a vaccine dose during Friday's clinic. Polisena helped vaccinate school staff during the four-hour pod. (Sun Rise photo)

at either state-run clinics or local pharmacies.

DiLullo himself received his first Pfizer vaccination at CVS a couple of weeks ago, and he is slated to

receive his second dose on April 2. He said he didn't experience any side effects from the shot.

"We would like to see our teachers back after April vacation," DiLullo said, offering a potential timeline for a steady return. "That would be a sufficient amount of time for them to get the vaccine, either the one-shot or the two-shot. We're already starting to see many of those teachers come back because they were able to get vaccinations at other sites."

DiLullo had said during a special School Committee meeting this month that he expected teachers to return to their classrooms once they were fully vaccinated. He said this week that there hasn't been any pushback to that suggestion, adding that it will likely be a month before educators begin coming back.

"I think our teachers support the idea of people coming back when they can," DiLullo said. "I would imagine if anybody still needs to stay out, they really are going to have to go through their doctor and get a specific reason for

POD - PAGE 10

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Watch Your MOUTH

by Rochelle Rhodes, D.M.D. and David McFarland, D.D.S.

CHEW, CHEW, CHEW, IT'S THE SMART THING TO DO

A lot of thought goes into what we eat, whether it concerns improving our health, creating delicious new recipes, or recreating an old favorite. However, we rarely think about how we eat, especially not how we chew. Chewing has a tremendous impact on our oral and intestinal health. Its breaks down our food to make it easier to swallow and digest, and it increases the amount of saliva in our mouths. Saliva helps replace the minerals on our teeth and restore and maintain the mouth's pH balance. It also helps rinse food particles from our teeth, preventing the buildup of bacteria that causes tooth decay. Slowing down and chewing longer creates more beneficial saliva. Healthy habits create healthy smiles that can change a life forever. Looking for a full service dental office providing compassionate, knowledgeable care in a welcoming, safe environment? Search no further. Many of our patients say they wouldn't think of going anywhere else for their dental care. Visit us soon at DENTAL ARTS GROUP to see why and join our ever-growing list of happily smiling patients. From the young to the young at heart, you are all welcome here at 1136 Hartford Ave., Johnston. Call us today at 401-521-3661 and start living your life free of dental worries.

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BURNS' BUDDIES: Among the valued first responders who enjoyed another chapter of Jen Burns' "Kindness Klub" at JPD Headquarters are, from left, Capt. Joseph Salvadore, Battalion Chief Rich Boehm, Maj. Matthew Leduc, Battalion Chief Ron Benedetti, Officer David Slinko, Jen Burns, Deputy Chief Mark Vieira, Chief Joseph Razza and Lt. Mike Babbitt. (Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine)

Burns' 'Kindness Klub' convenes

By PETE FONTAINE

People like Johnston Fire Department Battalion Chief Richard Boehm will tell you that when it comes to kindness and caring, Jen Burns is in a league of her own. This rings especially true when it comes to valuable first responders that Burns has for years made feel extra special with what Boehm called "her unmatched acts of kindness that mean a lot to each and every member of the [Johnston Fire] Department as well as our brothers and sisters from the Johnston Police Department."

Last Thursday, Burns

added yet another chapter to her now-famous "Kindness Klub."

"This was yet another act of kindness and thoughtfulness expressed by Jennifer Burns from The Preserve at Briarcliffe. The men and women of the Johnston Police Department truly appreciate the special treat of Irish soda bread and zeppoles on St. Joseph's Day," JPD Chief Joseph Razza said.

Moreover, as Razza pointed out, "These are acts of kindness that Jen has been offering for many years and each time it goes a long way with every first responder."

Burns' practices have been going on for more than a half-dozen years and included impressive cookouts and breakfasts—prepared by Marvin Carter, the long-time executive chef at The Bridge at Cherry Hill. Burns previously served as sales and community relations director at The Bridge for the past five years, until she was recently hired as sales director at the Briarcliffe Campus's new Preserve.

In past years, Burns used to celebrate St. Joseph's Day by personally delivering the caloric creations known as zeppole to each of the JPD and JFD headquarters.

"This year I wanted to do something a little different and make my delivery from The Preserve at Briarcliffe on the day between both ethnic holidays," she related.

For St. Patrick's Day, there was freshly baked Irish soda bread from the Bread Boss Bakery that Burns said, "has been so great to work with and is also a great supporter of our outreach program that I am responsible for at The Preserve. [James] put together beautiful festive trays of zeppoles, sliced Irish soda bread, and biscottis." Burns personally hand-delivered those treats to JPD headquarters last Thursday morning.

OSDRI wins grant to help vets affected by COVID-19

A Johnston nonprofit is one of 17 organizations that will share \$550,000 in grants from the Rhode Island Foundation to help residents cope with the continuing effects of the pandemic.

Operation Stand Down received \$25,000 to provide homeless and at-risk veterans with housing, utility and employment and training assistance. The organization expects to assist an additional 40 veteran households with this funding.

"The grant helps address shortfalls in fundraising that is normally dedicated to providing these types of temporary financial assistance and supportive services," Executive Director Erik B. Wallin said. "A portion of funds will also be utilized for outreach to encourage veterans to seek our assistance in proactively addressing rent arrearages with landlords so as to help

maintain long-term housing stability."

With the latest grants from its COVID-19 Response Fund, the foundation has awarded \$7.3 million in grants to 150 nonprofits across Rhode Island since launching the fund nearly one year ago. Here is the entire list of recipients.

"Even though the situation appears to be improving, we never stopped raising money and making grants to benefit Rhode Islanders hit hard by the crisis," said Neil D. Steinberg, president and CEO of the foundation. "We will continue working with dedicated and generous donors from throughout the state and tireless nonprofits partners as Rhode Island moves from crisis relief to long-term recovery."

Some of the other recipients include Project Undercover and the R.I. Parents Information Network in Warwick

and the Samaritans in Pawtucket.

The Samaritans will use its grant to support ongoing staffing for its work serving people in emotional crisis through its Hotline/Listening Line at 401-272-4044.

"Our nonjudgmental befriending services are there for the hopeless, the isolated and alone, the suicidal and the grieving as well as to their family and friends who care about them. The operating and program support is crucial to maintaining our statewide, volunteer staffed services and program assistance as well as our community partnerships as we adapt to COVID-19's evolving impact on the Rhode Islanders we serve," Executive Director Denise Panichas said.

Bradley Hospital, Crossroads Rhode Island, Dorcas International Institute, the Da Vinci Center, the Housing Network, the Inter-

faith Counseling Center, New Englanders Helping Our Veterans, Project Weber/RENEW, R.I. Legal Services, Sacred Heart Elderly Day Care, the WARM Shelter and Women's Refugee Care also received grants.

The Rhode Island Foundation is the largest and most comprehensive funder of nonprofit organizations in Rhode Island. Working with generous and visionary donors, the foundation raised \$68 million and awarded a record \$87 million in grants in 2020. Since its centennial five years ago, the foundation has awarded more than \$284 million in grants and has raised more than \$328 million. Through leadership, fundraising and grant-making activities, often in partnership with individuals and organizations, the foundation is helping Rhode Island reach its true potential. For more information, visit rifoundation.org.

Is too much money ever a problem in RI?

TALKING POLITICS



by
IAN
DONNIS

Thanks to President Biden's massive \$1.9 trillion stimulus package, Rhode Island will find itself in the unusual place of having an influx of money.

So keep in mind this observation from RIPEC President/CEO Michael DiBiase, a former director of the state Department of Administration: "[T]he only thing perhaps worse than not having enough money is having too much money."

Speaking on Political Roundtable at The Public's Radio last week, DiBiase said it would be a mistake to use the federal windfall to increase the level of state spending in Rhode Island, since, he said, the state is already spending more than it can afford. Rather, the \$1 billion-plus headed to the Ocean State should mostly be used for one-time investments.

"I would like to see the state use it for big bold ideas that could transform the state, that could actually change our economic prosperity or our quality of life in some fundamental way," DiBiase said, "instead of spreading it around in a bunch of different places."

While Gov. Dan McKee and the General Assembly will decide where the money goes, DiBiase said he would favor "things like broadband, government IT, certainly public infrastructure, particularly at the local end – the cities and towns are getting a lot of money. So we historically have been very poor in investing at the local level on capital and infrastructure. So things like roads and parks. We should think about housing, you know, can we incentivize higher density housing? On the human development side of things, which I think is harder with one-time funds, but maybe we could do some kind of big bang, adult ed, you know, some intensive three-year program, and we could really help a lot of people all at once."

Got vaccine?

Rhode Island is ramping up its capacity to administer vaccines – and everyone over 16 will be eligible in RI and Massachusetts as of April 19. Questions remain, though, about the quan-

tity of available vaccine. "I think it's important that Rhode Islanders know that when we open up eligibility on the 19th, that does not mean that everyone will receive a vaccine on the 20th," Gov. McKee said last week. "It will likely be a few weeks for individuals to get their appointment."

Taxing matters

Gov. McKee's continuation of the car tax phase-out probably plays well with a lot of Rhode Islanders. But RIPEC's Michael DiBiase said the potential use of federal stimulus money to pay for the cost of cutting the car tax would violate the spirit if not the letter of the law.

"I do think it is not responsible to use the federal funds, which is what we're doing to further cut the cost of the car tax," DiBiase said on Roundtable, in response to a question from guest panelist Patrick Anderson. "The car tax was a lousy tax for a lot of people, but we've reduced it quite a bit already. And I think, you know, freezing it at this point is more responsible. We're digging a deeper hole for ourselves, because we don't, we don't really have the money to make this next step of the car tax and we should be honest about it."

Senate divide

A generational conflict remains on display in the Rhode Island Senate, even though President Dominick Ruggerio and Majority Leader Michael McCaffrey have tacked left on a series of issues. Some of this is evident in the clash over a dress code in the chamber. And some was on display during a recent meeting of the Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee.

The issue in question was S468, part of the "Rescue Rhode Island Act" championed by some progressives. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Kendra Anderson (D-Warwick), calls for the creation of an agricultural jobs bureau, among other things, and would allow for participants to apply for grants of up to \$75,000.

Supporters touted the legislation as a way to bolster the local food supply, and it was held in committee, 8-0. Many of those testifying via phone said they would work aggressively to unseat incumbents if they voted against the measure. While the current crop of progressive insurgents embrace these brash tactics, they mark a contrast from typical testimony at the State House.

A disturbing trend

Asian-Americans faced

increased threats even before the pandemic. An earlier low point came in the early 1980s, when anger about a recession in Michigan coincided with a disturbing fatal attack on a Chinese-American.

Thirty-five years later, in 2017, Michigan experienced an upswing in hate crimes and anti-immigrant sentiment. To bring things up to date, as NPR's Rachel Treisman reports, "The group Stop AAPI Hate tracked 3,795 'hate incidents' against the Asian American community between last March and the end of February 2021, according to a report released Tuesday. Those incidents include verbal harassment and physical attacks and are likely a vast undercount, the group said. Women of Asian descent reported 2.3 times more incidents of violence than men."

Taxes, marijuana and housing

Three short takes from RIPEC's Michael DiBiase:

1) RIPEC is part of a coalition opposed to raising the state income tax on affluent Rhode Islanders. While supporters call the issue a matter of equity, DiBiase said the state doesn't need the revenue boost now due to the federal stimulus, and he said RI's tax for high-income earners is still higher than in Massachusetts.

2) While he expects Rhode Island to legalize marijuana at some point, DiBiase, a former director of administration for Gov. Raimondo, said he was always disappointed that the potential revenue wasn't more promising: "So my feeling is this should not actually be viewed from a budgetary point of view, it should be more of a of a, you know, of a social issue in terms of whether we want it or not."

3) Asked about Gov. McKee's proposal to create a permanent revenue stream to create more housing, DiBiase said the bigger issue is local resistance to expanding the stock of high-density housing: "You know, housing prices are very high now. There's a lot of incentive to construct high-density housing, but it's very difficult to actually get it approved. So what you see is the development happens at the low-end and the high-end only. And that's unfortunate. So I think this is a place where we could use federal funds to incentivize approvals at the municipal level and basically, give funding to the

municipalities to basically compensate them for whatever burden they think such housing might bring to their community."

Mail voting

While voting by mail is viewed suspiciously (or worse) by many supporters of former President Donald Trump, MIT professor Charles Stewart III said Republicans used to favor absentee voting.

"There's no evidence that mail voting helps or hurts either party intrinsically," Stewart tells WBUR's Anthony Brooks. "None."

In related news, a new Stanford study found that voter interest propelled increased voting in 2020, and that voting by mail did not substantially increase votes for Democrats relative to support for Republicans.

