

## Johnston joins 3-town regional animal shelter

By RORY SCHULER

Three towns are stronger than one.

That's the philosophy behind a move to consolidate animal shelters in Johnston, Smithfield and North Providence.

The three towns plan to combine forces and share a newly

constructed animal shelter.

In December, Johnston Town Council approved a resolution authorizing Mayor Joseph M. Polisena to enter into an agreement with Smithfield and North Providence to operate a regional Animal Shelter, rather than three separate town-located facilities.

"Quite frankly, if we had to build a building, it would probably cost at least a million and a half or more, by the time we found the land," Polisena told Town Council at its December meeting. "Guess where we have to go looking for the land. Probably near the landfill. You can't put this in a neighborhood obvi-

ously. And the land up there is not cheap. That's for sure."

The shelter is expected to be built at 900 Smithfield Road in North Providence, according to Polisena.

The former North Providence Animal Shelter has been razed.

"The Town of North Providence is happy to announce

that demolition of the old animal shelter has begun," according to an August post on the North Providence Town website. "This is the first major on-site step towards the construction of the new multi-town facility."

■ SHELTER - PAGE 4



## Johnston native turns Tik-Tok BBQ influencer and 'Next Level' chef

By EMMA BARTLETT

It's difficult to gain 1.6 million Tik-Tok followers, however it's debatably even tougher to beat out 50,000 people for a spot on a nationally televised cooking show.

Johnston native Gary Marandola Jr., 33, has achieved both.

Marandola, who grew up on Atwood Avenue in a house that could be seen from space when lit up for Christmas, attended Sarah Dyer Barnes School, Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School, and Johnston High School. Now residing in Woonsocket, Marandola first took to Tik-Tok – the video-focused social media app – last November.

He grew up with his father teaching him how to make scrambled eggs and macaroni and cheese and eventually learned to grill.

Due to his love for cooking and needing to step away from what he calls the "toxic" Facebook environment, Marandola uploaded comedic cooking videos to Tik-Tok.

At first, they seemed to get nowhere. Marandola then decided to add a shtick – taking on a Boston accent while teaching people how to cook.

The video went viral overnight and, on Dec. 19, 2020, Marandola woke up to 12,000 new followers. Now, Marandola may not

**SNACK ON THIS:** Johnston native Gary Marandola Jr. gained 1.6 million Tik-Tok followers for his BBQ chef videos and will appear on Fox's new show "Next Level Chef." (Photos courtesy of Gary Marandola)

■ BBQ - PAGE 11

## Johnston man charged after VT police chase and crash with child in front seat

By RORY SCHULER

Vermont State Police arrested a Johnston man the day after Christmas, for driving the wrong way, allegedly intoxicated, with a six-year-old child unbuckled in the front seat.

At 9:33 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 26, the St. Johnsbury, Vermont State Police barracks received several calls about a wrong way driver heading south on Interstate 91 in the Northbound lane in Sheffield, according to a VSP news release.

Vermont State Troopers responded to the area and discovered the vehicle had turned around and started driving northbound in the northbound lane, according

to police.

"Troopers found this vehicle shortly after it turned around, and it was identified as a black 2016 Chevy Colorado," police wrote in the news release. "Troopers observed this vehicle driving in a dangerous manner that presented a substantial risk to public safety and suspected the operator was impaired."

Police tried to stop the pick-up truck as it crossed Caledonia County lines into Barton, Vermont, before it crashed with airbag deployment, according to police.

Vermont State Police identified the driver as William Yediares, 39, of Johnston, Rhode Island.



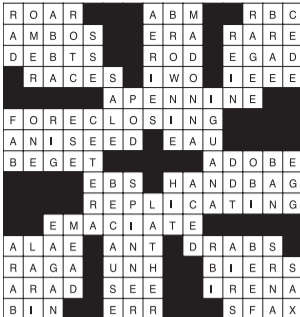
IN CUSTODY: William Yediares faces multiple charges following a Vermont State Police pursuit and crash. (Photo courtesy Vermont State Police)

■ CRASH - PAGE 5

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**ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:**



# After a tough two years, vague school shooting threats have some Johnston parents worried

## RI school leaders reach out to parents, while local police increase security presence in nation's schools

By RORY SCHULER

As if sending your kid to school wasn't tough enough lately, a vague nationwide shooting threat further increased parental paranoia across Johnston and beyond.

"I didn't send my kids!" wrote parent Lori Nascimento. "Extreme reaction? Maybe! But I had peace of mind!"

Nascimento was not alone. "Our school was already closed, but I would not have sent them today," Johnston parent Nicki Pace wrote.

"Perfect paranoia is perfect awareness," said Shalon Stephens.

Some parents — either conceding the threat was very likely only a hoax and/or trusting school administrators and police to ensure no violence would ensue — decided to proceed as normal.

"My son is in school," said parent Tom DiSano.

"My kids are in school today," added Taressa McMahon.

The week preceding the start of Christmas break was packed with stress. The buses shut down for a day due to quarantining, but were suddenly reactivated.

The Sarah Dyer Barnes Elementary School shut down following a significant COVID-19 outbreak. School leaders hope Barnes will re-open after the holiday break.

And then, to cap the week, parents had to decide whether to send their kids to school after they were informed of an online school shooting threat.

The much publicized, though unspecific threat of mass school shootings on social media triggered a message to parents from school administrators and increased police presence in schools across the Ocean State.

School districts and police across Rhode Island investigated the online posts, which appeared to threaten non-specific targets with school shootings on Friday, Dec. 17.

For Johnston's schools, it wasn't the first time. In fact, it wasn't the first time this year. It was the second vague mass school shooting threat in less than two months.

Oct. 28 was a difficult day for Johnston High School, which went into lockdown after a student allegedly threatened to "shoot up the school."

That threat was the first of two

discovered that day.

"On Thursday, Oct. 28, the Johnston Police Department arrested a juvenile male student at Johnston Senior High School following an investigation into threats made at the school," according to a statement provided by Johnston Police Chief Joseph P. Razza later that day.

School officials and police were compelled to investigate not one, but two separate threat-related incidents at the school that day.

And although both threats were found to be unrelated and likely not credible, according to Johnston Schools Superintendent Dr. Bernard DiLullo Jr., the second shut down the school for the day.

The student who allegedly made the initial verbal threat was removed from the school by police, arrested, and charged with disorderly conduct, according to Johnston Police.

By the time the school was in lockdown, school administrators were informed of the second separate threat, discovered by students on social media.

"In light of the other incident, it was taken very seriously. The message, which I believe was posted on SnapChat, appeared to be an individual threatening to come in and shoot up the schools and shoot four administrators," DiLullo explained in October. "After discussing it with police, the threat appeared to be text that has been traveling around a number of high schools in several states."

State Police brought a bomb and gun-sniffing K-9 officer to the school, but no firearms or explosives were discovered, DiLullo said.

"Later Thursday morning (Oct. 28), a threatening social media post was discovered and brought to the school's attention," according to Johnston Police. "Out of abundance of caution, a decision was made by the Johnston School Department to dismiss the high school students at 10 a.m. Again, this threat was deemed not credible and unsubstantiated."

According to DiLullo and Razza, the incidents only affected the high school.

The Dec. 17 threats, however, were so vague that they not only touched each Johnston school, but also multiple towns in multiple states.

North Providence Superin-

tendent Joseph Goho also sent a message to that town's school community.

"As you may be aware from recent media reports, information has been circulating in other states and nationally on various social media platforms such as TikTok, concerning threats against schools on Dec. 17," Goho wrote. "Please be assured that we have been in frequent contact with the North Providence Police Department, and although there have been no specific threats involving any (Rhode Island) school, the matter is being treated seriously. NPPD is working proactively with the school department, and has implemented appropriate action steps in response to the information. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your child's principal directly."

Johnston Schools Assistant Superintendent Julie-anne Zarrella emailed parents regarding the Dec. 17 threat.

"There are TikTok videos circulating throughout the country suggesting that there will be school shootings on Dec. 17," Zarrella wrote to parents. "The Rhode Island Fusion Center follows a variety of communication outlets to assess threats to our state. At this time, no real threats have been recognized. We have spoken with the Johnston Police Department and concur that while no evidence suggests that there is any danger to our students or staff, out of an abundance of caution (there will be an increased police) presence around the schools."

After a week of virus-induced turmoil, parents took to Facebook Thursday night and Friday morning voicing frustrations with what seems to be an ever-growing onslaught of stress connected to sending children to school.

"Parents should have age-appropriate conversations with their children about the various threats and challenges that are circulating on social media and particularly on TikTok," Zarrella wrote to parents. "In the last couple of weeks, students have damaged fairly new chairs with one particular challenge. While chairs can be repaired or replaced, other challenges may be dangerous or may put others in danger. Threats of any form will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary or police action."

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This story first appeared on **johnstonsunrise.net**



**SUPER SPECIAL SOUNDS:** JHS Music Department Ron Lamoureux leads the Panther band during the recently and highly-entertaining Christmas Concert. (Submitted photos)

# Johnston High Music Department thrills crowd with Christmas Concert

By PETE FONTAINE

If the appreciative audience of 250-plus people who took in the Johnston High School Music Department's 2021 Christmas Concert closed their eyes, they probably could have envisioned sitting inside the Providence Performing Arts Center or Trinity Repertory Theater. In short, the sounds were what people like Johnston School Committee Chairman Robert LaFazia and other town officials as well as proud parents concurred: "were smooth, special and super and professionally presented and performed by a group of multi-talented (JHS) musicians and vocalists."

As the Ron Lamoureux-directed JHS band closed out an extraordinarily entertaining evening with Larry Kirchner's energetic arrangement of "I Saw Three Ships" that resulted in a well-deserved standing ovation, several people emphasized while leaving the JHS auditorium: "It's no wonder this music department has

earned a national award-winning reputation."

Everyone — from volunteer Tech Club members who helped with various set changes to members of the Tri-M Music Honor Society serving as ushers and handed out programs, the Johnston School Music Association members who performed a myriad of duties, to Tim Hecker, a student-teacher who took the podium and directed two movements of Randall D. Standridge's "Christmas Village" — the night was a five-star plus performance.

It was an event during which the vocal groups of Chorus-Choir Director Matt Gingras' talented troupers were well-received and as Lamoureux offered: "Everyone should be proud of these two ensembles tonight."

Likewise, the Treble Choir took the stage and stepped up with Mozart's Veni Sancte Spiritus and the beautiful "Where the Light Begins" by Ola Gjeilo, there were more rave reviews for the large Concert Chorus that closed

out the first half of the show with "That's Christmas to Me" arranged by Mark Brymer.

And that, and more, all happened on a night that began with preparations as soon as Homecoming was over and, in fact, had several interruptions such as the JHS freshmen not being allowed to play a single note last year because of COVID-19, but worked tirelessly and reached new levels for this year's Christmas Concert.

Perhaps Lamoureux, who has led the JHS Music Department to among the all-time best in Rhode Island, said it best about the undergrads who participate in the Panther program.

"The attitudes have been excellent and we have some great leadership from our veterans who have been eager to guide the way for our younger musicians," he offered. "Everyone is extremely proud of what we've been able accomplish to this point of the school year."

Take senior Mackenzie Hanna, who welcomed



**VALUABLE VOCALISTS:** Risca Soth, Joshua Galeas, Willson El Hague, Fuji Kane and Samantha DiMaio were among the talented student vocalists who treated an audience of 250 people plus to a Christmas Concert extraordinaire.

the audience and the Concert Chorus that that opened the show with "White Winter Hymnal" that Lamoureux said was made popular by Pentatonix and led the group during "Veni, Veni, Emmanuel" by

Michael John Trotta and "Glow" by Eric Whitacre who is a favorite of Mgr. Gingras; she was wonderful."

There were many other special stars in the show, such as senior Victor Fragofo tuned up the

band followed by Lamoureux taking the stage and leading the musicians in "Winter Wonderland" arranged by Mike Story then followed up with a setting of an old French carol "Un Flambeau Jeanette Isabella."



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## Shelter

(Continued from page 1)

North Providence Mayor Charles Lombardi has estimated the shelter will cost about \$800,000, according to published reports. Plans call for a modern 6,000 square foot building.

Three towns have agreed to share the burden of day-to-day maintenance, upkeep, staffing and food costs.

"The Town of Johnston, Town of Smithfield and Town of North Providence shall provide an adequately trained animal care staff of sufficient size to provide all services required under this agreement," according to the resolution unanimously passed by Johnston Town Council. "The municipalities shall provide adequate feed, water, shelter, space, care, routine treatment to all animals housed at the Shelter. Animal quarters shall be sanitized and cleaned daily."

The initial agreement covers a term of 25 years (through 2046). After two and a half

decades, Smithfield, North Providence and Johnston will have the option to renew their agreement for an additional 20-year term.