RI poli-media people on the move

Welcome to Amy Russo, a new reporter at the ProJo ... Congrats to Travis Escobar on his move from the United Way to a new gig as manager of community relations for Fidelity Investments ... Ethan Shorey tweets that state Sen. Tom Paolino (R-

Lincoln) plans a run for the town administrator job being vacated by Joe Almond, who is joining the McKee administration ... Audrey Lucas, previously press secretary for Gov. Raimondo, is now doing comms for the Providence schools ... Last but not least, Victor Morente, comms director for U.S. Rep. Jim Langevin, is shifting to a job with the same time for the state Department of Education.

Remembering Ty Davis

Rest in Peace, Ty Davis, 71, the first rock reporter at the ProJo and the founder of the NewPaper, the precursor to The Providence Phoenix.

As Lou Papineau noted, Davis helped to launch the careers of lots of people. Lou also tweeted out excerpts from Bill Flanagan's piece, in the final Phoenix, on Davis and his impact: "It's hard to exaggerate how important the NewPaper was to the rebirth of Providence in the 1980s. It was not only that local musicians, theater folks, writers, and artists could get reviewed, interviewed, and promoted in its pages ... It was not only that lo-

cal politics got covered from a different angle than what the Journal offered – the NewPaper provided a voice for what started out being called the underground and eventually became the New Providence ... The NewPaper was a weathervane pointing toward a different kind of city. It was the community bulletin board for Rhode Island's post-war generation ... Ty Davis [was] the crafty, smiling, endlessly patient entrepreneur who kept his eye on the prize while everyone was freaking out around him. Ty built the local paper no one else was ever able to build."

New food court in Providence

The space once occupied by the Capital Grille on the first floor of One Union Station has been vacant for a few years. Now, though, Marsella Development Corporation plans an expansive 16,000-square-foot food court.

Ian Donniss covers politics for The Public's Radio and can be reached at idonniss@ripr.org. You can sign up here for his weekly politics newsletter and follow him on Twitter (@IanDon).



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Cherry Hill Heroes

Cherry Hill Manor recently recognized 28 staff members for their years of service, ranging from five years to 35 years. Each staff member was recognized for their individual strengths, contribution and commitment to their residents. These individuals “do whatever is asked on any given day and jump right in ... are positive and encouraging to their co-workers – always helping in any way ... [and] are not afraid to make suggestions and help find solutions to the challenges.”

They also “go out of their way to joke with patients to make them laugh and brighten his/her day ... [arrive] full of enthusiasm and immediately starts encourage the staff to work as a team ... [and find] time to sit with a resident and talk and listen and get a cup of coffee.”

Friends of the manor will say that every employee “has taken on so many different roles and touched residents and staff with their knowledge combined with compassion.” *(Text and photos courtesy Cherry Hill Manor)*



ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:

M	A	A	R	A	E	O	N	S	A	B	B	A
A	B	L	E	A	X	L	E	S	B	R	E	A
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ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local  Adoptable  Loveable



Olive

Tabby lovers, look at Miss Olive she's a true beauty! She has been patiently waiting for an adult home where she can bask in the Sun as it comes through the window. Olive has gained a little weight but who doesn't love a pudgy girl, right? If you have been looking for a nice companion then Olive might just be the girl for you. Please email EGAPL The Heart of RI Animal Rescue League at heartofriadoption@gmail.com for an application and an appointment to meet Olive. You can also call 401-467-3670 for more information. Olive will be waiting to meet you too and hoping for a nice soft kitty bed in her new forever home!

Photo credit: Bootsberry Photography

If you have been looking to adopt or know of an animal in need, please contact Karen directly at animaltalk1920@gmail.com



Rudy

Let's play fetch! Rudy is ready to go! Spring is here and this handsome boy is hoping to find someone who loves to play fetch, hike, run and wants to share their love with him too! When you first meet Rudy he may be a little anxious but once he feels comfortable he'll show you his great big smile and his loving heart. Rudy has a beautiful brindle colored coat with big sparkling brown eyes and is a year and a half old medium sized mixed breed. If you have the love, time and patience to give to Rudy then please contact EGAPL Heart of RI Animal Rescue at heartofriadoption@gmail.com for an application. They are currently open by appointment only. Please also fee free to call 401-467-3670 for more information. Rudy will be dreaming of the day when he's running and playing in with you!



Photo credit: Karen Kalunian



Undefeated JHS mock trial team headed for playoffs

By TRISTA CLARK

As the 2020-21 school year began, many high school events, extracurricular activities, and sports were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With restrictions and state regulations in mind, The Rhode Island Legal Education Foundation devised an alternative to the annual Mock Trial Tournament.

During a typical year,

Mock Trial consists of students playing the roles of prosecutors, defenders and witnesses in a fictitious trial set in a real courtroom and heard by a real judge.

This year, Mock Trial is taking place remotely through Zoom. Johnston High School's Mock Trial team rose to the challenge of this unconventional school year and began preparing for their trials.

With Mrs. Anna Herbert advising the group as the coach, and attorney Jacqueline Grasso volunteering her time and experience as co-coach, the team is undefeated and is surging their way to the top. Going into the playoffs, they sit at the second seed out of 16 schools, behind East Greenwich High School!

Good luck to the JHS Mock Trial team! Go Panthers!

JHS

(Continued from page 1)

like prom and graduation. Johnston was no exception, as Buono led the charge in getting sponsors for dozens of kids so they could enjoy their time in the limelight before departing JHS.

Buono said Ferruccio contacted her about renewing the initiative for this year, so now they are both administrators of the "Johnston High School 'Adopt a Senior 2021!'" Facebook page. Names and pictures of students are posted daily for people in the community to support, offering a care package as kids prepare for their final weeks as a Panther.

It's been especially difficult on the class of 2021, Buono said, because they also had their end-of-year junior activities stripped from them in 2020.

"So far, it's going really well. We actually have more members probably than what we had in total last year, and more people are getting added every single day," Buono said during a phone interview Monday. "The only thing is we kind of got started a little bit earlier this year, so it's a big investment for somebody that's doing it financially. If you're doing this once a week until graduation, that's a huge time commitment and monetary commitment to make, so when people have asked me things, I say there's no rules in the group. Literally the only rules in the

group are to be nice and kind. Everybody's dealing with a lot of stress."

Buono was compelled to get involved last year because her son was a senior, leaving school early before graduation to complete his Army training. She said he never got to experience a conventional commencement, both for high school and the Army.

"His graduation from Army was all virtual," Buono said. "We didn't even get to experience that. He's a freshman at URI, all of his classes were completely online, so from my perspective, because he's the only kid I'm seeing, it's amazing that he hasn't given up. That he doesn't have a bad attitude over everything that's happened to him."

Buono said her advice to parents and seniors enduring the same difficult spring this year is to avoid letting minor setbacks bring them down. She said she has said the same to her son and daughter – both of whom are in the Army/National Guard and dedicated musicians – "what in your life changes if something doesn't happen?"

"The Army was a big deal, so if you didn't complete that, that was a big deal. Your life could change, but when graduation happened last year, I said to my son, 'You're not going to walk the stage, but you're getting your diploma, you graduated high school,'" Buono said. "That one little hiccup in life isn't going to

set you back. You still graduated. You still got that accomplishment. You still achieved something. That's always something I've really drilled into my kids."

Buono later said that the group is also accepting Johnston residents from private schools. Those who would like to join the effort can head to the Facebook page, where there is a roster of students looking for a boost.

"There is somebody who [said they] just wanted to stay there and watch this, [they] don't want to participate," Buono said. "I'm like, we're happy to have you here. Just be kind, and if you're getting some sense of happiness out of this, then stay. Offer kind words of encouragement, and if you just want to be a spectator, that's fine, too. Just join the Facebook group."

Buono said she hopes Adopt-A-Senior becomes an annual tradition in Johnston. She said the program has "really brought our community together," as she reconnects with elementary teachers her children had and neighbors looking to lend a helping hand.




"It was just nice to see people in the community that I haven't seen in a long time and it's just something that, good brought us together again," Buono said. "I think it's shown a lot of community spirit ... I just try to always be positive and good. I just get so much happiness out of this."

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Senegal

(Continued from page 1)

that she was going to go to school, but they didn't pay her school," Lopez said of one runner. "So I called a friend of mine, and I explained to her about this athlete, because she's a big champion. She told me, 'OK, no problem. I'll give you money to pay for her to start school.' Then I called some of my friends, we've got to help the team."

Lopez said that the transactions are "totally transparent" to make sure that all the funds donated are going directly to the runners and team. The website explain that either a general contribution or sponsorship will go toward an athlete who "lacks the resources to access training, further education and often basic needs like proper nutrition and rest."

"The goal is to give the hope of life to youth in Senegal, West Africa, one child at a time."

Lopez initially asked for a list of four athletes,

for whom he quickly found friends willing to offer financial support. The roster of runners seeking support began to grow as Lopez saw interest increase, and coach Marcel Damado began generating more excitement within the team when he told them about the campaign.

"I talked to one of my friends, we ran together, and he was like, 'Dude, we've got to help our coach.' When I was running track, he was not getting paid," Lopez said. "This guy would give us everything he had, so much so that I would go with him to his house and his wife would tell him, 'Hey, we need this and that,' and he'd be like, 'I don't have anything.' He gave everything to us. We've got to help him out."

Lopez said he has received a hand from RhodeRunner in Providence. The local running store offered to donate shoes to his runners who are often forced to wear inadequate footwear, a gesture Lopez graciously accepted.

"Instead of running

with no shoes or wearing plastic shoes running, they would rather run with new shoes. They would cherish that," Lopez said.

Lopez said there are a couple of senior runners enrolled in the program, but most are kids equivalent to sixth-through eight-graders in the United State. The sponsorships go a long way for them, as Lopez noted \$40 converts to more than 20,000 CFA Francs in Senegal. Just being able to afford a bus pass is a "big deal" as it keeps the runners safe, and it allows them a comfortable ride to the stadium Lopez once knew as a sanctuary himself.

"We have many kids who can have the opportunity of using this way to spread out in the world, to become somebody," Lopez said. "This is who I was as a young kid growing up, knowing about the world, because education, you can have it sitting down in a classroom, but also you can have it a lot traveling around the world and

ESSENTIAL NEEDS:

Lopez said the donations and sponsorships go toward giving runners the basic needs, such as bus passes and shoes. He said some runners arrive at the track with either no footwear or plastic shoes. (Photo courtesy Eric Lopez)

seeing things, that experience. You don't learn it in school, but it's large."

Lopez is spreading the word on social media and looking to expand the base of donors to give the kids the same experience he relished. Those interested in joining the effort can visit sites.google.com/view/sponsor-zone/home.

"I have friends that call me from everywhere, 'I was on that team, I need to help you,'" Lopez said. "We need 48 sweatsuits, we have two more for coaches, so that's 50. I have people who give me money to actually buy a few of them so far, and that's one of my challenges - to make sure that this year, this is the only team in Dakar who doesn't have sweatsuits. This is the Joan of Arc team, before it was mostly just Christians who were on that team, but now the name is something big and you were the best. You had everything, but now that's the team that has nothing."

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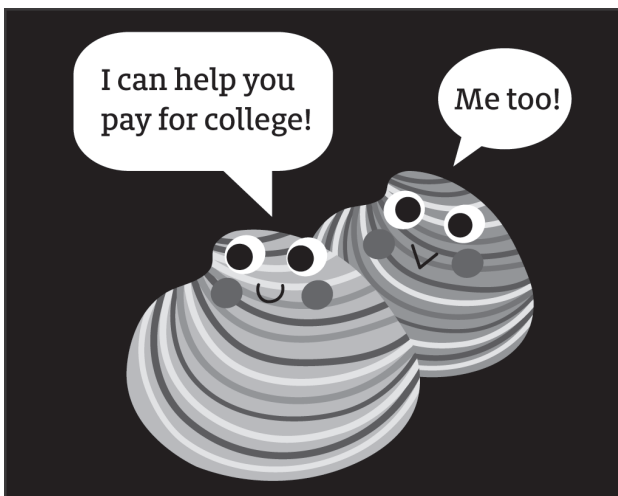
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Johnston students achieve honors at St. Ray's

Saint Raphael Academy congratulates students from Johnston who have achieved honor roll status for the second quarter marking period in academic year 2020-21. They are:

Highest Honors

Grade 12: Joseph Legault

First Honors

Grade 11: Ashley Ibeh

Grade 12: Cooper Arnold

Second Honors

Grade 12: Anthony Marsella

Saint Raphael Academy,

located in Pawtucket, is a diocesan, Catholic, college preparatory school founded in the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Johnston residents named to UNH, Lasell dean's lists

Gianna Koning of Johnston, RI has been named to the dean's list at the University of New Hampshire for earning High

Honors for the fall 2020 semester. Koning is majoring in English/Journalism.

Johnston students earn

Lasell University dean's list

Lasell University students Mackenzie Maron and Dylan Durante were

recently named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List for strong academic performance, with a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher.