Polisena and Lombardi have been discussing the consortium for months.

"When Mayor Lombardi knocked down the animal control building in North Providence and started construction of a new one ... that's when it started getting much more serious. And we've got to move forward."

The towns have agreed to provide a system to monitor medical and other information on each sheltered animal.

The towns will split the responsibility of each animal brought into the shelter, according to where the animal is found.

"All stray and confiscated animals deposited at the shelter by each municipality and private citizens shall remain the responsibility of the originating be properly identified at the shelter by such originating town."

The towns plan to "maintain a record of surrender of all stray

animals brought to the shelter by private citizens, including a signature to a statement that the animal is not owned by the person presenting the animal, and every effort will be made to confirm the circumstances of these stray animal situations with the Municipal Animal Control Officers."

If an animal found in one of the three towns is badly hurt or sick, the animal control officers will be tasked with seeking emergency veterinary care "for severely injured animals prior to depositing the animal at the shelter."

For strays, all three towns will receive copies of paperwork documenting the "date and time said animal was deposited, by whom, picked up under what conditions, and other pertinent descriptive data."

The three towns will also "jointly maintain the responsibility for the collection of penalties and fines" from owners found to be in violation of animal ordinances.

"On a weekly basis, all fees collected shall be paid over to the North Providence Finance De-

partment," according to the agreement. "The Treasurer of the Town of North Providence shall make a record of the same. All fees collected shall be maintained in a separate account and shall be utilized in connection with the maintenance and upkeep associated with the regional animal control facility."

The towns will cooperate on an adoption program at the shelter.

"The adoption program shall be conducted to ensure humane, permanent homes for animals with pre-adoption screening performed as appropriate," according to the three-town agreement.

The agreement also tackles animal euthanasia.

The towns will offer healthy animals to new owners for adoption. However, animals that are deemed a danger to "public safety or welfare" will be killed using "methods approved by the State Veterinarian."

The agreement does not address what will happen to animals that are healthy but not adopted.

Private citizens will

be permitted to view "accurate records of all animals impounded or turned over to it" during the animal control facility's normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).

The mayors of North Providence and Johnston, and the Town Manager of Smithfield, will each appoint two individuals to serve as liaisons, in a committee that will meet at least once per year.

Johnston and Smithfield will each contribute an initial sum of \$350,000 toward the construction and operation of the Regional Animal Control Shelter (paid in installments; \$5,800 monthly for the first five years).

"Every five (5) years, the Mayors and Town Managers of the (towns) shall reopen the consideration matter specific to reasonable proration of costs associated maintenance, operations, utilities, repairs, capital improvements, or other such costs," according to the agreement.

"To clarify, it will be about \$5,800 to \$5,900 a month for five years, then we've paid off our

obligation," Polisena told Town Council on Dec. 13. "However, while we're paying this, keep in mind, we're still going to be responsible for splitting a third of all the costs — heat, lights, animal food, cat food, whatever they have to buy. Which I think is more than fair."

Each town will be responsible for one-third of the overhead costs, including monthly utility payments like electricity, gas, internet, phone and water.

"You split it three ways," Polisena said. "I think it's a win-win."

"However, each of the (towns) is solely responsible for their own staff and vehicles," the agreement states. "Costs should always be managed such that each municipality solely covers the expenses of items and services not jointly consumed by all Parties."

The North Providence Finance Department will track the costs and invoice each town for expenses.

"I think this works for all of us," Polisena said. "I think it's a fabulous idea."

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**NP SHELTER RAZED:** In August, the Town of North Providence posted this photo announcing, "that demolition of the old animal shelter has begun." They called the teardown Johnston, Smithfield and North Providence's "first major onsite step towards the construction of the new multi-town facility." (Photo courtesy North Providence)



**NEW SHELTER:** The Regional Animal Shelter for Johnston, Smithfield and North Providence is expected to be built at 900 Smithfield Road in North Providence. (Sun Rise photo by Rory Schuler)

# High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force investigation yields three arrests in Providence and Cranston

By RORY SCHULER

Rhode Island State Police seized more than 40 kilograms of fentanyl and arrested three on drug and weapons charges after a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force investigation in Cranston and Providence.

Col. James Manni, Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police and Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, said the Task Force arrested three on narcotics and weapons charges on Wednesday, Dec. 22.

"The Rhode Island State Police/High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force initiated an investigation regarding individuals who were allegedly involved in a drug trafficking operation in the greater Providence Area," according to a press release. "Court authorized search warrants were obtained for residences located in the cities of Cranston and Providence. These court authorized search warrants were executed by members of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force, along with members of the Providence Police Intelligence Unit."

HIDTA reported the seizure of 41 kilograms of fentanyl, 67.7 grams of cocaine, \$20,545 in cash, two Polymer80 Ghost Guns, five vehicles, scales and packaging material used in the distribution of illegal narcotics, according to a state police press release.

Police arrested Angel Camilo, 21, of 918 Cranston St., Cranston, and charged him with the following offenses: Possession with the Intent to Deliver in Excess of 1 Kilogram of a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), Possession with the Intent to Deliver a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), Possession with the Intent to Deliver 1 ounce to 1 kilogram of a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Cocaine), Possession with the Intent to Deliver a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Cocaine), Controlled Substance Conspiracy, and Possession of a Ghost Gun.

Police arrested Miguel Jimenez Cruz, 26, of 330 Narragansett St., Second floor, Cranston, and charged him with the following offenses: Possession with the Intent to Deliver in Excess of 1 Kilogram of a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), Possession with the Intent to Deliver a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), Possession with the Intent to Deliver 1 ounce to 1 kilogram of a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Cocaine), Possession with the Intent to Deliver a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Cocaine), Controlled Substance Conspiracy and Possession of a Ghost Gun.



**OFF THE STREET:** HIDTA reported the seizure of 41 kilograms of fentanyl, 67.7 grams of cocaine, \$20,545 in cash, two Polymer80 Ghost Guns, five vehicles, scales and packaging material used in the distribution of illegal narcotics, according to a state police press release. (Photos courtesy Rhode Island State Police)

Police also arrested Luz Jimenez Regalado, 24, of 73 Gallatin St., Third floor, Providence, and charged her with the following offenses: Possession with the Intent to Deliver in Excess of 1 Kilogram of a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), Possession with the Intent to Deliver a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), Possession with the Intent to Deliver 1 ounce to 1 kilogram of a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Cocaine), Possession with the Intent to Deliver a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Cocaine), and Controlled Substance Conspiracy.

According to state police, all three individuals were arraigned at Sixth District Court and after their appearance all three individuals were held without bail pending further court dates.

"A person found guilty of Possession with the Intent to Deliver in Excess of 1 Kilogram of a Schedule II Controlled Substance - Fentanyl may be subject to a fine of not more than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) or imprisoned

for a term up to life," according to a Rhode Island State Police press release. "A person found guilty of Possession with the Intent to Deliver 1 oz- 1 kilogram of a Schedule II Controlled Substance - Cocaine upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than thirty (30) years, or fined not more than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) nor less than three thousand dollars (\$3,000), or both."

And a defendant found guilty of Possession of a Ghost Gun may face up to a \$10,000 fine, and imprisonment of not more than ten (10) years, or both.

"The HIDTA Task Force is managed by the Rhode Island State Police," according to the press release. "It is comprised of members from the Rhode Island State Police, Providence Police Department, North Providence Police Department, Lincoln Police Department, Middletown Police Department, Bristol Police Department, Narragansett, Police Department and Rhode Island National Guard."

## Crash

(Continued from page 1)

According to the VSP news release, Yediares "excited the vehicle he showed signs of impairment and resisted arrest."

Following the arrest, police found a six-year old child in the front passenger seat, without a child restraint or seatbelt, according to the VSP news release.

"The juvenile suffered minor injuries and was transported to North Country Hospital," police said. "Yediares was transported to Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital for minor injuries before being lodged at Northeast Regional Correctional Center on \$10,000 bail."

Police charged Yediares with several criminal offenses, including Resisting Arrest, Attempting to Elude, Cruelty to a Child, Gross Negligent Operation and Suspicion of DUI.

The charges were filed in Caledonia and Orleans counties.

"This incident is still under investigation pending further charges," according to Vermont State Police.

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Town of Johnston

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The Town of Johnston is requesting bids for Masonry and Interior Wall Construction- Rainone Gym. Bid specifications are available at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office located at 1385 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919 beginning December 31st, 2021 weekdays between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, subject to State Holidays. Specs are also available on the Town's website at [www.townofjohnstonri.com](http://www.townofjohnstonri.com). There will be a mandatory pre-bid conference at the Rainone Gym, 45 Mill Street, Johnston, RI 02919 on January 5th, 2022 at 9:00 am. Sealed bids will be accepted until 10:00 am, January 12th, 2022 at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office at the above address and will be opened publicly at that time. The Town of Johnston reserves the right to reject any or all responses or parts thereof, to waive any informality in them,

or accept any bid deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Johnston will offer interpreters for the hearing impaired provided the request is at least three (3) days prior to scheduled bid opening by calling (401)553-8830.

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# JOHNSTON POLICE LOG

## FELONY ASSAULT

At 10:57 p.m., Nov. 18, Johnston Police responded to the area of Vitos Express Inc., for a report of a stabbing that had just occurred. While patrolling the area, Johnston Police Officer Ashley Vanbemmelen found the victim in front of Seasons Corner Market, 525 Killingly St.

The victim was bleeding heavily from the face and back, according to police, but was also uncooperative and would not give police any suspect information.

Vanbemmelen wrote in the police incident report that the victim had a large cut on his left cheek and an open wound on his upper back. The Johnston Fire Department rendered aid and transported him to Rhode Island Hospital.

While at Rhode Island Hospital, the victim continued to be coherent, according to the incident report.

"When asked if there was anyone else involved he refused to give any information, but mentioned a woman being involved in the incident," Vanbemmelen wrote.

Johnston Police responded to a Maria Avenue address to investigate the incident.

"We observed the front door shades to be damaged, possibly from a physical altercation and bloody foot prints inside the residence," Vanbemmelen wrote. "Unsure if there was another person injured inside, and for the safety of others, we contacted JFD for a breach of the front door. A search of the house for injured individuals came up negative, however, a substantial amount of blood was observed in every room of the house along with other signs of significant disturbance. Due to the victim's unwillingness to cooperate with the investigation, the case will be closed pending further investigation. The door was later resecured."

At 1:02 p.m., Nov. 22, police showed the victim a photographic line-up, and he identified one of the individuals in the photo array as the person who assaulted him.

At 8:30 a.m., Dec. 16, Johnston Police responded to the Rhode Island State Police Lincoln Barracks and took custody of the suspect, Alton J. Williams, of 52 Gillooly Drive, Warwick, and charged him with a felony charge of Assault with a Deadly Weapon.

Williams was transported back to Johnston Police Headquarters, processed and later transported to Third District Court for arraignment.

## POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DELIVER

Around 5 p.m., Dec. 15, while on a fixed post at 1074 Plainfield St., Johnston Police Officer Thomas Santurri noticed a blue Volkswagen Passat with temporary Texas registration drive past his location eastbound, and the driver was not wearing his seatbelt, according to the police incident report.

"I then detained the vehicle at the intersection of Plainfield Street and Silver Lake Avenue in the City of Providence," Santurri wrote in the report.

Police made contact with the driver and identified him as Josue N. Bautista, of 91 Fairmount Ave., Providence. Police discovered that Bautista's driver's license was suspended. A subsequent background check further revealed an active Third District Court Bench Warrant for failing to appear at an arraignment.

"It should be noted that the original charge was shoplifting out of the North Smithfield Police Department," Santurri wrote in the report.

Bautista was then removed from the vehicle and searched.

"That search resulted in a clear plastic bag of suspected marijuana in his right pant pocket, and an additional clear plastic bag containing marijuana in his left pocket," Santurri wrote.

Bautista was cuffed.

"It should be noted based on my training and experience, I identified this type of packaging to be consistent with the illegal sale of marijuana and other narcotics," Santurri wrote in the report. "An inventory search of the vehicle resulted in four additional bags of marijuana which were located under the driver's side seat. In the center console I located a digital scale and two cell phones."

The items were seized and tagged as evidence.

The weight of the seized marijuana weighed a combined 48 grams (1.7 ounces).

"Based on the amount of seized marijuana, number of cell phones, digital scale, and packaging material, Mr. Bautista was charged with Possession With Intent To Deliver," Santurri wrote.

Bautista was also charged with Operating With A Suspended License (second offense), and issued a Third District Court notice to appear on Jan. 17. His vehicle was towed from the scene.

Bautista was later processed and held pending arraignment. He was also issued a Johnston Municipal Court summons for not wearing his seatbelt.