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Town of Johnston
Notice of Public Hearing
 Notice is hereby given pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws § 24-6-2 that the Johnston Town Council will hold a public hearing at the Johnston Municipal Court, 1600 Atwood Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919, on **April 12, 2021 at 7:00 pm.**
 This will be a virtual meeting which can be accessed using the Zoom virtual meeting platform. The virtual meeting can be attended by visiting <https://zoom.us/> and clicking on "Join Meeting". Enter the following information:
 Webinar ID: 857 5768 4873
 Password: 568750
 If you do not have a computer or mobile device-Dial in by phone:
 833 548 0282 (Toll Free)- 888 788 0099 (Toll Free)
 The purpose of the public hearing is to consider proposed **Ordinance 2021-3 (Formerly 2021-CP-22)**, an ordinance regarding the abandonment of a portion of **Elmhurst Avenue**, located on **Assessor's Plat 16**. All persons interested in the above Ordinance may attend the hearing and be heard. Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must notify the Office of the Town Clerk seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the hearing date.
Per Order: **Robert V. Russo, President** **Attest:** **Vincent P. Baccari, Jr.**
Johnston Town Council **Town Clerk**
 3/26, 4/2, 4/9/21


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SUN RISE SCOOPS

By **MERI R. KENNEDY**
Summer jobs with DEM

DEM is recruiting qualified lifeguards at beaches, parks, and campgrounds. Full-time lifeguard positions are available at all state swimming areas, including saltwater beaches such as Roger Wheeler and Scarborough, non-surf beaches such as Goddard, and freshwater beaches such as Burlingame Campground and Lincoln Woods State Park. Flexible, 20-hour workweeks are available for lifeguard positions at our busiest swimming areas. Hourly rates for lifeguards range from \$13.25 to \$16.25 an hour, based on location and position level.

All lifeguard candidates must have successfully completed courses and hold valid cards in lifeguard training, first aid, and CPR including infant, child, and adult.

DEM also is seeking park rangers and facilities attendants to work at recreational sites across the state. Park rangers are instrumental to a safe and fun experience at DEM properties. They give directions to beachgoers and park users, help with crowd control, provide security checks for facilities, and are the first responders in the event of emergency.

Hourly rates for park rangers range from \$10.50 to \$11.60. Applicants for facilities attendant and park ranger I must be 16 years of age or older, and applicants to park ranger positions at levels II and III must be 18 years of age or older.

For a complete list of seasonal employment opportunities and to apply, visit riparks.com/employment. Most positions are full-time and include weekend and holiday hours. Applications must be completed online. Paper applications will not be accepted. The state of Rhode Island is an equal opportunity/diversity employer.

With 50 percent fewer teens seeking jobs than 20 years ago, DEM is looking to recruit active older Rhode Islanders and retired military personnel who might want to work part-time work to make

up for the lack of younger applicants.

For more information, visit riparks.com/employment.php.

Focus on mental health

NAMI Rhode Island is the state organization affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). It offers an array of education and training programs and services for individuals living with mental illness, family members, schools, providers, and the general public. These programs draw on the experience of individuals with mental illness and family members who have learned to live well with their illnesses and are eager to help others, as well as the expertise of mental health professionals and educators.

Their programs are free and virtual. For more information on all programs or if you are an interested volunteer, visit namirhodeisland.org, call 401-331-3060 or email info@namirhodeisland.org.

Looking for '78 Blizzard photos

The Johnston Historical Society is looking for photos from the Blizzard of 1978, which includes recognizable backgrounds in Johnston such as businesses, landscapes, street signs and other landmarks. Please email them to JohnstonHistorical1825@gmail.com.

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.

News from the Mohr Memorial Library

Mohr Library is currently accessible to the public during reduced hours but continues to offer curbside pickup and other services during its regular schedule. Services include curbside delivery; reference help by phone, email or in person; recommendation lists and

one-on-one help to explore interests in reading, viewing and listening; printing from home or your device; use of computers and copier; and a free notary public, evenings and Saturdays by appointment.

Johnston Community Library Book Club

Kids ages 8 to 10 can meet online, by invitation, Thursdays at 3 p.m. to hear readings and discuss books with library trustee and volunteer Denese Carpenter.

Interested in other times or want to suggest a book for discussion? Let them know.

Parents can learn more about sign-up procedures by contacting Library Director Jon Anderson. Email info@mohrlibrary.org or call 401-231-4980, ext. 7.

Medical education scholarships

The Chartercare Foundation is now accepting applications for undergraduate and graduate medical education scholarships for the 2021 academic year.

The scholarships will support studies in nursing, pharmacy, dental hygienists, physician assistants, public health, occupational and physical therapy, dietitians, etc. The scholarship is open to Rhode Island residents only, and the application deadline is March 31, 2021.

Please visit chartercarefoundation.org and click on "scholarships."

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 Tectron 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 recipients. 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.

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.

Zoom-ba is here

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Office of the Town Clerk
Town of Johnston
1385 Hartford Avenue
Johnston, Rhode Island 02919
(401) 351-6618
 Notice is given pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 3-5-17 that the Johnston Town Council, sitting as the Liquor Licensing Commission under Title 3 Chapter 5 of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended, shall hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, April 12th, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Municipal Court Building, 1600 Atwood Avenue, Johnston, RI. Due to the Governor's Executive Order related to the pandemic, this meeting can also be attended virtually by using the Zoom virtual meeting platform. To at-

tend virtually, visit <https://zoom.us/> and click on "Join Meeting". Enter the following information:
 Webinar ID: 857 5768 4873
 Password: 568750
 If you do not have a computer or mobile device-Dial in by phone:
 888 788 0099 (Toll Free) -
 833 548 0276 (Toll Free)
 The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider the following application for a liquor license.
 Applicant: Angela Fried
 Business Name: Fried Enterprises, Inc d/b/a Mr. Biggs Saloon
 Transfer From: Fried Enterprises, Inc d/b/a Mr. Biggs Saloon

Location: 1463 Atwood Avenue Johnston, RI 02919
 License Type: Class BV Full - Liquor License- Transfer of Stock
 Remonstrants are entitled to be heard before the granting of the license.
 Per Order: Johnston Town Council Robert V. Russo, Council President
 Individuals requesting interpreter service for the hearing impaired must notify the Office of the Town Clerk seventy-two hours in advance of the meeting date.
3/19, 3/26/21

Opinion

EDITORIAL

RI's economic rescue must be well planned

Touted as the most significant financial relief package passed in American History, the \$1.9 trillion "American Rescue Plan" has already infused millions of Americans with \$1,400 stimulus checks, reinforced unemployment insurance benefits until September and is slated to inject \$1.78 billion into Rhode Island – including \$27 million for Cranston, \$24 million for Warwick and \$2.9 million for Johnston.

The conflicting responses to this package – as mostly every policy decision made in the previous 20+ years has been subject to – relies heavily upon when end of the political spectrum you find yourself.

• WHERE TO WRITE:

1944 Warwick Avenue
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JacobM@RhodyBeat.com

It passed without any Republican support in the Senate, and could only do that through the chamber's

reconciliation process that insulated it from being strangled to death by a filibuster.

But regardless of whether you believe the plan to be a sorely-needed economic boost to states that have been hammered by financial consequences of a once-in-a-century public health crisis or an over-reach of government welfare that will only plug holes temporarily and boost the national deficit, the money is coming. So, the discussion now must become how that money is spent in a responsible and effective manner.

There have been reports from critics that this money can be used for any measure deemed appropriate by individual governors and municipal leaders, however this is not exactly true. While the program does not yet have strict guidelines on what projects are precisely eligible – and bear in mind, the U.S. Treasury Department will be releasing more detailed guidelines in the coming days – the money expressly cannot be used to cover pension fund shortfalls or budget gaps created by tax cuts, such as the car tax phase out in Rhode Island's case. Additionally, the money can be utilized to mitigate damages wrought by the pandemic all the way through 2024.

So what causes are most worthy of receiving an infusion of temporarily available, non-recurring dollars? The last part of that question is an incredibly important piece to the puzzle. This money is not a new funding source and will not be replicated any time soon – therefore while it may come in handy to zero out a redlined item that was in the red purely due to the pandemic, to use any significant amount of this money to plug a recurring budgetary gap – especially if that item routinely runs in the red during healthy financial times – would be foolhardy.

However, using this money as a means to invest in one-time expenditures that can make a lasting difference in the present and future lives of Rhode Islanders is exactly what should be discussed and debated. And clues as to what endeavors are the worthiest can be found in recent bond measures that have been put forth to voters in 2016 and, most recently, in 2020.

Voters have overwhelmingly approved the state to go out for borrowing on projects associated with shoring up infrastructure, bolstering efforts against climate change, creating more affordable housing, expanding access to early childhood learning and after-school programming, maintaining our natural resources and public assets such as public parks and beaches and, not to be forgotten, bringing our aging and deteriorating school buildings into the modern era so our students can enjoy a safe and warm learning environment.

All of these endeavors, with the right direction, can support existing programming, put people back to work and improve the quality of life dramatically for thousands of Rhode Islanders.

Each city and town should assemble a committee to take public comment and identify the key areas in which this money could most benefit the citizens of each municipality. This money, like the stimulus checks themselves, is for the people and the betterment of our society at large. Citizens should have a say in how it is spent.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime infusion of dollars that could potentially fund the establishment of long-term systemic changes that produce a net benefit for many Rhode Islanders, and it must be done with care and long-term thought in mind.



OP-ED

Rhode Islanders don't need another tax

By STEVE ARTHURS

Rhode Island small businesses have struggled to get through a historic economic downturn brought on by the coronavirus. We are just now getting to a point where we can see a light at the end of the tunnel. The last thing we need now are more burdens. Unfortunately, the state legislature is considering a new tax on beverages that will hurt working families, small businesses and their employees hardest.

There could not be a worse time to raise prices on families and increase costs to storeowners. Neighborhood grocery stores, corner stores and restaurants drive employment in our communities and fuel our local economies. Many have had to lay off employees or trim worker hours because of the restrictions that were necessary to combat the spread of the virus. Sales were down for many small business owners; some even had to close their doors.

We should be relieving burdens on our small

businesses and their customers, not adding to them.

We've heard about the harm that beverage taxes cause in other places. A tax of 1.5 cents an ounce doesn't sound like much, but it adds up fast. Prices would go up as much as 60 percent or more on some beverages. It would add \$2.40 to a typical eight-pack of sports drinks, and the price of a family two-liter soft drink bottle will increase by \$1.02. Prices on fountain drinks would go up substantially.

This is not a tax just on soda. The tax would affect sports drinks, juice drinks, ice teas, coffee drinks, lemonades, energy drinks, even kombuchas, flavored waters and fountain drinks. This tax could impact more than 4,200 workers and lead to a loss of at least \$100 million in annual retail and restaurant sales.

The burden of the beverage tax falls most heavily on low-income and middle-income families living paycheck to paycheck, making it more difficult for people to afford

their grocery bills. Rhode Islanders will do here what consumers have done elsewhere when this tax has been tried – they'll cross the border for cheaper, untaxed beverages. And when they do that they'll do all their grocery shopping in another state. That's going to cut sales to Rhode Island stores and restaurants, especially those close to the border. That means job losses for Rhode Island workers.

This is exactly what happened in Philadelphia. A beverage tax of 1.5 cents per ounce on beverages was imposed on Philadelphians and they responded by shopping in the suburbs and New Jersey. Acme grocery stores saw beverage sales drop 47 percent; sales in Acme stores outside the city went up about the same amount. Total food purchases decreased in stores in the city and increased

in the suburbs, according to Acme, meaning people were taking care of their entire grocery list outside the city.

That caused job losses. There were layoffs in the beverage industry, union truckers lost driving hours and workers in grocery stores saw their weekly hours cut. One grocery store serving a low-income neighborhood shut down entirely due to sales losses.

Businesses have suffered economically during the pandemic. A beverage tax will make it worse. There has to be a better way to address our needs in the state than with an unproductive tax that targets working people, our local small businesses and their employees.

Steven Arthurs is the president and CEO of the Rhode Island Food Dealers Association.

The Ballad of Kicker

This is the story of that amazing heifer

The Kicker we needed, so hard to decipher

Pandemic and hardship with jobs in peril

With hope in the closet and masks as apparel

Came forth a symbol to distract from our plight

With courage and guts, our Rhode Island knight

The tagline of cattle with one as our theme

Just what was ordered to let off some steam

So steer us straight, Kicker, a true inspiration

The shot in the arm for our tremulous nation

Free and determined, bucking all odds

Ahead of the pack, evading all squads

A vegan for certain, now I have become

For the Ballad of Kicker is what we should strum

Stephen Andolfo
Warwick

Editor's note: For those who haven't followed the news, we ask that you think of what's loose in Johnston.