## DUI

At 12:22 p.m., Nov. 23, Johnston Police responded to 7 Tabor Drive for a motor vehicle accident involving a single vehicle. Police found the driver, later identified as Nichole R. Thomas, of 7 Tabor Drive, Johnston, at the scene, conscious and breathing. Johnston Fire Department personnel were contacted and responded to the scene.

Police noted the crash vehicle stopped on Tabor Drive, facing west with heavy damage on the passenger side, with airbags deployed.

"I also observed damage to the front landscaping of said address," Johnston Police Officer Matthew Winsor wrote in the incident report. "While looking inside of the vehicle, I observed two 25.6 ounce containers of Smirnoff Vodka on the front passenger seat of said vehicle in which one of the containers was open and half empty."

Police then spoke to the driver.

"While sitting down and wrapped

in her jacket, I asked Nichole if she was injured, however, Nichole did not answer my question," Winsor wrote. "It should be noted that while initially speaking with Nichole, I immediately observed her eyes to be bloodshot and watery. When I asked Nichole how the motor vehicle accident occurred, she stated that she was coming home to pick up more of her medication."

Police said that Thomas's speech was slurred and they could smell a strong odor of alcoholic beverage emanating from her breath.

Thomas submitted to a series of field sobriety tests.

"The first test that I administered on Nichole was the Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus (HGN)," Winsor wrote in the report. "I instructed Nichole that I was going to administer the Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus test on her and subsequently removed my pen from my vest and held the pen approximately 1 foot in front of Nichole's face. I asked Nichole if she wears glasses or contacts and she stated that she does not. When I asked Nichole if she could see my pen, she appeared hesitant and asked me 'what is that?' at which time I informed Nichole that it was a pen. Nichole then stated 'don't stick me with that,' at which time I informed Nichole that I was only holding a pen and I was not going to 'stick her' with it. Nichole then frantically sat back in the gurney and began yelling, 'don't stick me with that' several times. Once again, I advised Nichole that I was only holding a pen, however Nichole continued to yell 'don't stick me with that' while beginning to cry. I then terminated the HGN test."

Police determined Thomas was driving under the influence. Tomas faces three misdemeanor charges — DUI/Drugs/Alcohol (first offense, BAC unknown), Refusal to Submit to a Chemical Test (second offense), and Operating a Vehicle Without Ignition Interlock System.

## SIMPLE ASSAULT

Around 7:45 p.m., Nov. 18, Johnston Police responded to 6 Anderson St., to investigate a reported assault. The victim told police that he was invited to the home by the homeowner, Dante J. Marro, to retrieve items for a friend that used to reside there.

The alleged victim told police that Marro began grabbing his friends belongings and struck him on the right side of his head with a closed fist. After the alleged assault, the victim contacted police.

Police noticed redness and swelling on the victim's face where he said he was struck by Marro. The victim told police he wished to pursue criminal charges.

Marro told police that he did punch the victim because he raised his hands and Marro thought he wanted to fight.

Marro was placed under arrest for Simple Assault and Disorderly Conduct. He was cuffed and placed in the back of a police cruiser, processed at police headquarters and later released with a Third District Court

summons to appear on Dec. 6.

## FORGERY

At 8:15 p.m., Dec. 2, Johnston Police officers responded to Central Falls Police Department to take custody of Daliana Andrea Mercado Morales, who was wanted by Johnston Police on various charges. Morales was cuffed and transported to Johnston Police Headquarters, charged with three felony counts — Forgery and Counterfeiting in General, Receiving Stolen Goods, and Conspiracy. She was processed, allowed to use a cell phone and placed in a cell pending arraignment.

The charges stem from the investigation into an incident on Oct. 28, 2020, in which Johnston Police responded to the report of passing a stolen check at a bank in town.

Police were also aware of a matching stolen vehicle, which had a business checkbook inside at the time of the theft.

Upon arrival at the bank, police spotted the suspect vehicle, a white Honda Civic, facing westbound at the teller window.

As police approached the car, the driver accelerated the vehicle directly toward a Johnston Police Detective's unmarked cruiser, nearly hitting it head-on, according to the police incident report.

The driver made an erratic maneuver around police and exited the parking lot north on Atwood Avenue. The vehicle was pursued out of the parking lot and eventually traveled east on Route 6 toward Providence, according to the report.

Johnston Police Detective Anthony Sasso was seated in the passenger seat of the cruiser that was nearly hit. Sasso said that he made eye contact with the driver.

"The operator of the white Honda was a skinny Hispanic male, with busy dark hair," Sasso wrote in the police incident report. "The female was also of Hispanic descent, with curly brown hair. If I observed these parties again I could positively identify both suspects."

Police pursued the vehicle, which accelerated away at a high rate of speed.

Eventually police decided the chase had become too dangerous to continue, and due to the "non violent nature of the offense," decided to terminate the pursuit.

Police traveled back to the bank to talk to witnesses.

The occupants of the car had attempted to cash a \$2,000 check, but bank employees knew, due to an internal alert, that the checks had been stolen. The victim's car was stolen from a Providence Dunkin Donuts around 12:10 p.m., Oct. 28, while he was retrieving coffee for his employees.

Following the investigation, Morales was eventually arrested and charged with three felonies — Forgery and Counterfeiting in General, Receiving Stolen Goods, and Conspiracy — and a misdemeanor, Reckless Driving/Eluding Police (first offense).

■ POLICE - PAGE 7

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**Police**

(Continued from page 6)

**DRIVING WITHOUT A LICENSE**

At 9:52 p.m., Dec. 10, Johnston Police responded to the intersection of Plainfield Street and Atwood Avenue for the report of an erratic driver. Police dispatch received an anonymous call from a motorist following the vehicle, according to the police incident report.

The caller told police an older model red Acura was stopped at a green light and then abruptly sped away. The caller said the vehicle then turned into the breakdown lane and stopped for an undetermined amount of time.

A search of the area found the vehicle near the area of Plainfield and Coolidge streets.

"At that time, I activated my overhead lights and conducted a motor vehicle stop at 968 Plainfield St.," wrote Johnston Police Officer Robert H. Cardoza. "I spoke with the operator, Hugo Noriega. Mr. Noriega stated that he had pulled over to make a phone call."

Cardoza asked to see Noriega's driver's license, but the driver told police that he did not have one, but

did have a Guatemalan identification card.

Noriega, of 535 Union Ave., Providence, was issued a Third District Court summons for Driving Without A License (third and subsequent offense), and given a court date of Jan. 10. He was escorted to his residence by Johnston Police and the vehicle was towed.

**WARRANT ARREST**

Around 4:40 p.m., Dec. 12, Johnston Police Officer Michael A. Martufi Jr. was dispatched to 220 Constitution Court regarding a civil dispute, which was rectified without incident, according to the police incident report.

"Once the civil matter was resolved, I discovered that one of the involved parties, Jamiel Phillips, had an active arrest warrant issued by the East Providence Police Department in July of 2019, from an incident unrelated to today's call for service," Martufi wrote in the report.

Police arrested Jamiel M. Phillips, of 131 Sawmill Hill Road, Sterling, Connecticut, and transported him back to Johnston Police Headquarters where he was searched, processed and secured in a cell until custody could be transferred to Providence Police.

**SHOPLIFTING**

Around 4:41 p.m., Dec. 20, Johnston Police were dispatched to The Home Depot, 6 Victoria Mount St., Johnston, after they received a report of shoplifting in progress.

The store's loss prevention officer told police that she observed Thomas Robert Zarra, of 6 Victoria Mount St., Johnston, in the electrical department of the store with multiple items in his hands. Loss prevention told police that Zarra then concealed the items — later identified as a pair of Soundmates headphones, seven miscellaneous breakers, and eight Firex fire alarms — in his backpack.

Police were told Zarra attempted to leave without purchasing the items. Police arrested Zarra, cuffed and transported him to Johnston Police Headquarters where he was secured in a cell pending arraignment. The store requested a no trespass order be filed against Zarra.

Zarra faces a misdemeanor charge of Shoplifting, and police also discovered he had an outstanding Superior Court Bench Warrant for Failure to Appear at a Pretrial Conference.

**RECKLESS DRIVING**

ON Dec. 20, Eugene Grundy, of 57 Milton Road, Warwick, was presented at Third District Court after apprehension by the Warwick Police

Department. Grundy was charged by Johnston Police with Reckless Driving/Eluding an Officer in a High Speed Pursuit, Duty to Stop-Accident with Attended Vehicle, and Operating on a Suspended License (third and subsequent offense). Grundy was processed and photographed at headquarters at a later time.

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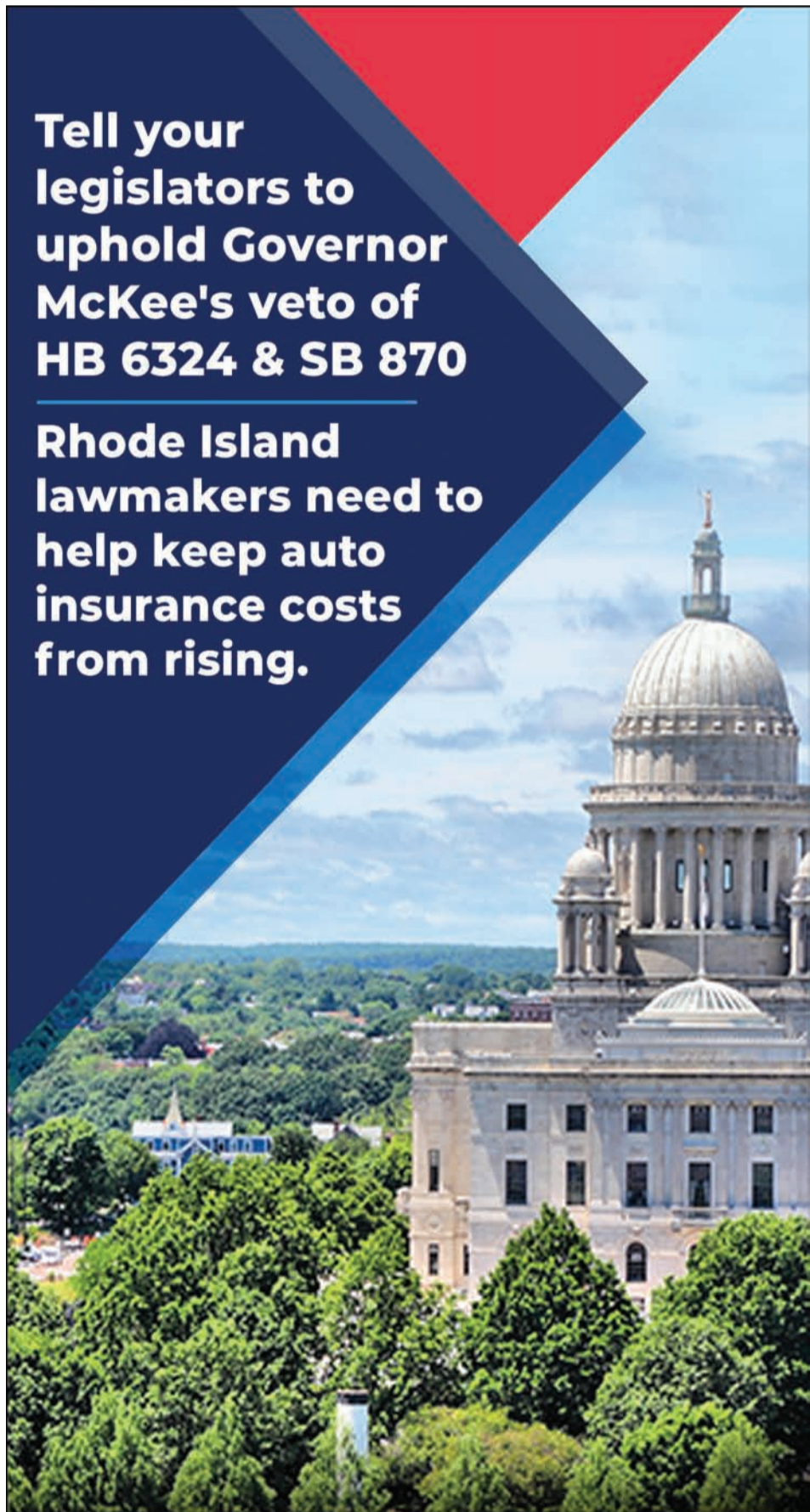
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**Johnston Sun Rise**

# Legislative leadership team looks to 2022

By **ALEX MALM** and **JOHN HOWELL**

The interview was over, House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarci and Senate Majority Leader Michael McCaffrey were on their way out of the office. They paused to chat about the upcoming Christmas holiday. Politics and the business of government was put aside. This was two friends talking.

It's been this way ever since the two Warwick legislators have ascended to leadership roles. Annually they visit the paper in December to talk about the upcoming legislative session. Their perspectives and what they consider priorities may differ, but if they do, each listens and there's discussion.

The question seemed appropriate therefore: to their recollection has there been such open communication between the leadership of the House and the Senate? Might what we have in Rhode Island not only be unique to this time but also to other states? It surely is in contrast to what is happening nationally where difference of opinions become divisive.

Larry Berman, who has served as public information officer for multiple House Speakers, barely waited for the question to be completed saying in his experience he's never seen the lines of communication between the House and Senate as open. Shekarci chimed in that he and McCaffrey have been friends since their days at Suffolk Law School. Rarely a day goes when they

aren't calling one another, a practice that has been accelerated by the pandemic and the issues it raised from how to safely conduct legislative business to ensuring public access to government.

Shekarci jokes that he and McCaffrey talk more frequently now than when they attended law school and no less so when the General Assembly is out of session. It's not surprising then that they were on the same page when highlighting the issues to come before the General Assembly in the New Year. Shekarci was frequently the first to answer and he started off reflecting on the accomplishments of the 2021 session.

He pointed to legislation guaranteeing pay equity, creating a housing czar position, and making the CCRI Promise Program permanent.

"I can go on and on with all the good things we did last year," said Shekarci.

Before adjourning this year's House session Shekarci noted that there is some legislation that may see veto overrides including for the short-term rental legislation introduced by Sen. Dawn Euer, and Rep. Lauren Carson, both of Newport.

The legislation which would create a statewide short-term rental registry passed both chambers last year but was vetoed by Gov. Dan McKee.

Shekarci said that in order for the legislator to successfully override the veto they would need a 3/5 vote.

"You have to make sure the votes are there for that," said Shekarci.

McCaffrey said in the Senate they will be voting on five judgeships and two magistrates before they adjourn last year's Senate Session.

## Housing

Shekarci hasn't made it a secret that he thinks that the housing crisis is a top issue in Rhode Island.

In fact, on his campaign website it reads, "as Speaker, Joe's top priority is addressing Rhode Island's housing crisis."

Aside from adding a housing czar, Shekarci pointed to adding \$6 million to address long-term homelessness, and creating a housing production fund and pre funding it by \$25 million as two accomplishments regarding housing.

"We brought a lot of people together, a lot of different ideas and got things done," said Shekarci.

Shekarci knows however, that the state is a long way away from the crisis being over.

He said that through the Low and Moderate Housing Commission

and Land Use Committee, Shekarci said he is looking for a lot of legislation to come out of them this year.

"It's a long term problem, it's going to require a long term solution," he said.

Shekarci pointed to a "boom" of real estate in Pawtucket and Central Falls near where the new train station is planned, saying that public transportation is important for where developers want to build housing.

In Warwick Shekarci pointed to the old Sheraton Hotel on Airport Road which is expected to be turned into workforce housing. He thought that the project was a good idea.

While Warwick has a MBTA line that goes as far as Boston north and as far south as Wickford, Shekarci and McCaffrey pointed to the fact that it doesn't stop in Warwick enough.

Currently the MBTA stops 10 times coming from Boston during the week and 20 times in Providence. During the weekends it doesn't stop in Warwick, and stops in Providence nine times.

Shekarci also said that he thinks they need to add an Amtrak stop in Warwick.

## Hospital Merger

One of the big questions in Rhode Island currently is whether or not Lifespan and Care New England, which owns multiple hospitals in the state including Kent Hospital in Warwick. The merger application was submitted last March.

"We're just waiting for the decision from the federal government if they can do it and go from there," said McCaffrey.

Shekarci said that right now the merger is in the Federal Trade Commission process.

"Right now there's no role for the General Assembly to play at all," he said.

Shekarci said that he hopes that the Kent Hospital patient care is "still at a high level for residents," and to make sure they can preserve the jobs there.

But like the vast majority of those in Rhode Island he and other legislators are simply spectators right now.

"We have to let the process play out," said Shekarci.

## Universal Pre-K

McCaffrey expects legislators will be looking to speed up the universal pre-k rollout.

Former Governor Gina Raimondo's plan would take about 30 years, McCaffrey said, and the Senate is hoping the state can

do it in five years.

"We feel that pre-k is very important to all children in the state," said McCaffrey.

According to Greg Pare, Communications Director for the Senate about 14,000 children would be enrolled in the universal pre-k per year, and right now they have 2,000 seats meaning they need to add 12,000 more. Pare said in an email that over the past three years, the State has added an average of 428 seats a year.

## The Budget

Shekarci, as he has many times before, pointed to the budget as being the most important piece of legislation that is passed in the House each year.

"The single most important thing we do in the House is the budget," said Shekarci. "That always has been and probably will always be our number one priority."

## 2022 Elections

McCaffrey said he is planning on running for re-election. He is expected to face off against Rhode Island Political Candidate Jennifer Rourke, who previously announced her campaign. She ran against McCaffrey in the Democratic Primary in 2018, and 2020.

McCaffrey said that he hopes the COVID-19 pandemic will be better than it was during the 2020 election.

"Hopefully we aren't in this COVID crisis and can get back to a normal election process, but who knows what that will be like," said McCaffrey.

Shekarci said that he intends to seek re-election.

"I have every intention to run for re-election," said Shekarci.

While he didn't give any specific names he said that there have been rumblings of candidates possibly running against him.

Shekarci said that based on his and McCaffrey's records he thinks they accomplished a lot and that he will be running on his record.



"They (the legislative seats) don't belong to Mike and I, they belong to the people. If people think we did a good job they will send us back. If they don't they will make a change," said Shekarci.

## American Rescue Funds

Shekarci said that the leadership from the House and the Senate have been at the ARPA spending all summer, saying that approving a supplemental budget for the funds is on the top of their list for one of the first things they want to get done.

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# Johnston Schools ask RI General Assembly to allow bond vote

By RORY SCHULER

Johnston's voters are one step closer to voting on an overhaul of the town's school buildings.

At its Dec. 21 meeting, the Johnston School Committee passed a resolution supporting a \$215 million bond to pay for two new schools and two massive renovations.

The committee's resolution "endorses and supports the construction, additions, renovation, improvement, alteration, repair furnishing and equipping of schools and school facilities in Town and all costs related"

In October, the School Committee voted to retain the SLAM Collaborative architectural firm to take the district into Stage III of the school construction process.

And following a vote by the Town Council immediately after, Johnston plans to seek legislation from the Rhode Island General Assembly so they can poll voters on a \$215 million bond.

The district plans to build a new Early Childhood Center and a new Elementary School, and make major renovations at the Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School and the Johnston High School, if voters approve bond funding.

Last week's resolution clarifies the town's intentions.

"In order to undertake and complete the Project, there would be a need to issue bonds and/or notes in an amount not to exceed \$215,000,000," the resolution states.

Copies of the committee's resolution will be forwarded to "every Rhode Island State Senator and Representative, including Senators Stephen R. Archambault, and Frank Lombardo, III, and Representatives Ramon A. Perez, Edward T. Cardillo, Jr., Deborah A. Fellela, and Gregory J. Costantino; every Rhode Island Municipality and School Committee; and the Governor for the State of Rhode Island."

The resolution asks the "General Assembly to enact legislation authorizing the Town, with the approval of the qualified electors, to issue bonds and notes in an amount not to exceed \$215,000,000."

The town will hold a special election, likely in March, "on a date as shall be designated by the Town Council," according to the resolution.

In October, Johnston Schools Superintendent Dr. Bernard DiLullo Jr. announced the bond would likely face a

referendum some time in March.

Johnston is hoping to pass the bond while the state's still providing a high reimbursement ratio for Rhode Island public school building projects, and favorable interest rates on borrowing remain in place.

The town is hoping to see more than 50 percent reimbursement on the more than \$200 million project.

"This is great," Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisenia said in October. "I think ... our delegation, both our senators and our reps will be glad to put this in. And we're just looking forward to moving ahead and getting reimbursement from the Rhode Island Department of Education."

The construction project would be the biggest education facility overhaul in Johnston's history.

In October, the town's legal counsel, William J. Conley Jr., answered questions on the impending bond issue vote.

"It's supported by legislation that we will request of the General Assemblies as soon as they go into session," Conley explained. "We appreciate having council act upon this now, so that there is no delay, as soon as the General Assembly goes back into session."

The General Assembly is expected to return to session in the New year.

The new ECC will cost an estimated \$28,600,000 and is tentatively slated to open in the summer of 2024.

The plans call for closing and then demolishing or selling all of the town's current elementary schools — Graniteville ECC Annex, Barnes, Brown Avenue, Thornton and Winsor Hill.

The large consolidated, new elementary school will be built to educate 1,100 students in grades 1-4, and is planned for construction on town property just north of the Johnston High School.

The elementary school will cost an estimated \$84,350,000, and is tentatively scheduled to open in late summer 2024.

The district will likely tackle the new ECC and elementary school first, and then move on to the high school renovation, and then the middle school project, according to DiLullo.

SLAM has proposed more than \$39 million in renovations to the Ferri Middle School and a \$57 million facelift at the high school.

The high school is slated for a late summer of 2024 unveiling, and the middle school repairs should be complete by late summer of 2025.



**NEW SCHOOLS:** The district hopes to build a new Early Childhood Center (bottom) and a new Elementary School (above) for all students in grades 1-4. Major renovations are also planned at the Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School and Johnston High School. (Renderings courtesy Johnston School Department)





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# ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local ♥ Adoptable ♥ Loveable



Photo credit: Rebecca Bernardo Hartley

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By JENNIFER COATES

There is nothing more awe-inspiring than watching a young gymnast leap, flip, swirl, spring and bound off of mats, bars, beams, pommel horses, vaults and rings! The confidence and skill that it takes to do these complicated maneuvers is not something that happens overnight. It takes a dose of natural talent, but it also takes commitment, dedication, practice and mostly, the help of equally talented and dedicated coaches. It also takes a heavy load of passion.

Watching a Ninja Warrior master a piece of daunting equipment is just as inspiring and impressive. It also requires practice and passion and guts! Like gymnasts, Ninja Warriors come in all ages and sizes ~ boys and girls alike.

For both gymnasts and Ninja Warriors, there is no better place than Dream Big Academy in Cranston to refine their skills, to stoke a passion for these sports and to be taught by the best coaches and instructors around.

One of those coaches is Shannon Cornicelli, the owner and founder of this long-standing academy in Cranston. Shannon is herself an accomplished gymnast whose love of the sport and lifetime of experience have made her uniquely qualified to lead a team of other coaches at this state-of-the-art gym. Dream Big Gymnastics is a fully-equipped, modern gym in Cranston that is owned by Shannon Cornicelli. Cornicelli has used her many years of experience in the gym to create a place where prospective athletes of all ages can come to feel the excitement and thrill of the sport of gymnastics. Her classes are not only instructive, they are also fun. Her classes are not only competitive, they are also about "gymnasts supporting gymnasts." They are not only about skill-building, they are also about team building.

What sets Dream Big Academy apart from its competitors



Gymnasts such as these aspiring athletes, seen here with owner and coach Shannon Cornicelli, are what make Dream Big Academy on Comstock Parkway in Cranston such a popular and welcoming place to be! Check out the gym for 2022!

is its' objective that gymnastics are meant to be fun, unifying and growth-promoting. The way they accomplish these goals is through planned activities such as their popular Cartwheel and Pullover clinics (January 8th and February 5th from 2:00pm to 4:00pm) and Back Handspring clinics (from 4:00pm to 5:00pm, following the Cartwheel/Pullover clinics).

There are even Parent's Nights Out for your child to attend while you head out for a night on the town. Parent's Nights Out are held from 5:00pm to 10:00pm once a month including next month on the night of January 22nd. Mark your calendars!

While it has always been a place of fun and learning, Dream Big is also a place of friendly competition where true potential is realized and revealed. The gym planned four meets this year; check out the Beauty & the Beast Invitational (January 15th to the 17th) and the Mardi Gras Invitational held on February 12th & 13th.

For more details about these events and to register for upcoming classes, check out their website at www.dreambiggym.com or call 401-228-8946. Dream Big Academy is located at 41 Comstock Parkway in Cranston.

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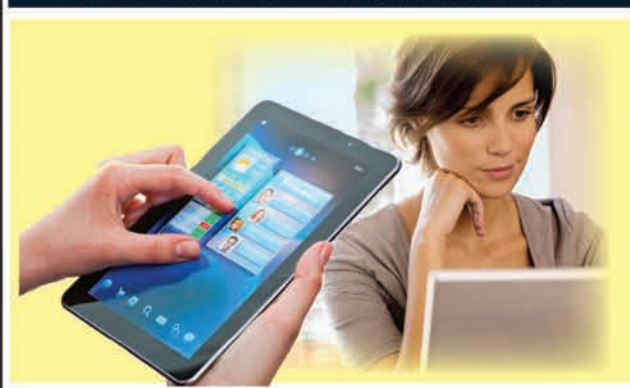
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**BBQ**  
(Continued from page 1)

have as many followers as content and dance creator Charli D'Amelio who has 131.9 million followers, but acquiring 10,000 followers or more is uncommon for most individuals.