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OBITUARIES

Anthony Scacco

Anthony Scacco, 94, a lifelong resident of Johnston, RI passed away on Wednesday, March 17th at Cherry Hill Nursing Home after a brief illness. He was the son of the late Nazzareno and Jennie (Russo) Scacco.



He graduated from Central High School in 1944. He enjoyed being a mechanical engineer while being employed at Leeson, Browne and Sharpe, Electric Boat and Bostich. Anthony was also a tool maker for Kenney Manufacturing and worked diligently owning his own machine shop. His motto was "If a job has once begun - never leave it until it is done. Should the task be great or small, do it well or not at all." Anthony loved the New York Yankees - watching and listening to almost every game, camping, spending time with his grandchildren, helping Jim and Diane with endless house projects, singing at morning Mass at Saint Rocco's Church and raising chickens. A special thank you to his angel caregiver friends: Virginia Dube and Becky Berrigan

His dear wife, Joy (DiBiasio) Scacco of seventy years, entered heaven last Fall and his cherished son, Anthony Robert, passed away in February. He was the twin brother of the late Vincent Scacco. He leaves behind his beloved son, James and wife Diane of Scituate and his adoring grandchildren James Jr. and Anna Joy. He is survived by his sister, Betty White, sister in laws Eileen Kennedy, Alice DiBiasio, Terri DiBiasio, and brother in law of Louis Masucci along with several nieces and nephews. He was happy to have a dear friend, Raymond Muccino and a lovely cousin Gladys Nardone whom he spoke to daily.

Relatives and friends are invited to a Mass of Christian Burial on Friday, March 26th at 11 a.m. at St. Rocco Church, Johnston. Burial will follow in St. Ann Cemetery.

Visitation will be Thursday, March 25th from 6-8 p.m. at "WOODLAWN" Funeral Home, 600 Pontiac Avenue Cranston. Please share memories and condolences at WoodlawnGattone.com.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his name can be made to Meals on Wheels, RI, 70 Bath Street, Providence, RI 02908.

Mildred A. Santilli

Mildred A. Santilli, 71, of Finne Road, Johnston, died Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at her home surrounded by her family. She was the wife of John A. Santilli. They had been married for 51 years.



Born in Providence, RI she was a daughter of the late John J. and Mary (Nataliza) Battista. She had lived in Johnston for 47 years. Mildred worked at the Johnston Senior Center for 20 years. She loved her grandchildren and being with her family passionately. She enjoyed shopping, cooking, spending time in Florida, summers by her pool, joyriding with her husband in their thunderbird, and writing children's books in honor of her grandchildren and her friends' grandchildren.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her children: Kerri Santilli-Campbell and her husband, Aaron of Westerly, John Santilli and his wife, Laura of East Greenwich, Melissa Prociuous and her husband, Brian of Mystic, CT, her grandchildren: Jack, Ava and Lila Santilli, her siblings: Robin Beyer and her husband, Keith of Cranston, John Battista of Cranston, her in-laws: Louis Santilli and his wife, Colleen of Wakefield, Brenda Carpentier and her husband, Peter of Cranston, Christopher Santilli and his wife, Karen of Cranston, as well as many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents, John and Mary Battista and her father and mother-in-law: John and Inez Santilli.

A private funeral service will be held at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers donations in her memory may be made to Noonan Syndrome Foundation: thenoonansyndrome.foundation.kindful.com.

Pod

(Continued from page 1)

that, but as far as the district goes, we've offered the vaccine in the town, there's ample opportunities in the community to get that ... I think a majority of our teachers, when they're able to come back, will be back. I think they're committed enough to our students to make that decision and to return to school."

Polisena attributed the success of Friday's pod to Johnston Police Chief Joseph Razza and Deputy Chief Mark Vieira, as well as the Johnston Fire Department, all of whom were instrumental to the setup. Firefighters were stationed at the center basketball court giving shots, with some help from the mayor himself.

Still, though, Polisena said patients are shocked when they get to their table.

"People will say, 'You're the mayor,' and I'll say, 'Shh, don't tell anybody,'" said Polisena, a nurse by trade. "They laugh. I'm just doing a public service. I'm no different than the firefighters. We work as a team. Then you've got the police that are directing street traffic and foot traffic and plus the volunteers. Razza and Vieira put this all together. It's a true success story. We are the gold standard



FAMILIAR FACE: Johnston Town Council District 1 representative Linda Folcarelli took temperatures as people entered the Johnston pod on Friday. (*Sun Rise photo*)

for pods in the state."

Both Polisena and DiLullo are looking forward to teachers making their way back to the halls, as state testing looms and the district makes an effort to bring more students back to an in-person learning model. The superintendent said there will still

be distance learning options offered to students for the remainder of the year.

DiLullo reiterated his plan to bring distance learners back for Rhode Island Common Assessment System, or RICAS, testing on four Mondays starting next week and running through April.

Those who attend class in person will take their exams on alternating days throughout the rest of the week.

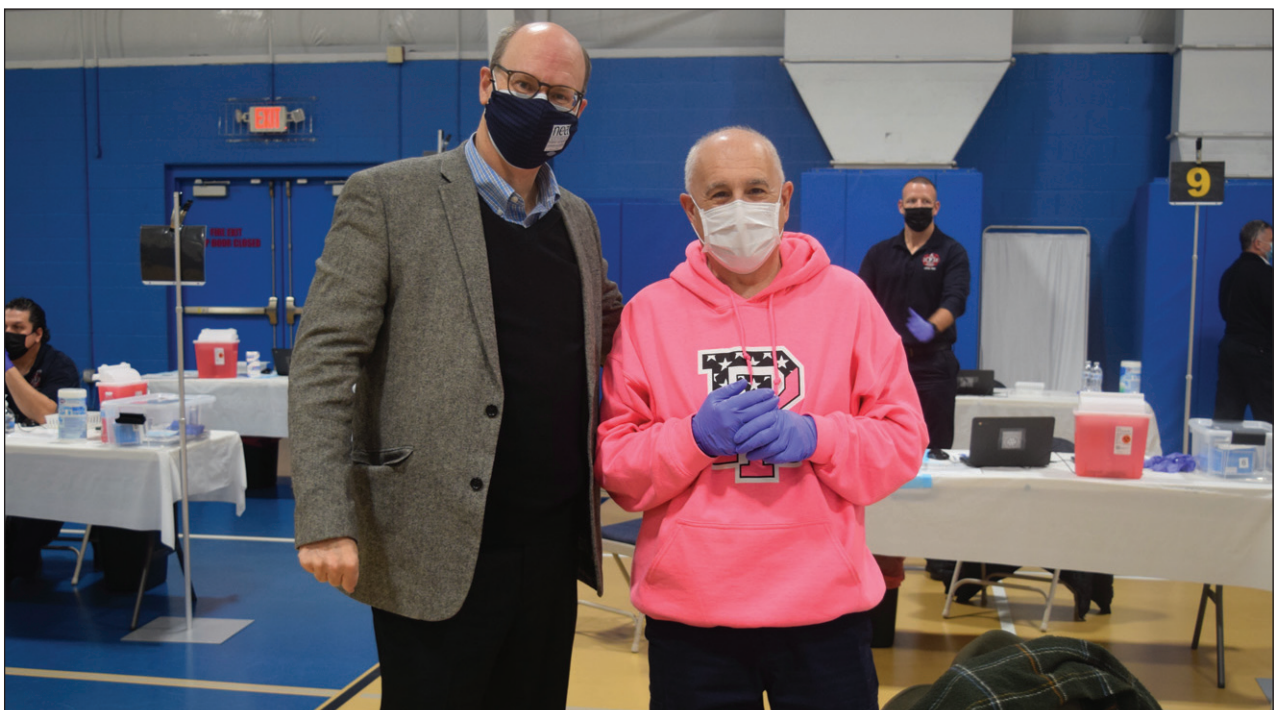
"That allows us to keep that group separate, test them and then clean the building after they leave," DiLullo said. "After that, we're considering bringing kids back on the Mondays. Hopefully the beginning of May, we'll have students K-12 in on Mondays as well. The students at the elementary level are fully in four days a week, so they're not on a hybrid model, however the middle school and the high school are on a hybrid model. We would like to start bringing those students back full-time as well."

Since the pandemic has shifted how Johnston is administering state examinations, the district will have to prepare for other local and national tests in the spring as well.

"The high school has testing coming in April and May, they are testing SATs, PSATs, and science testing in May," DiLullo said. "The elementary and the middle school also has science testing in May. It's not as extensive as RICAS, and hopefully we'll have most of our students back by the time that test has to be administered, and that's given to grades five and eight."



HELPING HANDS: Above, cones outline the path to the observation area. Below, Mayor Joseph Polisena poses for a photo with NEARI's Bob Walsh.



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Sports



HANDOFF: Johnston's Hunter Remington during a practice. (Photos by Leo van Dijk/Irhodyphoto.zenfolio.com)

Final football predictions

Football is back. After months of delay, waiting, uncertainty, we are finally going to see our local teams hit the gridiron this Friday night for the first time in over a year.

Last week, I broke down the situation with each team and how they are looking in the early going. This week, let's make a few predictions.

Now, unlike normal years, I am not going to be predicting records or precise finishes ... more of just the ceilings, I guess. It's a shortened schedule with some teams going up against unfamiliar opponents. Nothing is ever set in stone when it comes to COVID, and even the playoff formats are a little unsettled at this point. There are just too many factors in play, but let me take a crack at it.

Bishop Hendricken

The Hawks are always contenders and this season will be no different. Sure, they lost much of their offense including their quarterback, but the Hawks are always deep with numbers and still return what should be a stout defense. This team is a well-oiled machine on an annual basis and there is not much more to say than that.

The trick will be the offense and how fast it can

My pitch



by ALEX SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR
ALEX@RHODYBEAT.COM

put the pieces together. Hendricken's coaching staff is also as stable and battle-tested as any in the state, so there should be little doubt that they will be able to pull it off. Will the wonky, shortened preseason take its toll? Probably to an extent, but it will for everyone, so it kind of balances itself out. It would be crazy to say the Hawks are anything but championship hopefuls.

Prediction: State Championship appearance (at least)

Pilgrim

I remember when the Pats won the Division III State Championship back in 2019, and I was arguing against Pilgrim being moved up a division.

It was the school's first football title since 1975,

PITCH- PAGE 13

Panthers ready for breakout season

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Johnston football team entered the 2019 season as a wild card in Division II, featuring a young lineup and a new group of play-makers.

The Panthers struggled, finishing with a 1-5 record and missing the postseason.

Now, in 2021, much of the same core returns including quarterback Hunter Remington and wideout Thomas Zednik, who emerged as

one of the top duos in the division down the stretch last season.

"So far so good, we're just happy to be out there. We have a lot of skill

PANTHERS- PAGE 12

Against all odds: JMCE sets record of \$42K

Memorial golf tourney moved to Oct. 3

By PETE FONTAINE

Michele P. Brannigan, the Senior Major Gifts Officer/Campaign Manager at Hasbro Children's Hospital, had a smile of sincerity and satisfaction on her face as she stepped to the podium inside the David Levesque-owned/operated Brewed Awakening Coffee Shop-Restaurant at 1395 Atwood Avenue in Johnston.

Brannigan, you see, was about to make a historic announcement about an important non-profit group made up of close-

knit friends who as she emphasized time and again defied any and all obstacles that stood in their way during 2020.

"Despite a number of odds, most especially the COVID-19 crisis, the Johnston Memorial Cancer Events outdid themselves and broke their own record with a generous donation of \$42,000!" Brannigan told volunteers, their family members and friends. "The JMCE's dedication to fundraising for Hasbro's Children is in-

JMCE- PAGE 14



FANTASTIC FUNDRAISERS: David Levesque (second left), Michele P. Brannigan (center) and Vin LaFazia hold the JMCE mock check for \$42,000 that volunteers raised for Hasbro Children's Hospital in 2020. The group also includes: Dewey Uriati, Tony Pacino, Valier Mooney, Phyllis Gelsomino, Tom Mooney, Brian Crum, Michelle Carraro, Mike Mazzulla, Robin Christensen and Judi Graham. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)



BACK TO WORK: Johnston's Joey Acciardo (left) and Deremy Stubbs run drills during a recent practice at Cranston Stadium.

■ Panthers

(Continued from page 11)

guys coming back which helps. No doubt (we've seen maturation). Any time as a coaching staff you get to return most starters it's rare. In a season that's short, it's important that those guys have that experience," said Johnston head coach Joe Acciardo. "We'll have Hunter at quarterback, Thomas split out. Fortunately we have most of our names filled

in, some years you have to gamble and guess on kids, but this season we already had a pretty good idea of who was playing where."

The team has been motivated to right the ship after a disappointing campaign last season. Although the Panthers can only go up from here, Acciardo believes that there will be added pressure in the heightened expectations.