After this success, Marandola said he thought he might have something and analyzed every single comment to help with his future videos. There were so many comments, however, that they maxed out the response space that TikTok allocated.

"I worked as an event DJ, singer and drummer, and thought I'd be famous for music one day. I didn't think it would be cooking," Marandola said.

Producers from the new show "Next Level Chef" found Marandola on Instagram and reached out to him in July 2021 about being on the show's first season. Gordon Ramsey – a famous British chef who

has an assortment of successful restaurants – led and created the show.

"This gave me the chance to meet one of my ideals – Gordon Ramsey," Marandola said. He added that meeting and talking with Ramsey and Richard Blaze was a fun experience.

As for his TikTok videos, Marandola explained the work that goes into them. Each video takes a different amount of time, depending on how long the cook is – it could be as short as half an hour with cooking popcorn in a skillet to as long as 14 hours with a brisket.

"I literally turned my kitchen into a studio," Marandola said.

After taking clips of his cooking, he edits the videos, playing around with lighting and coloring to get everything just right.

This spot in the lime-light has led to Marandola making friends throughout the country and in Canada.

Additionally, he has

changed his profession to being a full-time influencer, making his money from TikTok, Instagram and brand partnerships; "Next Level Chef" also paid him for his time on the show.

Marandola's new focus is to expand his dry rub business that started before his TikTok days. What started with four flavors has already doubled, and the company is looking to produce a full line of twelve rubs.

"When new stuff comes in, it flies out."

Marandola has two partners in Miami, Florida, who help with this business. He hopes to use the money from the rubs as income while using social media as a promotion of his material. Overall, he would like to start by selling the rubs on Amazon and then seeing them in storefronts.

"Next Level Chef" airs at 8 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 2 on Fox. Marandola's videos can be found on TikTok at @garybbqchef.



**THE TEAXS TWINKIE:** One of Marandola's TikToks shows viewers how to make a Texas Twinkie. This recipe includes shredded brisket, cream cheese, rub from the brisket – all of which is wrapped in a jalapeno pepper and smoked on the grill.



**IS IT THE ACCENT?** Marandola gained 1.6 million TikTok followers for his BBQ chef videos and will appear on Fox's new show "Next Level Chef." (Photos courtesy of Gary Marandola)

**CROSSWORD  
PUZZLE CORNER**

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10			
11				12		13			14					
15						16			17					
	18				19		20		21					
					22	23			24					
25	26	27	28	29										
30							31							
32									33	34	35	36	37	
					38	39	40		41	42				
									43					
					45	46								
47	48						49			50	51	52	53	54
55							56				57			58
59							60				61			
62							63					64		

**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Loud cheer
- 5. Defensive nuclear weapon (abbr.)
- 8. Type of cell
- 11. Oblong pulpits
- 13. Pitching statistic
- 14. Uncommon
- 15. Liabilities
- 16. Thin, straight bar
- 17. Oh goodness!
- 18. Competitions
- 20. \_\_\_ Jima, WW II battlefield
- 21. Professional assn. (abbr.)
- 22. Italian mountain range
- 25. Taking possession of
- 30. Used in cooking and medicine
- 31. Water (French)
- 32. Parent a child
- 33. Sun-dried brick
- 38. One point south of due east
- 41. Female fashion accessory
- 43. A way of making a copy of
- 45. A way to debilitate
- 47. Wings
- 49. Social insect
- 50. Dull brown fabrics

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Cool!
- 2. Passover offering
- 3. Swedish rock group
- 4. Collegiate military organization
- 5. Large nests
- 6. Beloved baked good
- 7. 1980s pop legend
- 8. Finger millet
- 9. Hillside
- 10. Surrender
- 12. Midway between south and southeast
- 14. Long, narrow strap
- 19. Discount
- 23. A type of cast
- 24. Large, tropical lizard
- 25. Half of "Milli Vanilli"
- 26. Single
- 27. Big truck
- 28. Midway between east and southeast
- 29. Et \_\_\_ : indicates further
- 34. Insecticide
- 35. Luke Skywalker's mentor \_\_\_-Wan
- 36. Cast out
- 37. Breakfast food
- 39. By reason of
- 40. One who makes thread
- 41. Baseball stat
- 42. Breezed through
- 44. Frothy mass of bubbles
- 45. Tony-winning actress Daisy
- 46. Made of fermented honey and water
- 47. Member of a Semitic people
- 48. Monetary unit of the Maldives
- 51. Run batted in
- 52. Makes publicly known
- 53. Disagreement
- 54. Soluble ribonucleic acid
- 58. Single-reed instrument

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# SUN RISE SCOOPS

By Meri R. Kennedy

## Warwick to host NY Eve Fireworks

Come kick off your festivities at the City of Warwick's New Year's Eve Celebration! A family friendly event where you can enjoy food from local food trucks 4-6 p.m. which will include Festive Music, Activities & Giveaways from the Warwick Police, and Prizes courtesy of BankNewport, Warwick Tourism, and local businesses.

Top it all off with a fabulous 12-15-minute Fireworks Display at 6 p.m. that you can enjoy from the warmth and comfort of your car.

Thank you to the City of Warwick and the team who came together to bring you this special celebration! Warwick Parks & Recreation - Police Department - Public Works - Tourism, BankNewport, and Central RI Chamber of Commerce. Wishing You All A Safe and Happy New Year!

## Minnnows, sharks welcome at Polar Plunge Jan. 1

A Wish Come True's 18th annual Polar Plunge will be held on January 1st at Easton's Beach (also known as First Beach) in Newport. This year, an estimated 5,000 people will return to plunge into icy cold water to benefit children with a life-threatening illness. The plunge is a major fundraiser for A Wish Come True and is the largest event of its kind in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

The Plunge will begin right at noon. Participants are encouraged to arrive early due to new check-in requirements addressing safety protocols. Check-in begins at 10:30am. The charge for 'Minnnows' is \$20. For \$40, 'Sharks' can plunge and get their choice of a towel or fleece blanket. Those who want to contribute without getting into the water can purchase a towel, fleece blanket or T-shirt for \$25.

Payments can be made by cash, check, credit card, or Venmo. Plungers are encouraged to start a Just Giving Fundraising Campaign to help raise funds to support your efforts in helping Wish Families. More information is on the website at [www.awish.org](http://www.awish.org). Plungers that started a JustGiving fundraising campaign online will just need to check in to receive their bracelet and blanket.

## Reminder from Parks & Rec

Just a reminder of some of the rules and regulations at Johnston Memorial Park. There are no dogs allowed in the park or walking tracks. Dogs are allowed in the nature trail across the street from our

parking lot; No smoking or tobacco use, No bikes, scooters, skateboard, etc. are allowed on the walking track that surrounds the pond. They may be used on the center path of the park, Please do not feed the ducks, birds, or any wildlife,

Please keep the park clean by using the available trash barrels, Absolutely no alcoholic beverages on town property. No vehicles allowed in the park; No swimming or boating in the pond; No open flames or charcoal grills. Gas grills are permitted; Fireplace use is prohibited, For your safety, please do not climb trees or fences; The park closes at 10 p.m. Recreation Department organized activities may continue; No overnight parking; No foul language or loud music; Field use is by permit only.

Also, please be mindful of parking. Please display a handicap placard if you park in a handicap space. The area behind the office is reserved for employees. If you have any questions, please call 401-272-3460.

The restrooms at Johnston Memorial Park will be closed for the winter beginning tomorrow, Saturday, December 11 and will reopen in the Spring.

## NAMI-RI: Registration open for Free Virtual Family-To-Family Course

The Rhode Island chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness is now accepting registration for their winter 2022 virtual Family-to-Family course. This is a free, 8-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program, which means that research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition.

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

For more information on the Family-to-Family curriculum and registration requirements, visit [namirhodeisland.org](http://namirhodeisland.org) or call 401-331-3060 or email [beth@namirhodeisland.org](mailto:beth@namirhodeisland.org).

## New Donation Center for Big Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island (BBBSRI) has opened a new Donation Drop-Off Center at 993 Oaklawn Ave. on Dec.1. BBBSRI's main headquarters has been located on Pontiac Ave. for 12 years. With its headquarters moved to Provi-

dence this November, BBBSRI had to find a new location for its Cranston Drop Off Center.

Residents are encouraged to drop off bagged clothing and textiles at the new location, 993 Oaklawn Avenue (next to Gasbarro's Liquor Store plaza) Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. The location is staffed with an attendant during these hours. During off-hours, residents can conveniently drop bagged items into one of BBBSRI's green donation bins located in the parking lot.

BBBSRI makes donating easy. In addition to our Donation Center, residents can also schedule a free curbside pick-up at their home or drop their bagged cloth in bins throughout the state. Visit [BigsRI.org/DonateRI](http://BigsRI.org/DonateRI) to schedule your pick-up online or find your nearest bin.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island creates and supports one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. If you are interested in mentoring a child, donating to support our program, hosting a clothing drive, hosting a clothing fundraiser for your school or group, or more, visit [www.BigsRI.org](http://www.BigsRI.org), call (401) 921-2434, or email [events@BigsRI.org](mailto:events@BigsRI.org).

## Tour the Johnston Historical Society

Just a reminder that Tuesdays, 6 to 8 p.m. are open hours at the Johnston Historical Society. Tour the museum! Tour the Elijah Angell House! Ask all the questions you ever wanted to ask about Johnston history! All are welcome!

Contact the Johnston Historical Society at 231-3380 or at [johnstonhistorical1825@gmail.com](mailto:johnstonhistorical1825@gmail.com), [www.johnstonhistorical.org](http://www.johnstonhistorical.org) or [www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical](http://www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical).

## Bingo is back

Bingo games have returned to the Johnston Senior Center. At 2 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays, Johnston Senior Center members can try their luck on the Bingo cards again.

During the pandemic, the games had ceased, and were badly missed. Last week, a successful Dress-Down fundraiser resulted in free Del's Lemonade for participants.

## Johnston Senior Center updates

Things are happening once again in full swing at the Johnston Senior Center. The following is list of classes and activities held daily.

On Mondays, Walk away the Pounds, Aerobics & Boot Camp, Arts &

Crafts and Hi Lo Jack.

It is Walk away the Pounds and Bocce on Tuesdays and on Wednesdays it will be Bocce, Quilting, Zumba and Fit and Strong as well as Hi Lo Jack and Poker.

On Thursdays it is Walk away the Pounds, Bocce, Marg Jong, Yoga and Bingo and on Fridays it is Line Dancing, Zumba and Bingo.

The Return of Saturday Drop-In Crafts at Mohr Library

This week, the Marian J. Mohr Memorial Library will resume Saturday hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Do some crafts in the library or take some home. They are located at 1 Memorial Ave. in Johnston.

## Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness Meditation will be held at the Warwick Center for the Arts, 3259 Post Rd. in Warwick on the first and third Mondays of each month. It is free and open to the public.

Their mindfulness meditation is led by Paulette Miller. The sessions offer a westernized, secular version of Vipassana, also known as insight, open-hearted, and analytic meditation. Sessions often include guided breathing meditation, movement meditation, loving-kindness meditation, and music meditation. The meditation exercises are guided and no experience is necessary.

For further information: [www.warwickcfa.org](http://www.warwickcfa.org) or 401-737-0010.

## Friends of the Mohr Public Library

Friends of the Mohr Public Library is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation dedicated to Mohr Library.

Members of the Friends plan and run book sales and carry out other fundraising activities to allow Mohr Library to increase services and programs.

The Friends welcome new members who are willing to support either through donations, membership dues, or through volunteering their time.

To find out more, contact library director at 231-

4980 (press 7).

## RI Housing offers loans

RI Housing's Hardest Hit Fund Rhode Island (HHFRI) program is offering zero interest, forgivable loans to eligible Rhode Island homeowners who became unemployed or underemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are struggling to make their mortgage payments.

Loan proceeds may provide eligible homeowners with up to six months of mortgage payment assistance. Learn more about the loan program and eligibility at [rihousing.com/hhfri](http://rihousing.com/hhfri).

## Be Kind RI

Be Kind RI is a new program that connects volunteers to their neighbors across RI through text alerts to coordinate food

deliveries from grocery stores and food pantries. To sign up go to [www.BeKindRI.org](http://www.BeKindRI.org). Volunteers must be 18 or older and undergo our background check.

Be Kind RI is open to those in RI experiencing COVID-19 risk factors including seniors 65+, anyone with underlying health conditions, those in quarantine or isolation, anyone experiencing a lack of childcare, and those who would otherwise experience difficulty in obtaining food. For assistance signing up, call 877-958-8785.

## Marian J. Mohr Memorial Library

Free craft and activity kits for children are available at the library. Stop by the library to pick up one, or e-mail Ms. Meri meri@[mohrlibrary.org](mailto:mohrlibrary.org) or call 231-4980 to make a reservation.

# OBITUARIES

## Denise A. Caranci

Denise A. (Sarandrea) Caranci 51, of Cranston, passed away on Thursday, December 9, 2021 at Kent Hospital, Warwick. She was the beloved wife of 20 years to Michael Caranci. Born in Providence, she was the loving daughter of Joseph Sarandrea jr. and Jacqueline (Lemoi) Sarandrea of Johnston, and the late Giovanna (Peluso) Sarandrea.

Denise was a Registered Nurse, working for several healthcare locations throughout the State of Rhode Island.

Besides her husband and parents she is survived by her loving children: Keanna M. Caranci, Courtney D. Caranci and Matthew M. Caranci all of Cranston; her dear siblings Joseph R. Sarandrea of Florida and John J. Sarandrea of Cranston. She was the sister-in-law of Lynn (Caranci) Carter and her husband Steven of Johnston, and aunt of Sebastian Carter of Johnston and godmother of Tabitha Medeiros of Johnston; and is also survive by many aunts, uncles and cousins. She was Special Sister to: Andrew Nassef, Michele Brogno, Michael Nassef Jr., and a foster parent for 15 years to countless children. Denise was the daughter-in-law of the late Luigi and Marie Caranci.

Her visiting hours will be held on Tuesday evening from 4-7 pm in the NARDOLILLO FUNERAL HOME & Crematory 1278 Park Ave., Cranston. Funeral from the funeral home on Wednesday morning at 9 am followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 am in St. Mary's Church, Cranston. Burial and committal prayers to follow in St. Ann's Cemetery, Cranston.



## Marie Badessa

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Or a silver lining in the clouds,  
When the sun is peeing through.

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daughters, daughter in law  
and grandchildren.

## Obituaries

In your time of need, the *Johnston SunRise* will print your loved one's full obituary for a small charge. The paper also places the obituary on our website, [johnstonsunrise.net](http://johnstonsunrise.net).

Should you desire our services, kindly inform your funeral director, or call Amanda Nardolillo at (401) 732-3100 or email [AmandaN@rhodybeat.com](mailto:AmandaN@rhodybeat.com) for additional information. Obituary prices start at \$60. You may include the obituary in any of our other newspapers for half price.

- Thank you

# Opinion

## Get a COVID test?

**T**his sick situation has provided far more questions than answers.

Do you feel that phlegm in the back of your throat?

Did you just sneeze? Or was that a cough?

Are you suffering from an annual case of the seasonal sniffles? Or are you infected with the latest mutant COVID-19 variant?

Countless Rhode Islanders are asking themselves these questions during this final week of 2021, following Christmas parties and festive dinners.

Headed toward New Year's Eve, and perhaps another gathering with family and friends, virus testing has never been in higher demand.

Have we lost our minds, or are we justly paranoid following two years of a lingering pandemic?

Lines are stretching outside of testing centers across the Ocean State.

Pharmacy stocks of take-home tests have been severely depleted. Finding a test can be difficult, if not near impossible.

And if I find a test, can I trust the results? (Nobody seems to be able to answer that question with a reliable answer.)

Just about every resident of Rhode Island now knows someone who has just tested positive for COVID-19 in recent weeks.

Maybe your child has been exposed in a classroom. Maybe you stood behind a coughing patient while waiting for your booster shot. Maybe you picked up the bug while hugging your grandmother.

No matter the source of exposure, you're not alone.

The test frenzy has gripped even the most steadied and resolute among us.

An already decimated work force finds itself further reduced by sick employees and quarantined workers.

The federal government has reduced the isolation time for asymptomatic positive cases to five days following an affir-

native test result. That might help a little.

The federal government has also pledged to purchase and distribute a half billion tests to Americans in January.

Has that move made it more difficult to find take-home tests at your local pharmacy?

Or is this all just a sign that we're concerned for our fellow man? Mask requirements are back in place — almost.

Early data seems to indicate that the new Omicron variant of COVID-19 is possibly more easily transmissible, but also quite possibly less deadly.

However, the timing, coinciding with the holidays and New England's winter weather forcing us indoors, could not be worse.

Nobody wants to be the source of the virus at a holiday super-spreader event. Nobody wants to be "that guy" who brought the bug to the party.

But is testing, and more testing, the answer?

"Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect you and those around you from serious illness related to COVID-19," according to Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee. "I thank all Rhode Islanders who have already rolled up their sleeves, got vaccinated and then got boosted."

Many of us have now absorbed three shots of the vaccine that could help save us and those around us. We thought that would be enough. We all thought this pandemic would be over by now.

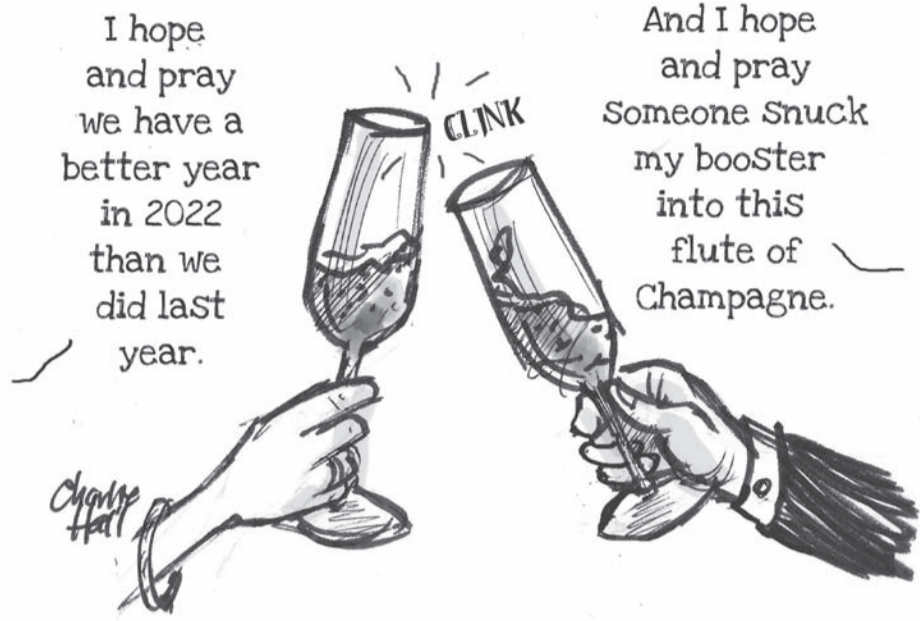
In the meantime, we need to let common sense prevail.

Between testing, masking and jabbing, the people of Rhode Island are exhausted. But perhaps exhausted is better than struggling for breath in an ICU bed.

Can we test ourselves out of this situation?

Are "more tests" the answer to our current conundrum?

Or are we placing far too much faith in the testing apparatus that seems to be crumbling beneath us?



## Let us unite in advocating for human rights

By LONNIE BARHAM

What's in a name? A lot! My wife's father, the first child born in the U.S. to her Italian immigrant grandparents, was named Americo in honor of the new land his parents would call home.

The same sentiment applies to the NBA basketball player formerly named Enes Kanter. Kanter, now Enes Kanter Freedom, plays center for the Boston Celtics.

He immigrated to the U.S. from Turkey ten years ago and has since been an outspoken critic of the Turkish government and other countries for human rights violations. He's spoken out both verbally and with slogans on his shoes about China's suppression of the Uyghurs and its repression of Tibetans seeking independence.

Freedom has also castigated U.S. companies who profit from items made in China, especially Nike, for their "hypocrisy" in enriching themselves at the expense of the "blood and sweat and so much oppression" that goes into the manufacturing of exports from China. He also excoriates

Nike for supporting minority rights in the U.S. while remaining silent about China's human rights abuses.

And Freedom reviles other players' failure to "research and educate themselves before signing deals" with companies like Nike, especially NBA superstar LeBron James for signing a lifetime contract with Nike.

He says James and other athletes who promote Nike have become "puppets" who are supporting China's human rights violations.

He's also called for a boycott of the 2022 Olympics in Beijing. Enes Kanter Freedom came to the U.S. legally and worked for years to achieve citizenship. While the lucrative

NBA salary was one of the reason for his immigration, his primary reason for coming here is now an eponym—freedom. His freedom to support social activism, to freely criticize other countries for suppressing human rights, and his ability to freely express his views on the court through shoe slogans, made Free-

dom so appreciate the rights American citizens enjoy that he decided to legally add "Freedom" to his name to coincide with the bestowal of U.S. citizenship.

While most Americans reluctantly support professional athletes' right to protest our country's ills by kneeling during the playing of our national anthem, it is so refreshing to see an athlete who recognizes the vast freedoms Americans enjoy and who is so proud to be a part of our country that he unabashedly added Freedom to his name.

If all Americans had the courage and tenacity to strongly but peacefully advocate for the protection of human rights around the world, to include boycotting companies like Nike, we might see real improvements in how China and other autocratic countries treat their minority citizens.

Many Americans feel that widespread discrimination still exists in the U.S. and that we should wash ourselves before trying to wash others. That's true in some respects. But our Constitution and the ideals our country was founded on provide mechanisms for inequalities to be eliminated—and methodically they are.

Most Americans take our freedoms for granted. Enes Kanter Freedom recognizes how fortunate we are to live in a country with protections from human and civil rights abuses.

The old saying, "From the mouths of babes," refers to children who speak truths that reveal how adults have purposely or inadvertently hidden truths from themselves.

The Emperor's New Clothes provides a fictitious but prime example.

In the face of an American population that seems to have forgotten its foundational freedoms, it has taken an immigrant with the name

Enes Kanter Freedom to show us that we are unclothed.

*Lonnie Barham, a retired military officer and former school administrator, is an occasional guest columnist who lives in Warwick*

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# Opinion

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Have we lost our minds, or are we justly paranoid following two years of a lingering pandemic?

Lines are stretching outside of testing centers across the Ocean State.

Pharmacy stocks of take-home tests have been severely depleted. Finding a test can be difficult, if not near impossible.

And if I find a test, can I trust the results? (Nobody seems to be able to answer that question with a reliable answer.)

Just about every resident of Rhode Island now knows someone who has just tested positive for COVID-19 in recent weeks.

Maybe your child has been exposed in a classroom. Maybe you stood behind a coughing patient while waiting for your booster shot. Maybe you picked up the bug while hugging your grandmother.

No matter the source of exposure, you're not alone.

The test frenzy has gripped even the most steadied and resolute among us.

An already decimated work force finds itself further reduced by sick employees and quarantined workers.

The federal government has reduced the isolation time for asymptomatic positive cases to five days following an affir-

mative test result. That might help a little.

The federal government has also pledged to purchase and distribute a half billion tests to Americans in January.

Has that move made it more difficult to find take-home tests at your local pharmacy?

Or is this all just a sign that we're concerned for our fellow man? Mask requirements are back in place — almost.

Early data seems to indicate that the new Omicron variant of COVID-19 is possibly more easily transmissible, but also quite possibly less deadly.

However, the timing, coinciding with the holidays and New England's winter weather forcing us indoors, could not be worse.

Nobody wants to be the source of the virus at a holiday super-spreader event. Nobody wants to be "that guy" who brought the bug to the party.

But is testing, and more testing, the answer?

"Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect you and those around you from serious illness related to COVID-19," according to Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee. "I thank all Rhode Islanders who have already rolled up their sleeves, got vaccinated and then got boosted."

Many of us have now absorbed three shots of the vaccine that could help save us and those around us. We thought that would be enough. We all thought this pandemic would be over by now.

In the meantime, we need to let common sense prevail.

Between testing, masking and jabbing, the people of Rhode Island are exhausted. But perhaps exhausted is better than struggling for breath in an ICU bed.

Can we test ourselves out of this situation?

Are "more tests" the answer to our current conundrum?

Or are we placing far too much faith in the testing apparatus that seems to be crumbling beneath us?

I hope and pray we have a better year in 2022 than we did last year.

And I hope and pray someone snuck my booster into this flute of Champagne.



## Let us unite in advocating for human rights

By **LONNIE BARHAM**

What's in a name? A lot! My wife's father, the first child born in the U.S. to her Italian immigrant grandparents, was named Americo in honor of the new land his parents would call home.

The same sentiment applies to the NBA basketball player formerly named Enes Kanter. Kanter, now Enes Kanter Freedom, plays center for the Boston Celtics.