"Teams are going to have years, especially in high school, where you have returners or you don't have returners and

you have to rebuild. This is one of those years where we have returners, there's no excuses. You're always trying to get the most out of every team, and now, we have to look at what didn't go well last year and what we have to improve on," said Acciardo.

The two biggest areas of concern will be defense and blocking on offense. The Panthers were one of the better offensive units in 2019 but regularly fell behind early and often in shootouts.

"The thing that we're concentrating on

this year is defense, we have to play better and have a better mindset, more aggressive. Our offense, at some point was able to put points up last year. We just always allowed more points than we put up," said Acciardo. "If we can get (three and outs) and put the ball back into our offense's hands, that's like double dipping. Our offensive line also needs to step up. When teams were aggressive with us, that's when we got in trouble at times. Offensive line and defense ... we've put a lot of emphasis on that."



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RIC gets walkoff win

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Sophomore Alex Martinez (Cranston, R.I.) doubled in the game-winning run with two outs in the bottom of the ninth to lead the Rhode Island College baseball team past Roger Williams, 5-4, at Pontarelli Field on Monday afternoon.

The Hawks took a 3-0 lead in the top of the first on an RBI single by senior center fielder Tyler Cedenio (Maynard, Mass.) and a two-run homer (1) by graduate second baseman Danny Roth (West Hartford, Conn.).

RIC got two runs back in the bottom of the second. With the bases loaded, senior shortstop Rommy Morel (Providence, R.I.) hit a grounder to the left side that was botched and allowed sophomore designated hitter Jarrad Grossguth (Coventry, R.I.) and Martinez to score.

RIC starter Seth Daly (Riverside, R.I.) settled down after the first frame and was masterful for the next 6.2 innings. He retired 14 Hawks in a row at one point before coming out in the eighth frame.

Sophomore left fielder Joey Coro (North Providence, R.I.) came on as a pinch runner in the seventh and scored on a Hawk error to tie the game, 3-3.

Roger Williams took a 4-3 lead in the top of the eighth.

Freshman center fielder Cameron Sarterre (Bristol, R.I.) led off the bottom of the ninth with a single, stole second and scored on senior third baseman Ray Zincone's (West Warwick, R.I.) RBI single. Martinez followed with a perfectly placed flare down the right field line that RWU could not get to in time to throw out Zincone, who slid safely into home for the walk-off win.

■ Pitch

(Continued from page 11)

it took them a number of years to finally climb back into contendership, I just felt like moving them up and out would be a little unfair to the kids. I didn't even consider the fact that they would be losing 20 seniors to graduation. Nothing lasts forever, and now, the defending DIII champs are in DII looking to make a splash with a very young roster.

Although the vast majority of Pilgrim's championship roster is out the door, I believe in big game experience, even if you are on the sidelines. I'll admit, I probably value experience a little too much, but I feel like just being present in preparation and on the sidelines is so important.

Of course, if you have actual varsity playing time in big spots, that's ideal, but I'll take some experience over none. That was a long, roundabout way of me saying that I think this team won't look as young as its roster is. Not to mention head coach Blake Simpson is entering his third year at the helm ... he's gotten better each year and looks to be the real deal moving forward.

Prediction: On the playoff fence, we'll see which way the wind blows.

Toll Gate

All eyes will be on quarterback Greyson Pasquina. Pasquina is entering his third season as the team's signal caller which is an incredible advantage.

Typically, quarterbacks don't get to start until their junior year and sometimes have to wait until their senior season. Pasquina has been the guy since a sophomore and has been improving on a weekly basis.

The Titans had a shaky start to their 2019 season but turned things around down the stretch and reached the post-season ... much thanks to Pasquina's improvement as well as an emerging running attack.

The Titans return a few receivers but lost their two running backs. But as I said earlier, experience in my opinion is so big at the high school level, and the quarterback is one of the most experienced players on the team. John Olink also returns to lead an experienced line. Between the team's strength up front and Pasquina under center, I think the Titans will be just fine.

Prediction: Return to the playoffs

Cranston West

The biggest question with the Falcons will be the quarterback position as Cam Alves graduated and headed to Stonehill.

With Kris Degaitas and Brennan Stetson returning, the offense should be in pretty good shape either way. As I said last week, this team always plays smash-mouth football on the defensive side as well.

The Falcons have a pretty sizable junior core with 12 players, so that will be another key, how will those guys step up?

Pilgrim, for example, is one of those teams where legitimate youngsters are going to have to make an impact. With West on the other hand, many of these guys got reps on a regular basis whether it be off the bench or in starting roles last year. However, we will have to see how big of a step forward they will take.

West has reached the Division I Super Bowl the past two seasons and has really established a steady, consistent program. Point being, I expect these juniors to be ready to step up and I think they'll be able to overcome the loss of

Alves and the other seniors to be back in the mix. Would some early-season struggles surprise me? No, but by the end of the season, the Falcons will be a factor.

Prediction: Return to the playoffs (with championship upside)

Cranston East

The Bolts were one of the youngest, if not the youngest, teams in Division I in 2019, and unfortunately, it showed.

The Bolts missed the playoffs in quite awhile and at times were overwhelmed by the DI competition. Against the cream of the crop, it was even more apparent.

Much of the same core returns, including quarterback Ben Harding. The team boasts a solid rushing attack and what should be a viable line on each side of the ball.

It is going to come down to the playmakers, plain and simple. The Bolts should be able to do the basics: Run the ball, defend the run, play disciplined, play smart. But will they have one or two x-factors emerge? Whether it be receivers, defensive backs? They need that little bit extra to become true factors in Division I, will they get it?

When looking at last season and the still youthful roster, I can't say expectations are high. But when you look at this program and the success it has had over the past decade, I feel that it would be a mistake to count them out.

Prediction: On the playoff fence, but will need something to break to fall on right side

Johnston

Last season felt like it was shaping up to be the Panthers' coming out party, however, Johnston finished with just one win. Johnston had the talent, but it was one of those seasons where a tough start snowballed into a variety of issues. They just weren't ready.

This season though, they'll have Hunter Remington back under center as well as Thomas Zednik there to be one of the top pass catchers in the state.

Once again, talent is not an issue with this team. They have playmakers, they have size, and after a tough down year, they have some valuable experience.

Maybe I am being too optimistic here, but I feel that things will come together for this team. Obviously, they can only go up from here, but I truly feel that the playmakers on this team will help lead the Panthers to a few more wins.

Prediction: Playoff appearance

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60					61			62		63		
64					65					66		
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CLUES ACROSS

- Volcanic crater
- Long times
- Swedish rock group
- Having the means to do something
- Rods or spindles
- La ___ Tar Pits, Hollywood
- Missing soldiers
- Measuring instrument
- All of the components considered individually
- Play "___ Irish Rose"
- Gene
- Barrels
- London-based soccer team
- Feline
- Breed of sheep
- Body part
- Doctors' group
- One who follows the rules
- Cigarette residue
- Ancient Greek sophist
- Polish yeast cakes
- Promotional materials
- Pancakes made from buckwheat flour
- Completed perfectly
- Photo
- A peninsula in SW Asia
- The common gibbon
- Disfigure

CLUES DOWN

- Mother
- Jewish calendar month
- Jai ___, sport
- Establish again
- Swiss river
- Racetrack wager
- ___ but goodie
- Closeness
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- At right angles to a ship's length
- Women's undergarments
- Mountain stream
- Expresses pleasure
- Painful places on the body
- Automobile
- Scandinavian god of battle
- Expresses surprise
- Secret political clique
- Yields manila hemp
- River in central Italy
- Brain injury science acronym
- Mental illness
- A person from Asia
- Father
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Cooked or prepared in a specified style
- Large terrier
- Hillsides
- Golf score
- Not or
- Type of student
- Flower cluster
- Closes tightly
- Saudi Arabian desert
- Famed vaccine developer
- Multi-function radar (abbr.)
- Actress Jessica
- Pay attention to
- Beloved big screen pig
- ___ Clapton, musician
- Take a chance
- Cost per mille
- Helps little firms

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MEMORIAL MARK: The annual and highly-lucrative JMCE Golf Tournament is played in memory of six close friends who all lost a battle with cancer but have been honored during each of the previous 13 link events. At left, Joe Grasso, Phyllis Gelsomino, Michelle Capraro, Robin Christensen and Mike Mazzulla hold a mock check while remembering their loved ones.

JMCE

(Continued from page 11)

spiring to everyone at the hospital and we are enormously grateful."

Once a loud applause of hand-clapping subsided, the popular Hasbro executive continued: "Their commitment to our patients helps insure our children receive the very best care possible. As we renovate the hospital from top to bottom, the thoughtful donations from community members and those who step up to support the JMCE, are making the difference."

Brannigan would make several more statements that further reinforced – and made – the JMCE the most unique non-profit fundraising committee in the state and also set the stage for yet more sus-

tained success in 2021.

"To date," Brannigan began, "the JMCE has raised over \$277,000 for us and we can't see what this year brings!"

Thus, Vin LaFazia – the former Assistant Recreation Director in Johnston who is a distinguished Vietnam veteran and has chaired the JMCE Memorial Golf Tournament into one of New England's most premier amateur events, that because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, has had to change the date for what will be the group's 14th annual event.

"We have moved the tournament from May to Sunday, Oct. 3 but we will return to the Connecticut National Golf Club located in Putnam, Ct. and an outstanding organization that has worked with us each and every year," LaFazia offered. "As Michele said we donated \$42,000 to Hasbro

from last year's events and everyone is hoping we'll surpass that total on October 3."

The 2021 JMCE Tournament, which will again be played in memory the late Anna Mazzulla, Sal Gelsomino, Laura DeAngelis, Raymond Johnson, John Furia and Frances Grasso, will have two flights and the first of which will tee off in the Open Division with a shotgun start at 8 a.m. and another featuring a Co-Ed, Seniors and Over 65 Divisions at 12:30 p.m. also on Oct. 3.

"Thank you to all 50 foursomes that stepped up last year and we will guarantee a spot this year to those golfers who teed it up in 2020," LaFazia announced. "We will require a \$100 deposit per foursome by July 1 with the balance due by August. Individual playing spots at \$130

per golfer. All golfers will receive gift bags; golf attire and/or accessories and gift cards.

The 14th annual JMCE Golf Tourney will feature the traditional food-fest beginning with a continental breakfast for the early flight with the main grill open at 10:30 a.m. and offering the event's famous sausage and pepper and chicken sandwiches, clam chowder, pizza chips, saugy hot dogs, hot wieners, donut holes and lemoncella.

As LaFazia and many JMCE members will attest, sponsorships that range from \$500 to \$75 and \$60 are vital to the tournament's success every year are now on sale and may be purchased by calling Linda LaFazia at (401) 233-2564 or Judi Graham at (401) 497-2594. Likewise, playing spots may also be reserved by calling either LaFazia or Graham.

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- 300 Dogs For Sale
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EMPLOYMENT

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- 510 General Office
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- 605 Rentals
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- 620 Garage For Rent

- 630 Rooms For Rent
- 635 Duplex For Rent
- 640 House For Rent
- 645 Commercial Rentals
- 650 Store/Office For Rent
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- 680 Roommate Wanted
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Sticking the landing

After pandemic challenges, Dream Big Gymnastics owner finds continued rewards, new success



By KATE LeBLANC

During the pandemic, Shannon Cornicelli, owner of Dream Big Gymnastics in Cranston, rediscovered what makes her happy – coaching.

After a life of gymnastics, including state championship titles in high school, an Eastern College Athletic Conference champion award in bars in 2003, and coaching at her alma mater Rhode Island College, Cornicelli stepped away from coaching at her gym four years ago. Now, she's back teaching – and more excited than ever about her sport.

"Since coronavirus, the best thing has been that I'm out of bed, I'm coaching, I have my passion back. I can now dream about the future in a positive way," Cornicelli said. "[I'm] going home with all this renewed energy of all the accomplishments you made, or your kids made, throughout the day. I'm getting so excited and posting them all over social media, and making a big deal about all this happiness that's back in the gym again."

Cornicelli embarked on "the biggest undertaking of my entire life" in 2008, when she opened the doors of Dream Big Gymnastics on Comstock Parkway in Western Cranston. She also started Dream Big Athletic, a brand that produces and designs



leotards, warm-up suits and other gymnastics apparel.

She started her gymnastics journey at age 3 in California, influenced by her mother, who was a gymnast, and her grandmother, who was a dancer.

She didn't just stick to gymnastics, though. Growing up, Cornicelli played baseball, softball, skiing and field hockey. She also pursued lacrosse and rugby during her time at RIC, while simultaneously maintaining her national rank as a gymnast.

Her gym closed in March 2020 and reopened again in July 2020, in accordance with the state's COVID-19 guidelines. During the closure, Cornicelli created virtual Zoom classes for her students to stay engaged with the sport. She also developed the UNITY Collection, which designs tank-top leotards for other gyms throughout the country. To help offset the decline in income during the pandemic, each gym receives 25 percent of the profits.