He immigrated to the U.S. from Turkey ten years ago and has since been an outspoken critic of the Turkish government and other countries for human rights violations. He's spoken out both verbally and with slogans on his shoes about China's suppression of the Uyghurs and its repression of Tibetans seeking independence.

Freedom has also castigated U.S. companies who profit from items made in China, especially Nike, for their "hypocrisy" in enriching themselves at the expense of the "blood and sweat and so much oppression" that goes into the manufacturing of exports from China. He also excoriates Nike for supporting minority rights in the U.S. while remaining silent about China's human rights abuses.

And Freedom reviles other players' failure to "research and educate themselves before signing deals" with companies like Nike, especially NBA superstar LeBron James for signing a lifetime contract with Nike.

He says James and other athletes who promote Nike have become "puppets" who are supporting China's human rights violations.

He's also called for a boycott of the 2022 Olympics in Beijing. Enes Kanter Freedom came to the U.S. legally and worked for years to achieve citizenship. While the lucrative

NBA salary was one of the reason for his immigration, his primary reason for coming here is now an eponym—freedom. His freedom to support social activism, to freely criticize other countries for suppressing human rights, and his ability to freely express his views on the

court through shoe slogans, made Freedom so appreciate the rights American citizens enjoy that he decided to legally add "Freedom" to his name to coincide with the bestowal of U.S. citizenship.

While most Americans reluctantly support professional athletes' right to protest our country's ills by kneeling during the playing of our national anthem, it is so refreshing to see an athlete who recognizes the vast freedoms Americans enjoy and who is so proud to be a part of our country that he unabashedly added Freedom to his name.

If all Americans had the courage and tenacity to strongly but peacefully advocate for the protection of human rights around the world, to include boycotting companies like Nike, we might see real improvements in how China and other autocratic countries treat their minority citizens.

Many Americans feel that widespread discrimination still exists in the U.S. and that we should wash ourselves before trying to wash others. That's true in some respects. But our Constitution and the ideals our country was founded on provide mechanisms for inequalities to be eliminated—and methodically they are.

Most Americans take our freedoms for granted. Enes Kanter Freedom recognizes how fortunate we are to live in a country with protections from human and civil rights abuses.

The old saying, "From the mouths of babes," refers to children who speak truths that reveal how adults have purposely or inadvertently hidden truths from themselves.

The Emperor's New Clothes provides a fictitious but prime example.

In the face of an American population that seems to have forgotten its foundational freedoms, it has taken an immigrant with the name

Enes Kanter Freedom to show us that we are unclothed.

*Lonnie Barham, a retired military officer and former school administrator, is an occasional guest columnist who lives in Warwick*

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### SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



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# RhodyLife

## RIEMA:

## Planning for everybody's worst day



FLOODED: Helping to ensure that state agencies and municipalities are prepared for disasters like the 2010 flood in Rhode Island is one of the many functions of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. (Submitted photo)

By ALEX MALM

On the same morning Rhode Island Emergency Management Executive Administrator Tom Guthlein gave a presentation to the Warwick Rotary Club, RIEMA was coordinating the passage of a LPG (liquefied propane gas) tanker up Narragansett Bay to the Port of Providence. Two Coast Guard vessels, one in the bow and another following the stern and a helicopter escorted the tanker.

Guthlein explained that the Coast Guard considers ships carrying LPG as crucial fuel deliveries.

Because the channel is narrow going into Providence a helicopter flies in front of the ship and lets the water assets know if someone is in the channel. The escorts ensure the channel is clear.

"That's a safety precaution we have," said Guthlein. He noted that the channel is narrow and it could be problematic if the tanker had to alter course.

Because of the level of coordination needed between the State and Federal Agencies RIEMA's State Emergency Operation Center in Cranston was staffed that day to make sure everything went smoothly.

Escorting the LPG tanker is just one of the many situations that RIEMA helps with.

While the agency helps in a number of different ways Guthlein said that the public usually associates emergency management with hurricanes, floods, and winter storms. "But we do a lot more than that," he said Guthlein.

Guthlein said that RIEMA is like FEMA but at the State level.

He said that the motto for the agency is "we're always planning for everybody's worst day."

In order to accomplish that Guthlein said that RIEMA has many different partnerships with the federal government, municipalities and a number of different organizations.

RIEMA also works with Massachusetts and Connecticut. He said RIEMA monitors hundreds of first responders calls daily from

both in and out of state.

"We're always going across each other's state to help each other," said Guthlein.

One partnership Guthlein pointed to is with the Rhode Island Medical Reserve Corps, 8,000 volunteers that includes doctors, nurses and people without medical training.

"During the pandemic they have been life-savers," said Guthlein.

Guthlein said RIEMA is divided into different branches.

One of those is mitigation, which plans for example for situations arising from Climate Change and sea level rise.

Another one of the branches works on recovery.

Guthlein said that they are in recovery right now for the pandemic.

"Everything that we're doing right now seems like a response but it's actually in the recovery phase," said Guthlein.

One of the ways RIEMA has been helping is through getting more test kits. Guthlein said that they recently put in a request with FEMA to get 1 million tests for the State.

Guthlein said that once the tests come to Rhode Island they will be put in the state warehouse which RIEMA runs.

Guthlein said a 255,000 square foot warehouse houses all of the equipment and supplies used for the pandemic.

"Everything from the alternative hospital site to the bandaids that are needed for the vaccinations," said Guthlein.

An example of RIEMA assistance was three years ago when Block Island lost its public safety communications. RIEMA was erected two portable communication towers and restored communications for the summer.

In order to fulfill the agency's motto RIEMA organizes and participates in a number of different trainings to be prepared for a number of different emergency situations.

One of the ways they do so is by creating different scenarios to train for. Guthlein said that in 2019 plans were developed for federal, state and local agencies to cooperatively con-

duct search and emergency rescue operations on the water, in urban areas and in wilderness areas throughout the state.

Because of the pandemic those plans had to be put on hold.

During an event in October representatives from federal, state and local agencies conducted tabletop exercises at the Radisson Hotel as a prelude to live exercises next spring to troubleshoot and improve upon the plans.

Guthlein said that while the airport does a lot of training for what happens when there is a problem on a runway, he said there is little training for what happens if an aircraft lands in the water.

With the lack of current training for those scenarios Guthlein decided to create a table top plan and training exercise for what would be done if a large passenger plane landed in the bay and what the response would be using the U.S. Coast Guard, State and municipal assets.

When it comes to inclement weather, Guthlein said RIEMA stays in touch with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and RIEMA has their own seven-day modeling for weather.

He said most storms start on the west coast and come east and the modeling they have is based on that, while the National Weather organization base its modeling on a broader scale.

Within three to four days of a storm arriving, Guthlein said RIEMA is able to begin giving estimates to government officials of when it will arrive and how much snow or other inclement weather is expected to arrive. By doing so they are then able to start making decisions in regards to things like closures.

During hurricane season Guthlein said that RIEMA is in touch with the national Hurricane Center once a week.

Another facet of RIEMA is incident command teams that are deployed to assist municipalities when needed.

Guthlein said that one example of those

teams helping was during the 2019 Newport gas outage. For that incident RIEMA sent 8 people from their team while FEMA sent 15 to help the City of Newport.

The almost two dozen employees helped to organize things with City officials and then reported back to RIEMA so they could get them everything they needed. One of the issues was being able to feed 22,000 people quickly with no gas.

"One of the big things with emergency management is thinking outside the box," said Guthlein.

Inside the Emergency Operation Center was a new employee, Guthlein said, who came up with a suggestion.

"Can we get all the food trucks in the state to go down there and feed people," Guthlein recalled the employee asking.

The idea was well received by other staff members and RIEMA called the Commerce Department and got in touch with different food trucks. Soon 45 trucks were there and RIEMA paid the food truck owners to feed the residents of Newport.

One of the most iconic things about RIEMA is the Emergency Operation Center.

Guthlein said with representatives from a number of different organizations and agencies inside one room, they are to get a lot of things done during emergencies.

"They can solve problems by talking to each other," said Guthlein. The command center includes a governor's cabinet room that is used so officials can follow what's happening without being a distraction to those on the floor.

The room is referred to as a fish bowl since officials can see what's happening but those in the command center can't see them.

"They can look and see them but they can't see the cabinet or governor," said Guthlein.

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# COLLECTIBLES



## BRITISH MONSTER HEAD HANGERS

Brass hilted monster head hangers were in use with the British army from at least the mid-to-late 17th century. Sometimes they are fairly crude cast-brass and some with a little more discernable detail. By the mid-18th century, they seem to be quite similar in form. A cast-brass hilt and counter-guard with a knuckle bow and occasionally a branch, what looks like twisted rope around the grip, and an impressive pommel that looks like a monster's head. When issued out they sometimes were engraved with regiment and rack numbers on the counter-guard to identify the soldier to whom it belonged. These markings add to the collector value and history especially if marked to a regiment that fought in North America.

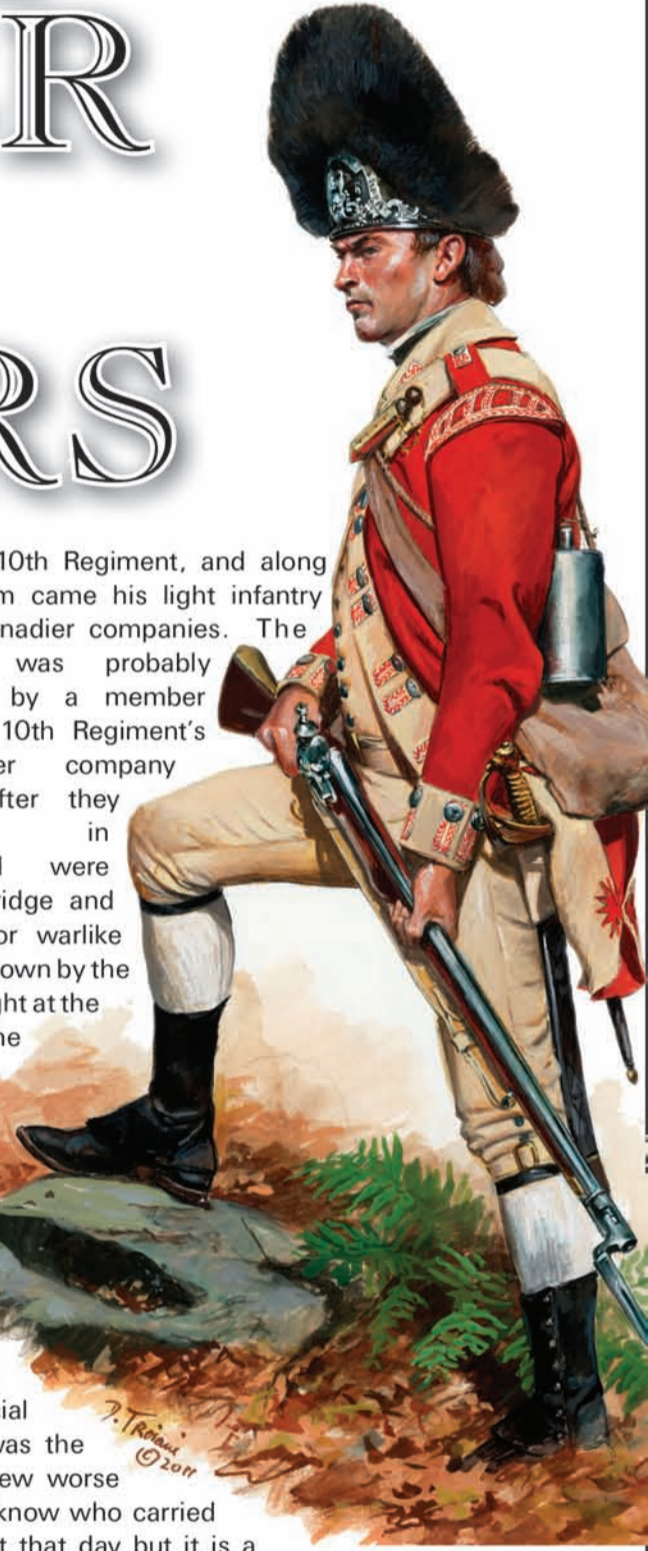
Before the American Revolution, battalion companies turned in their swords, but they were still carried by the grenadier company of a regiment. Not all regiments used the same form of sword, and it was up to the colonel to choose a pattern. My favorite British martial sword is the cast brass monster head. It just has a certain look to it and when worn with the entire grenadier uniform it helps add to the impressive look of the soldier.