Despite the challenges – Cornicelli contemplated bankruptcy in the early days of COVID-19 – Dream Big Gymnastics has

■ GYMNASTICS - PAGE 20

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spotlight ON BUSINESS

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By JENNIFER COATES

There is something about a wreath hanging on a front door, or on that perfect spot in a family room, that signifies "You are welcome here"! Wreaths, with their colorful flowers and festive bows, or their understated, simple elegance, actually have great symbolism. Traditionally, wreaths ~ or floral garlands ~ symbolize honor or celebration. Some lore even suggests they represent that a victory was achieved in the household upon whose door they hang. Whatever their symbolism, wreaths of spring flowers are always a breath of fresh air!

This year, with the specter of Covid-19 still lingering, John Dick, the owner of Atwood Florist, canceled his annual Spring wreath-making workshops. Because these workshops were so popular, John and his talented, longtime assistant Teddy decided to build a series of silk flower wreaths to sell instead. Now that spring is here and you have tossed away your worn-out winter wreaths, why not pick up one of these cheerful creations at Atwood Florist? John is offering them, right before Easter, in a week-long sale (at rock-bottom prices)! Call or visit the shop to see some of the various styles and floral combinations now available.

Along with these beautiful wreaths, the celebration of the Christian holiday Easter remains a busy time for flower and flowering plant lovers everywhere. While our gatherings may be more modest these days, Easter gatherings are more important than ever ~ and a striking centerpiece, made by John, can elevate any tablescape. Using seasonal flowers like tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, pansies, violets (and more of your favorites), John will create a cheerful, classic and showstopping arrangement for your holiday meal ~ or just to bring happiness and comfort to a loved one.

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Spring is the time for bright and cheerful flowers, especially when they are arranged into beautiful and welcoming wreaths, custom-made and available for sale by John Dick of Atwood Florist in Johnston! Call the shop or swing on by to see them yourself!

that flowers can bring than John Dick who has been a florist for over 25 years. For his hundreds of customers, John is the one person they can depend on to create a fanciful arrangement of flowers for a party, to put together a corsage for a mother-of-the-bride, to assemble several floral displays for a funeral or to gather an overflowing bouquet of roses for Mother's Day. His love of flowers is surpassed only by his genuine affection for his customers, many of whom have been with him since his earliest years.

John can do just about anything you need to make your day special, from his

\$5.00 "Love Bunches" to his full spread of custom-made centerpieces to his Spring wreaths!

There is hardly an occasion that cannot be improved with the gift of flowers. As you prepare for the upcoming events of Easter (Sunday, April 4th) and Mother's Day (Sunday, May 9th), be sure to plan ahead! Give Atwood Florist a call today!

Atwood Florist is located at 1041 Atwood Avenue in Johnston. John can be reached at 401-274-7300. Visit the website at www.atwoodflorist.com or follow Atwood Florist on Facebook. Pick-up and delivery are available.

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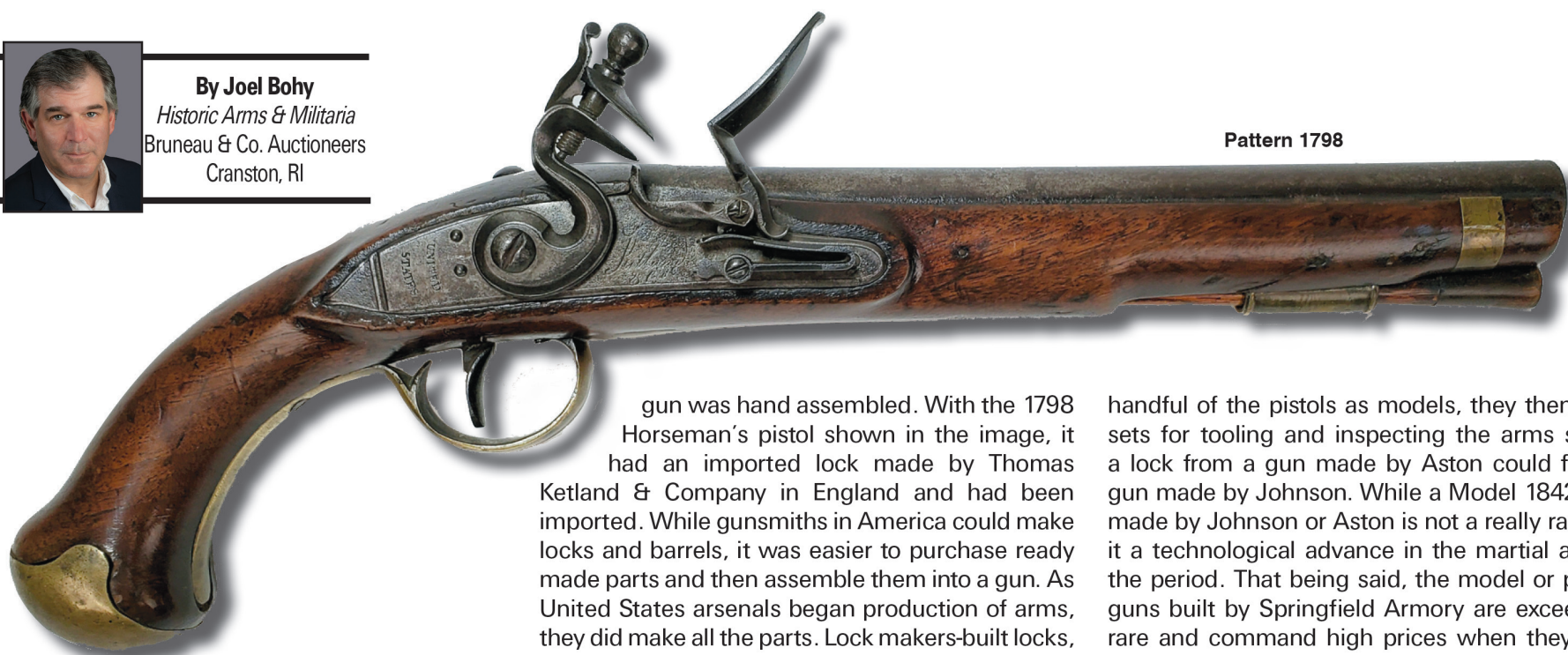
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COLLECTIBLES

From Flint to Percussion, an Evolution of Arms



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



Pattern 1798

Like many collecting fields, there are certain genres that people collect. One of them that has always interested me is the late 18th and early 19th century evolution of martial arms technology. While the basic functionality of the gun was the same, certain things did evolve over time.

Last week I picked up the collection of a gentleman who collected U.S. military pistols from 1797 to 1842, the advent of the first mass produced gun as well as the first with a percussion ignition system. Sitting down with all these pieces of history and cataloging them has been fascinating. While I have seen many of these guns, never before have I had the chance to sit down to handle each one and study them.

Up until the U.S. Model 1842 mentioned above, each

gun was hand assembled. With the 1798 Horseman's pistol shown in the image, it had an imported lock made by Thomas Ketland & Company in England and had been imported. While gunsmiths in America could make locks and barrels, it was easier to purchase ready made parts and then assemble them into a gun. As United States arsenals began production of arms, they did make all the parts. Lock makers-built locks, stockers made stocks, and each part had assembly marks so that they could be assembled and fit together. Each gun was individually made, and the parts were not necessarily interchangeable during this period. This is why some of these arms have repairs to existing parts done during the period instead of just replacing a lock if something broke. As the early 19th century progressed certain patterns, or models as they are officially called, all look identical, however they are not all exact in specifications.

Then came the Model 1842 pistol. Springfield Armory built a

handful of the pistols as models, they then made sets for tooling and inspecting the arms so that a lock from a gun made by Aston could fit on a gun made by Johnson. While a Model 1842 Pistol made by Johnson or Aston is not a really rare gun, it a technological advance in the martial arms of the period. That being said, the model or pattern guns built by Springfield Armory are exceedingly rare and command high prices when they come on the market. Another of the rare Model 1842s were built by Palmetto Arsenal in Columbia, South Carolina. They used cast-off or condemned parts from Johnson and from a distance look the same as a standard 1842, but a closer look shows a palmetto tree on the lock plate, breech of the barrel, and other details that break it out from the other less valuable examples.

While I am in the business of finding and auctioning historic arms and militaria, the history of some of these objects as well as the human stories with some of them continue to fascinate and draw my interest.



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■ Gymnastics (Continued from page 17)

prevailed. Enrollment numbers are at an all-time high. "Our coaching staff is the strongest it's ever been," Cornicelli said. "It's actually better than ever. We are on such an up ... especially this month in new registrations. At the front desk, the phone doesn't stop ringing. It's been awesome. It's been heartwarming to have the support of our community."

balances the life of being a mother to two boys, 10-year-old Ashton and 13-year-old Dylan. Like Cornicelli when she was younger, her sons pursue multiple sports such as basketball, wrestling, cross country, football and baseball, although they are not gymnasts. She pushes them to be the best they can be and achieve their goals as athletes, but finds it challenging to organize rides to practices and games while maintaining the gym.

"It's very stressful," Cornicelli said. "I want to be there for my kids, but I need to make a living. It has a lot of challenges. I want to be there for them, but these girls

need me too."

In adapting her gym to the pandemic world, Cornicelli has also begun to shift gymnastic meets to a virtual format. In February, the Cranston gym hosted its first Zoom invitational with 18 other gyms from throughout the country, as well as one gym from Germany. Judges also joined the meet virtually and gave scores after watching the gymnasts' live-streamed performances. Cornicelli's students, the judges and other gyms are pleased with the format, inspiring Dream Big Gymnastics to schedule more virtual meets in the coming months with themes like Mardi Gras and "Fun in the Sun."

Tanya Forti, general manager of Dream Big Gymnastics, is working closely with her longtime friend Cornicelli to develop virtual meets and regulate the gym's other COVID-19 safety protocols. Before anyone enters the facility, Forti conducts required temperature checks and makes sure gymnasts and guests are wearing masks.

While spectators are limited, Forti is happy to see the young gymnasts back on the beams, bars and mats.

"It's fantastic and refreshing to be able to interact with people and see our kids and watch them in the gym and see how happy they are interacting with their peers and doing what they love," she said.

Although the pandemic presented many challenges and required pivots, it's the gym's namesake – "dream big" – that Cornicelli hopes her students will remember during this time.

"We all, as coaches, teach life lessons," she said. "Hard work pays off. No guts, no glory. Stuff like that is not just for their score, but also for their future as strong women."



OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE: Despite the challenges of COVID-19, Dream Big Gymnastics in Cranston has experienced great success. Its enrollment numbers are at an all-time high.

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– MARTY BELL, Executive Director of the National Aging in Place Council

Comfortably Aging in Place

Having lived in the same ranch house for 55 years, John Heck’s grandparents wanted to make any and all necessary accommodations to allow them to peacefully age in place. Using his expertise as a home remodeler, Heck completed a variety of aging-in-place related projects in their house, including adding grab bars to the bathroom and other small comforts.

“I feel very lucky knowing my grandparents live in a one story and have my assistance making home adjustments to ensure that they can independently age in place,” said Heck, owner of VIP Remodeling & Construction Services, LLC. “Many folks who ignore the fact that they are aging and need to make adjustments wind up injuring themselves and being uprooted from a more affordable, comfortable lifestyle and proximity to loved ones.”

With the number of U.S. residents 65 or older growing from 35 million in 2000 to nearly 73 million in 2030 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, baby boomers entering or approaching retirement need to be aware of how they can best prepare to age comfortably. According to HomeAdvisor’s 2015 Aging-in-Place Report, more than half of homeowners who hire a professional for an aging-related home improvement are under 65 years old, with 10 percent younger than 50.

“Too many of us wait until we reach a health or financial crisis to plan for getting older,” said Marty Bell, Executive Director of the National Aging in Place Council. “We plan our careers, we plan to send our children to college, we plan our vacations, but we don’t plan to age. And yet the evidence is there that those who do accept they are going to get older and make plans in advance have a considerably better later life.”

Heck notes that even making small adjustments in a home over time, such as adding stair lifts and handicapped accessible and curbless showers, can make all the difference in aging safety.

The top aging-in-place related projects completed by homeowners according to HomeAdvisor’s Aging-in-Place report include:

- Adding a personal alert system: Personal alert systems provide necessary security in case of an emergency accident or fall. Installing a personal alarm system costs an average of \$652, according to HomeAdvisor’s True Cost Guide.
- Adding grab bars: Many accidents and falls take place in the bathroom. Homeowners may choose to add grab bars to help them safely enter and exit a bathtub or shower.
- Building a disability ramp: Adding a wheelchair ramp, at an average cost of \$1,547, offers accessibility to wheelchair or walker users. Various factors go into the cost and safety of a ramp, including slope, weight specifications, landing and materials.
- Installing a stair lift: A staircase lift can eliminate the risk of injury on one of the most dangerous parts of a home. Folks with mobility issues can access the upstairs level safely with this highly reliable added function. (Family Features)

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More than 20 million medical visits are made each year due to in-home injuries - HERE'S HOW TO PLAY IT SAFER

FALL PREVENTION IN THE HOME

Dr. Geoffrey Westrich, an orthopedic surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery, New York City, recommends going room to room to ensure your home is as fall-proof as possible.

GENERAL TIPS:

- Ensure that the home is free of hazards like slippery floors, unsecured rugs and poorly lit areas.
- Install handrails, grab bars and other safety devices.
- Wear properly fitting shoes with non-skid soles.
- Engage in regular, moderate amounts of physical activity to maintain strength, coordination, agility and balance.
- Get an eye examination and physical each year, and wear glasses if needed.
- Check the side effects of all your prescription and over-the-counter medications and take proper precautions. Medications can cause drowsiness and interfere with balance.
- Eat a nutritionally balanced diet with adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D.
- Avoid excessive alcohol intake.

STAIRS AND STEPS

- Install light switches at both the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Provide enough light to see each step and the top and bottom landings.
- Keep flashlights nearby in case of a power outage.
- Install handrails on both sides of the stairway and be sure to use them.
- Do not leave objects on the stairs.
- Consider installing motion detector lights to light your stairway.
- Put non-slip treads on each bare-wood step.
- Do not use patterned, dark or deep-pile carpeting. Solid colors show the edges of steps more clearly.
- Do not place loose area rugs at the bottom or top of stairs.
- Repair loose stairway carpeting or boards immediately.

BATHROOM

- Place a slip-resistant rug adjacent to the bathtub for safe exit and entry.
- Mount a liquid soap dispenser on the bathtub/shower wall.
- Place nonskid adhesive textured strips on the bathtub/shower floor.
- Replace glass shower enclosures with non-shattering material.

BEDROOM

- Clear clutter from the floor.
- Place a lamp and flashlight near your bed.
- Install night lights along the route between the bedroom and the bathroom.
- Sleep on a bed that is easy to get into and out of.
- Keep a telephone near your bed.

LIVING AREAS

- Arrange furniture to create clear pathways between rooms.
- Remove low coffee tables, magazine racks, foot rests and plants from pathways in rooms.
- Install easy-access light switches at entrances to rooms so you won't have to walk into a dark room to turn on the light. Glow-in-the-dark switches may be helpful.
- Secure loose area rugs with double-faced tape or slip-resistant backing. Recheck these rugs periodically.
- Keep electric, appliance and telephone cords out of your pathways, don't put cords under a rug.
- Place carpeting over concrete, ceramic and marble floors to lessen the of injury if you fall.
- Repair loose wooden floorboards immediately.

KITCHEN

- Remove throw rugs.
- Immediately clean up any liquid, grease or food spilled on the floor.
- Store food, dishes and cooking equipment at easy-to-reach waist-high level.
- Don't stand on chairs or boxes to reach upper cabinets. Use only a step stool with an attached handrail so you are supported.
- Repair loose flooring.
- Use non-skid floor wax.

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After the Fall

I knew I was in trouble as soon as my right foot began to slip off the smooth, painted step. The stairway to the basement of my historic condominium building is twisty and tricky to maneuver even when not carrying a week's worth of dark laundry. Adding slippers to the mix was simply not a good idea.

In an instant, I was in the air - and then bouncing down the remaining eight steps on my back. I landed at the bottom covered in jeans and sweatshirts, and with the wind completely knocked out of me. I paced the basement, trying to catch my breath while gripping my left ribs, which had taken the brunt of the fall. My back was tightening quickly and already tender. I knew I was in trouble.

The emergency room doctor confirmed my suspicions three days later - on Thanksgiving morning - bruised ribs. After a shot of something powerful for the pain (which had an added side effect of improving the family holiday dinner), he promised that the muscles spasms would end in a couple of days, but it would be at least a month before the soreness from those bruised ribs subsided. I couldn't help but wish that I'd made two trips down to the laundry room that day and traded my worn slippers for a pair of soled shoes.

After all, I knew better.

"Most of the time, younger people that have had trauma, falls at home, falls on the outside of the house, they almost always say, 'Oh, it was so stupid. I shouldn't have done that. I knew better,'" says Dr. Geoffrey Westrich, an orthopedic surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery, a specialty hospital for orthopedics and rheumatology in New York City. "Accidents are accidents, and I think that, obviously, a lot of these things can be prevented."

The Home Safety Council estimates an average of 21 million medical visits were made

each year due to home injuries between 1996 and 2000. Falls, like mine, accounted for 41.2 percent of all non-fatal unintentional home injuries, with struck by/against, cut/pierce, overexertion and poisoning rounding out the top five, and making up 80 percent of these injuries.

Between 1992 and 1999, there were nearly 20,000 unintentional home injury deaths per year, according to "The State of Home Safety in America: Facts about Unintentional Injuries in the Home," published in 2004 by the non-profit Home Safety Council. Its research points to falls and poisoning as the leading cause of unintentional home injury deaths during those years. Older adults - men and women - lead all groups in the highest rate of unintentional home deaths, although across all ages, men experience substantially more than women.

Nighttime falls are especially common, notes Westrich. "A lot of people tend to get up in the middle of the night, and when they do it's usually dark," he says. "They don't turn on all the lights because somebody else is usually sleeping. A lot of times that creates a dangerous situation because ... they fall and trip over things."

Plus those who wear glasses or contacts typically don't slip them on in the middle of the night, making midnight excursions to the bathroom even more treacherous, adds Dr. Westrich. He advises that people always make sure to clear a clutter-free path out of their room and have night lights in the hallway and bathroom.

But Dr. Westrich also has seen falls off step ladders, step stools and even on recently waxed floors take down a perfectly healthy adult in the light of day.

Robyn Drake, of suburban Houston, had purposely chosen a lightweight, collapsible aluminum ladder so she could do more home projects herself. Even though she had already

successfully completed a plethora of do-it-yourself jobs, like painting, the day she propped the extra long ladder against the wall of her two-story entryway to place knickknacks on shelves would be her last solo endeavor.

"The last thing to put up there was a tiny little silk plant," Drake says. "I got a little way up the ladder, and I didn't step right in the center of the rung, and it just basically flipped and caught my feet up, so as I was headed toward the tile. All I could see was my feet, and I landed on my back, on the tile. That was after I put my left arm down to brace myself, which wasn't a good idea."

Drake shattered her wrist, ribs, two bones in her arm and two vertebrae in her back in the fall. She spent a week in the hospital and a month in home-recovery, and it was many more months before she was fully recovered.

Luckily, Drake was in excellent physical condition at the time of the fall. "I've always been really athletic, I've always been in really good shape, which is probably why my injury wasn't as serious and devastating for me long term," she says. "I already had a strong back."

Healthy people rebound more quickly from most accidents, and even recover faster from surgeries, notes Westrich. "The stronger the muscles are, the more command people have over their body, and they're able to bounce back that much faster."

Four years later, Drake has a new, heavy-duty ladder that she can't lift alone - and she doesn't set foot on it unless someone else is home to hold the bottom.

"I don't climb up on the roof anymore and put up Christmas lights like I used to," adds Drake, now 50. "You get a little safer, you just don't think you're indestructible anymore."

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ACCORDING TO DON

by DON FOWLER

Restaurants

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Dining Out has to be one of life's greatest pleasures.

Baked stuffed shrimp at Twin Oaks.

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All you can eat chicken at Wright's Farm.

As I get my second Covid shot, my thoughts turn to Gregg's Death By Chocolate Cake, Iggy's Fish and Chips, and an omelet, home fries and hash at J.P. Spoonems.

Dining out with friends and family has taken a toll during the past 12 months on both restaurant owners and their customers.

Many restaurants have closed their doors for good, facing too difficult an economic impact to recover.

Those on the road to recovery, hanging on by a thread as people slowly return to inside dining, deserve our full support. It is a fact that many people frequent restaurants close to their homes, ones

where "everybody knows your name", especially the owners.

We have made it our goal now that we have had our second shot to return to our favorite restaurants and also to try a few new ones.

43 Years of Reviewing

I started my Entertainment column in the Beacon and Herald 43 years ago. The first column mentioned two Pawtucket Village legends: The Bank Café and The Driftwood. Both, unfortunately, are long gone.

The Bank Café still sits at the split between Narragansett Blvd. and Post Rd. on the Warwick side of the bridge. The building and grounds are well maintained, but their classic johnnycakes are no more.

Basta, one of RI's best Italian restaurants occupies the space where the Driftwood offered some of the best seafood in R.I.

We reviewed some great restaurants during the seventies.

One of our favorite spots in the Village was Krieger's, where you are whatever George had to be cooking that evening. You watched him prepare the meal in the tiny space, where he brought the food and conversation to you.

The first full restaurant review I did was back in 1978, when Phoebes Fish and Chips offered the dinner for \$1.95. The restaurant was in a house across

from the Seekonk Showcase, where we reviewed movies before the Warwick Showcases were built.

Ristorante Zio Michele was located inside the old Carlton House Motor Inn at 2082 Post Rd., Warwick, next to the airport.

I ordered a crab casserole and Joyce had swordfish, both for \$6.50.

We also reviewed one of Warwick's most popular restaurants, The Inn at 2227 West Shore Rd., where a seafood platter was \$6.85 and baked stuffed shrimp was \$6.55

While we favored Cranston and Warwick restaurants, we ventured out of our comfort zone in 1979, going all the way to The Bagpiper at 1940 Pawtucket Ave. in East Providence, formerly Emerson's Steak House, where an hour wait for dinner was not unusual.

Imagine having a broiled scallop dinner for only \$3.95, and a big piece of blueberry cheesecake for \$1.35.

Back then we found great restaurants in our Dine Out book, returning to the Riverside section of East Providence for a great Italian dinner.

One of our favorite all-time restaurants was the Old Grist Mill in Seekonk, with its beautiful view of a working grist mill and duck pond, plus the best prime rib in the world.

Kristo's was a popular Greek restaurant in down-

town West Warwick, famous for its lamb dinner.

Remember the Volare Inn at 1473 Warwick Ave, near Hoxsie Four Corners?

All the chowder and clam-cakes you could eat for \$1.95.

And Gregory's at 1500 Oaklawn Rd. in Cranston, where a fisherman's platter was under \$8?

Remember the SS Victoria, the old steamship docked on South Water St. in Providence harbor?

The restaurant received mixed reviews when it first opened, but we enjoyed it.

The Helm, at 867 Bald Hill Rd. had the best marinated mushrooms in Rhode Island. Broiled scallop dinners and crab leg casseroles went for \$6.95 back in 1979. Cranston's own premiere trumpet player, Tony Pelosi played there on weekends.

We even ventured to Boston's Anthony's Pier Four and No Name Restaurant back in the late 70's.

Unfortunately, like all of those listed above, they have gone on to the great dining room in the sky.

The only restaurant that is still in operation that we reviewed in those early years is Twin Oaks.

You can't get a quahog pie and salad with Roquefort for a buck anymore, but they still have the best baked stuffed shrimp and open steak in R.I.

Remember your favorite restaurant from years past?

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AGING IN PLACE

To Grandmother's House We Go Make Sure It's Safe

It is no secret that grandparents play an important role in the lives of their grandchildren. From giving encouragement and life advice, to helping out as a caretaker, many turn to their grandparents for support. In fact, 72 percent of grandparents take care of their grandchildren on a regular basis, and 70 percent of them see their grandchildren at least once a week, according to the American Grandparents Association.

With an abundance of grandparents overseeing their grandchildren on an ongoing basis, it is particularly important they are aware of the dangers that lie within their household that may be harmful to children. One of the most common dangers includes leaving out medication that is easy to access. In fact, in three out of four emergency room visits for medicine poisoning, the child got into medicine belonging to a parent or grandparent, according to Safe Kids World Wide, a global organization dedicated to preventing unintentional injuries in children.

Rallie McAllister, MD,

MPH, a family physician in Lexington, Kentucky, and co-author of The Mommy MD Guide to the Toddler Years, encourages conversation, awareness and education-surrounding children's home safety. McAllister says that each year in the U.S., thousands of children are seen in emergency departments for accidental medication exposures, which can be fatal. The typical scenario involves a curious child finding and ingesting unsecured medication.

"In almost 40 percent of cases, the medication belonged to a grandparent, and the medication was left in a purse or bag, a pillbox, or on a counter or nightstand," says McAllister. "It only takes a moment for children to find and swallow medication that can put their lives in danger. Parents and grandparents can protect the lives of the children they love by ensuring that all prescription and over-the-counter medicines in their homes are stored safely and securely."

Families, and grandparents specifically, should consider the following steps to ensure their medications are not avail-

able to their grandchildren:

- Keep medication up high and out of sight of children. The orange bottle medications usually come in is bright and appealing to children. To them it may look like a toy that makes noise when shaken, or a fun game with pieces that can easily go straight into their mouth.
- Be absolutely sure the bottle is closed and secure with the safety lock. With a regular schedule of taking meds, it may be tempting for seniors to leave bottle tops loose for easy access each time the medicine needs to be taken.
- Lock up your medication in a designated spot. Med-Master offers a variety of durable, flexible medication storage solutions that feature locking options including a 3-digit combination lock, or a wireless battery operated RFID lock, to maximize security. In addition to being a locking storage unit, once opened, options include a pill-sorting tray for organization, a magnifying glass with LED light for easy label reading, as well as a magnetic dry erase kit for important reminders and notes. (BPT)

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RETIREMENT SPARKS

by ELAINE M. DECKER

Distraction Tactics for Today's Culture

Distraction: A tool for diverting attention from an area of focus in order to diminish how much information is absorbed about it.

You might have noticed an increase in the diversionary tactic “whataboutism” lately. It’s generally used by a party on one side to divert attention from their failures. They then either focus on their own successes or redirect attention to the failures of the opposite party. If Facebook is any indication, not only is whataboutism not politically correct, there’s a movement afoot to ban it altogether. Don’t get your knickers in a twist. Herewith, some less offensive options for distraction.

Let’s begin with a literal distraction, based in history. Red herring. This term supposedly originated in British foxhunting circles in the 1600’s, drawing a red herring across a trail to confuse hunting dogs and prolong the hunt. Pungent fish were also used by escapees being chased by posses with bloodhounds. By dragging a fish across the trail behind him, the person being chased hoped to buy time and make a safe getaway. These days a red herring is usually a figurative diversion. Take care to be politically correct when you drag that stinky thing out.

Here’s a fun distraction that will be familiar to cat lovers: Bright shiny object. The most popular is the laser toy. Grab one of those and shine it in the opposite direction of the speaker or activity from which you want to divert attention. Not many can resist the lure of the laser. For those who can, there are other distraction tactics to consider.

Another reliable one: Smoke screen. This was more typically used as a military tactic to obscure troop movements. With a thick enough screen, a speaker has no hope of having his message break through. I’m told this was used effectively in the movie “Wag the Dog.” I never saw that one, but I don’t think it employed smoke literally.

Loud noise, including music, and especially repetitive sounds, can also effectively disrupt communication. Not to mention sanity. “A Clockwork Orange,” anyone? Don’t think about “Singin’ in the Rain.” Think about the electronic version of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony that drove Malcolm McDowell to jump out a window. Tem-

perature extremes, either hot or cold, can have similar effects.

Retail establishments have learned to use fragrance to distract shoppers and lure them to desired areas or inspire purchases. On the opposite side of the spectrum, obnoxious smells, like rotten eggs, will drive folks away from something you don’t want them to see or hear.

On a brighter (and less repulsive) note, animals are a tried and true method of diverting attention away from one person to another area altogether. Puppies! Kittens! Lions and tigers and bears, oh my! Only the truly stone cold-hearted can resist these.

Before I share my final tactic, I’m throwing out two words that are not exactly distraction techniques, but which describe things that aren’t what they seem. Astroturfing imitates the messaging of grass roots movements, masking the sponsors to sway people to believe something that isn’t true. It makes it seem like it originates from the true grassroots organizations, but it’s far from it. Clickbait is linked text designed to entice users to follow that link and view the online content. In this case, that content is deceptive and misleading and is typically sensationalized.

On to my final pièce de résistance of distraction techniques. As I often do in my essays, I’m going full circle back to where I started, which is a historical example of a distraction tactic. It falls into the general category of humor. Humor is almost always a safe way to divert attention from one area to something totally different. There are, of course, plenty of examples out there of politically incorrect humor. But you really should be able to accomplish your goals while still being PC. When all else fails and you desperately need to distract attention from something, strip off all your clothes and streak naked in the opposite direction.

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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.



SENIOR ISSUES

by LARRY GRIMALDI

The Invasion of the Traveling Sisterhood

It’s a moveable feast marked on our Fort Lauderdale snowbird calendar as Spring Break for the Post-Graduate Brigade. This year’s annual celebration was observed from February 28 through March 7. In the interest of accuracy, I have officially designated it as “The Invasion of the Traveling Sisterhood.”

My wife Kathy has four sisters (and two brothers, but that’s a column for another time). The clan grew up in the small White Mountain town of Woodsville, New Hampshire, once a prominent railroad stop on the banks of the Connecticut River. Crossing the town bridge spanning the river, would land you in Wells River, Vermont. Over the years, marriages and careers have taken the Sisterhood from Woodsville to various states along the eastern seaboard. In order of birth, their current GPS locations include Kathy (Rhode Island), Anne (Virginia), Maureen (New Hampshire), Nancy (Maine), and Jeanne (late of Texas and New Jersey and now Rhode Island).

Given this winter’s frosty temperature plunges and snow storms, they were happy to escape the Virtual Antarctica of the north. And since they can only gather together in one place periodically (even in pre-COVID days), the mid-winter southern reunion is a rare opportunity for them to spend time together away from work, grandmotherly duties, and the demands of everyday chores and commitments. As the memories of childhood and updates of family news (requiring considerable time and amazing recall for an extended family now exceeding 70 members) unfold, the laughter and aura of nostalgia meld into an atmosphere that refreshes their spirits and strengthens their bonds. It’s their version of a spa vacation at Biarritz on the French Riviera.

The Invasion of the Traveling Sisterhood does cause a mild, yet temporary, disturbance in my Force of Winter Tranquility. The Invasion is marked by a flurry of excursions, lunches, dinners, shopping, and other distinctively “sister stuff,” all somehow squeezed in around a few hours of daily pool summits.

Most times, I remain in the background and out of the path of the maelstrom. I spend the time reading, writing, phoning friends back home, or just listening to music. The Sisterhood vacation is my respite too. (Now I KNOW that you’re thinking,

“Why would he need ‘respite’ from spending most days outside in sunny 80-degree weather?” Golfing, walking the beaches, scouting for Happy Hours at local watering holes, and rummaging second hand book stores for bargain basement-priced books and videos CAN be exhausting! I will admit to “throwing myself off the island” when reverberations of five simultaneous conversations overload my sensory capacity.

Each member of the Traveling Sisterhood possesses their own personality, but they share numerous admirable qualities (as do their brothers Tommy and Peter). They are a family of deep spirituality, uncommon kindness and consideration, generosity, support, and compassion. They also have a zest for life that makes them fun to be around. I should know because I have spent more than 50 years in their remarkable presence. We have shared countless good times and comforted each other in challenging times.

While there are occasional differences of opinion among the Sisterhood, they never allow them to fester into long-term grudges. They resolve those differences and move on after the required “cooling off” period. I suspect that they instinctively observe the time-honored metaphor to “Never let an angry sister brush your hair.”

As you read this, the 2021 Invasion of the Traveling Sisterhood has come to an end. Anne, Maureen, Nancy, and Jeanne have returned home, no doubt with yet another collection of memories to share the next time that they are together. It will be as if no time has past and they have just seen each other yesterday. Their lifelong bond that cannot be measured and is often missing in other families. They appreciate and acknowledge its value and treasure it as a precious gift. In some ways, it brings them back to simpler (but with a 10-person household not necessarily quieter) days spent growing up in a small New Hampshire town, while lending credence to Marion C. Garrety observation, “A sister is a little bit of childhood that can’t be lost.”

In the interim, I will be resting up for the 2022 Invasion of the Traveling Sisterhood. Dates to be Determined.

Larry Grimaldi is a retired freelance writer living in North Providence. Comments can

THE PERFECT BLEND

LET'S EAT!

Blenditarian substitutions make dinnertime delicious

(Family Features) Finding the right daily nutritional balance is no easy feat. Managing sugar, carbohydrate, fat and red meat intake takes serious effort and planning, but transforming your favorite recipes into more nutritious family meals may be easier than you realize.

Adopting the blenditarian lifestyle is a simple solution to healthier eating. It involves, simply, blending mushrooms into meat to make every day dishes more healthful and delicious. Adding chopped mushrooms to ground beef at a ratio of at least 25 percent mushrooms can enhance the taste of dishes, deliver an extra serving of vegetables and beneficial nutrients, and trim total calories and fat intake.

Any mushroom variety will work. Creminis and portabellas lend rich, earthy flavors to any meal, while white button mushrooms offer a more delicate taste. For the more adventurous eaters, maitake and shiitake varieties bring a bold woodsy taste and meaty texture to the plate.

The key to blending is developing the perfect mushroom consistency. For example, if using ground meat for tacos or burgers, chop mushrooms to mimic the familiar crumbled texture, using a knife and cutting board, food processor or vegetable chopper. For stews, halve or quarter mushrooms, or slice them to match strips of meat in fajitas or stir-fry.

Practice your blending technique with these recipes and find more deliciously blended dishes to share with your family at MushroomInfo.com.

Classic Blended Burger

Prep time: 15 minutes Cook time: 10-15 minutes
Servings: 4

- 1/2 pound cremini or white button mushrooms
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 buns

Finely dice mushrooms or gently pulse in food processor.

In skillet, warm 2 tablespoons olive oil on medium-high heat and add mushrooms, sauteing 5-7 minutes, or until golden brown. Remove from heat and cool 5 minutes.

Transfer cooled mushrooms to medium bowl. Add ground beef and salt, mixing until combined. Make 4 patties. Add remaining olive oil to pan and cook burger patties on medium-high heat until desired doneness. Plate and add desired toppings to bun.

Topping recommendations: feta cheese, romesco sauce, sweet peppers and sauteed red onions.

Blended Chili & Macaroni

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Servings: 8

- 1/2 pound mushrooms
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 package chili seasoning
- 1 can beef broth
- 1 can (15.5 ounces) kidney beans, rinsed
- 1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
- 1 cup medium salsa
- 2 cups elbow macaroni, uncooked
- shredded cheese
- sour cream
- cilantro



Pulse mushrooms in a food processor until finely chopped.

In large saucepan, brown meat and mushrooms with chili seasoning. In another saucepan, mix broth, kidney beans, tomato paste, salsa and macaroni.

Bring mixture to boil and cover. Simmer on low 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. When noodles are al dente, stir in browned meat and mushrooms.

Serve topped with cheese, sour cream and cilantro.



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YOUR TAXES

by MEG CHEVALIER

Tax Day extended to May 17: Treasury, IRS extend filing and payment deadline

The Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service announced that the federal income tax filing due date for individuals for the 2020 tax year will be automatically extended from April 15, 2021, to May 17, 2021.

“This continues to be a tough time for many people, and the IRS wants to continue to do everything possible to help taxpayers navigate the unusual circumstances related to the pandemic, while also working on important tax administration responsibilities,” said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. “Even with the new deadline, we urge taxpayers to consider filing as soon as possible, especially those who are owed refunds. Filing electronically with direct deposit is the quickest way to get refunds, and it can help some taxpayers more quickly receive any remaining stimulus payments they may be entitled to.”

Individual taxpayers can also postpone federal income tax payments for the 2020 tax year due on April 15, 2021, to May 17, 2021, without penalties and interest, regardless of the amount owed. This postponement

applies to individual taxpayers, including individuals who pay self-employment tax. Penalties, interest and additions to tax will begin to accrue on any remaining unpaid balances as of May 17, 2021. Individual taxpayers will automatically avoid interest and penalties on the taxes paid by May 17.

Individual taxpayers do not need to file any forms or call the IRS to qualify for this automatic federal tax filing and payment relief. Individual taxpayers who need additional time to file beyond the May 17 deadline can request a filing extension until Oct. 15 by filing Form 4868 through their tax professional, tax software or using the Free File link on IRS.gov. Filing Form 4868 gives taxpayers until Oct. 15 to file their 2020 tax return but does not grant an extension of time to pay taxes due. Taxpayers should pay their federal income tax due by May 17, 2021, to avoid interest and penalties.

The IRS urges taxpayers who are due a refund to file as soon as possible. Most tax refunds associated with e-filed returns are issued within 21 days.

This relief does not apply

to estimated tax payments that are due on April 15, 2021. These payments are still due on April 15. Taxes must be paid as taxpayers earn or receive income during the year, either through withholding or estimated tax payments. In general, estimated tax payments are made quarterly to the IRS by people whose income isn't subject to income tax withholding, including self-employment income, interest, dividends, alimony or rental income. Most taxpayers automatically have their taxes withheld from their paychecks and submitted to the IRS by their employer.

Winter storm disaster relief for Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas

Earlier this year, following the disaster declarations issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the IRS announced relief for victims of the February winter storms in Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. These states have until June 15, 2021, to file various individual and business tax returns and make tax payments. This extension to May 17 does not affect the June deadline.



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