One of these beautiful swords is in the collection of the Concord Museum and it's provenance states it was picked up on April 19, 1775. It is in very good condition and marked on the counter-guard to the 10th Regiment of Foot. The expedition to Concord on that fateful morning was led by Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith, commander



**By Joel Bohy**  
*Historic Arms & Militaria*  
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of the 10th Regiment, and along with him came his light infantry and grenadier companies. The sword was probably carried by a member of the 10th Regiment's grenadier company who after they arrived in Concord were ordered to hold the South Bridge and search homes in the area for warlike supplies being stockpiled in the town by the Provincial Congress. After the fight at the North bridge which included the light infantry company of the 10th Regiment and searching out and destroying what supplies they could find, British forces left Concord for their return to Boston. As they reached Meriam's Corner, about a mile outside of town, they were attacked by Provincial minute and militiamen. This was the start of heavy fighting that grew worse as the day went on. We don't know who carried the sword or where it was lost that day but it is a great survivor of the expedition to Concord and the start of the American Revolution.



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# Sports



ALL-DIVISION TEAM: Steven Finegan picks up some yards this season. (Photo by Alex Sponseller)

## Looking back on the year

Happy New Year to our readers at Beacon Communications. It's incredible how fast the holidays always sneak up on us and how quick the season always seems to fly by.

Like every year, late December is a time of reflection and I have spent the last few days thinking about how great of a sports year 2021 was, despite us still clawing our way out from under the ongoing pandemic.

Here is a look at some of my favorite things from 2021:

I would say the best game that I covered had to be the football state championship between Hendricken and La Salle, and I am referring to the one back in November, not the spring.

The two teams were the clear cut best in the state and for the first time in awhile, the Rams were considered the favorite heading into the matchup.

Sure enough, the game delivered and the two clubs would need all four quarters to decide a winner in what ended up being the highest scoring state championship in state history. It was a thrilling, back and forth game from the get-go and Hendricken would run away with it in the final minutes to pull off the upset. The rivalry is as strong as ever and it was great to see another incredible chapter between the two teams.

In terms of my favorite teams, there are too many to narrow down to just one. I will go through the ones that stand out the most, starting with the

### My pitch



by ALEX SPONSELLER  
SPORTS EDITOR

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more recent ones.

I have a ton of respect for what the Johnston football team accomplished this fall. After being steamrolled in the Division III championship in the spring, the Panthers returned in the fall without their best player in Tom Zednik who graduated, but would go on a late-season surge to reach the playoffs and take a game.

Although Johnston's run ended at the hands of the eventual champion Narragansett, the Panthers went from being a second-tier team at midseason to becoming a legitimate contender by the playoffs. Then on Thanksgiving, they swooped in on two days' notice to replace Toll Gate in the Warwick Beacon Bowl and pulled off a big upset against Pilgrim.

Although Pilgrim fell in the semis, I do not think it would be a stretch to say it was the second best team in Division III. Johnston traveled to Warwick and made it look easy on Thanksgiving day. The Panthers were really a fun team to follow this fall.

Another team that impressed me was the Pil-

■ PITCH - PAGE 17

# All-Division football squads unveiled

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

The RI Football Coaches' Association recently unveiled its All-Division selections for this past fall season, and many locals made the cut.

Bishop Hendricken's Brandyn Durand was named to the Division I-A First Team on offense as well as teammate Oscar Weah. Also making the first team on offense is Hendricken's Teighan Jeremy, Alex

Morin and Peter Bibby. Bless Nyanneh made the defensive first team for Hendricken, along with teammate Kamalie Pem-

■ DIVISION - PAGE 19

## JGSL enjoys record-setting year

By PETE FONTAINE

In keeping with its brief, yet terrific tradition, the Johnston Girls Softball League's Rhode Island Rockets wrote one of the town – and state's – special sports success stories of 2021.

So much so, in fact, just when it looked like the JGSL's three traveling teams would not host its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual 50 Innings of Softball to continue raising money for breast cancer research due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Rockets knocked it out of the park for the highly-acclaimed Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

A total of five teenage girls' softball teams – along with the Bay State Blitz and KNB Rox of Massachusetts – smashed all previous fund-raising records and after what JGSL President Lisa Calabro called "a long, 12-hour day of softball, the donations were tallied and we \$12,000."

Which was, as representatives from the five traveling teams concurred, "a far cry from the first year back in 2019 when we only raised \$1,700."

■ JGSL - PAGE 17



FANTASTIC FUNDRAISERS: These are the players who rewrote the state's sports history book by raising over \$20,000 for breast cancer research during the unique and highly-successful 2021 50 Innings of Softball that was played at Wood Lake Park in Johnston. (Submitted photos)

**■ Pitch**  
(Cont. from page 16)

grim girls tennis team. Heading into the playoffs, it looked like the Lady Pats would be one and done as they drew No. 2 Saint Ray's in the opening round. Pilgrim pulled off the upset and would later beat Central in the semis.

Lincoln School wound up beating Pilgrim in the championship match, but Pilgrim really caught fire down the stretch and had a chance to get the job done.

I have spent a lot of time talking about the Cranston East girls basketball team from last winter, but I will have to give the group one more shout out here as well.

Last winter, with five games left on the regular season schedule, it looked as if the Lady Bolts would have to win four, maybe even all five of their final contests to qualify for the playoffs. They did just that, winning five straight then even picking up a postseason win.

This was one of the biggest surprises this year, as East entered the year looking like a low-end team with little hope of making the playoffs. Not only did the team earn a playoff berth, but it won at home and became a scary team in the process. It was one of those classic examples of the pow-

er of momentum late in the season.

I'd say the biggest upset of the year had to be the Cranston West baseball team beating Bishop Hendricken in the Division I playoffs.

West had a good team, no doubt, but Hendricken was the clear favorite to take it all and the Hawks were at home. I remember that day ... I was covering the Pilgrim-Toll Gate opening round and as I was waiting to get my postgame interviews, I heard the parents start buzzing about how the Hawks were upset down the street.

I couldn't believe it and even asked the coaches if they had heard the same thing which they did. One of those times when I was genuinely surprised, which does not happen often in high school sports. Anything can happen, but that one stunned me.

In terms of my favorite performances, I have narrowed it down to two.

The first, not in order necessarily, is Brandyn Durand in the spring football state championship.

Primarily a defensive lineman, the Hawks deployed the All-Stater as a running back which ultimately paid off as he was a force all afternoon. The Rams had no answer for him as he rushed for a touchdown. Meanwhile, he continued to

dominate on the defensive line and would ice the game with a pick-six.

I'll always remember that play because he ran right down the sidelines where I was standing and I was able to get the front page photo. One of those pictures that I will always remember.

The other performance that stands out to me is Pilgrim's Alyssa Twomey in the softball playoffs.

Not only was Twomey lights out in the circle, but she came up huge at the plate including a game-sealing home run in the semifinals. Twomey was a force and carried Pilgrim in the playoffs.

I could go on and on about the good things we saw in 2021, but unfortunately, I must cut myself off here. We are still working our way back to normalcy and have a ways to go, but I am thankful that we got the sports that we did this year.

As we enter 2022, let's continue to be safe, make good decisions, and take advantage of every opportunity that we have to enjoy athletics. Nothing brings people together like sports, and during these tough times, we need to be unified more than ever.

Thank you to the athletes, coaches and fans for making my job as fun as any job could be. I can't wait to dive into the new year.



**MIGHTY MESSAGE:** Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena stands on the infield at Wood Lake Park and welcomes all team players, coaches, and officials while thanking everyone for this "important fund-raising effort in honor of breast cancer research."

**■ JGSL**  
(Continued from page 16)

Perhaps even more impressive was that last year the event took in \$7,250.

So, as Calabro and her husband Derek - who have led the Johnston Rockets to become one of the most respected traveling team organizations in Southern New England - explained: "immediately following the last pitch in 2020 the coaches agreed that this year's goal would be \$10,000."

However, even the most optimistic coach, as Lisa Calabro noted: "we were all unsure if that would be a possibility with the uncertainty of COVID-19, but we all pushed our girls to do their best and that led to the extraordinary amount of \$12,000 that brought the event's three-year total to over \$20,000 for breast cancer research."

As the Calabros continued, while announcing "we want to break another record in 2022," we have a lot of THANK YOUS to send around."

"Johnston Girls Softball would like to thank the five teams - RRI Rockets Blue, Red and White teams - as well as the Bay State Blitz and BNB Rox - for a great job on-and-off the field, raising money for a great cause," the enthu-

siastic husband and duo emphasized. "We would also like to thank our RI Rockets family for all their raffle donations that resulted in over \$1,000 we added to this year's total."

After pausing and wearing her usual special smile on her face, Lisa Calabro added: "We also want to thank our umpires - Justin Bazinet and Shawn Cadieux - for their generosity of volunteering their time. We look forward to another successful event next year and YES, we hope to surpass this year's total."

Thus, as Derek Calabro added: "I can't believe it's been three years for our 50 innings of softball. It's an absolutely rewarding experience for everyone involved; the players, coaches, parents, super sponsors and supporters ... who have all been part of a two-fold program of softball sportsmanship that gives all our girls the opportunity to do something special for other people."

When asked if there was a winner after 50 innings of softball, Derek Calabro wanted it known: "That's really not important; each of the five teams played three, 12-inning games and two, 7-inning games and we give all the girls an award and the memory of raising money that will further enhance breast cancer research here in Rhode Island."



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**BLACK SEA BASS:** Catching keeper black sea bass is difficult after June and July in our Bays as the water warms and large fish move to cooler waters in the lower Bay or offshore. (Submitted photo)

# Workshops and public hearing on 2022 regulations

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI

If you want to provide input on recreational fishing regulations in state waters you won't want to miss upcoming meetings. Two workshops, a hearing and the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Management Council meetings have been scheduled to discuss recreational fishing regulations. The meetings will address regulations on species recreational anglers love to catch and eat.

Important regulatory issues anglers are advocating for include starting the black sea bass season earlier in June or in May and what the tradeoffs are with the fall/winter season? Concerns for the tautog fishery in light of an abundance of large females with great spawning potential being killed? And why can't anglers catch and keep more than three bluefish, particularly small snapper blues which are traditionally fished for by families in our covers and harbors?

The Rhode Island Saltwater Angler Association (RISAA) leaders met in December with DEM officials to express their concern about recreational regulations for 2022. Since the meeting the Council and Board approved measures for 2022 regulations including a 28 percent black sea bass Recreational Harvest Limit (RHL) reduction coastwide; a 33 percent reduction in scup; and up to a 18.5 percent liberalization of the RHL for summer flounder. All of these actions will likely result in RI and MA fishing regulation changes for 2022. However after vetting at state meetings these measures go through the Commission/Council process and NOAA with conservation equivalency proposals.

Greg Vespe, RISAA Executive Director, said, "Even

though we may have a reduction we would like to see the black sea bass season start earlier this year. We have recommended this for years to give Bay and shore anglers an opportunity to catch keeper sized black sea bass (larger than 15 inches). These fish are in the mid and upper Bay in the spring, but once the water warms at the end of June and July they leave for cooler/deeper water in the lower Bay and offshore."

DEM is working on black sea bass scenarios along with others that RISAA discussed with them in hopes of presenting some viable alternatives at the workshop on January 4. Anglers are urged to attend this meeting (in person or on-line) and express their opinion on proposed regulation option.

DEM's Division of Marine Fisheries will hold the regulatory workshops at 5 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 4, and one on Monday, Jan. 10, 2022, in anticipation of a public hearing to be held on Feb. 7, 2022.

As noted above, the purpose of workshops is to provide opportunity for feedback on regulatory amendments, and to offer an opportunity for new proposals to be provided for consideration. Meetings will be both in-person and virtual. For agendas and background material visit [www.dem.ri.gov/programs/marine-fisheries/rimfc/index.php](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/marine-fisheries/rimfc/index.php).

The agenda for the Jan. 2, 2022 meeting includes discussions on regulation management for recreational black sea bass, scup and summer flounder. As well as recreational and commercial tautog; recreational and commercial striped bass as well as floating fish trap management; recreational and commercial bluefish; and shortfin mako regulations.

## Division

(Continued from page 16)

berton. Cranston East's Dante Paredez-Martinez was named to the defensive unit as well.

Cranston West's Marcus Chung was named to the Division I-B First Team for offense.

Pilgrim's Connor Widmer was named to the Division III First Team on offense, along with teammates Andrew O'Leary, Austin Kilduff and Alex Pinheiro. Johnston's Joey Acciaro also made the offensive unit.

Pilgrim's Danny Halliwell made the Division III First Team on de-

fense, along with teammate Brady Burke. Johnston's Steven Finegan and Ryan Schino also made the defensive team, as well as Toll Gate's Joseph Pankowicz.

Making the Division 1-A Second Team for East was Carlos Cedeno, LaQuinton Kelley and Nate Lopes. Representing Hendricken on the second team was Garrett Burke, David Lynch, Andrew Noland, Andrew Picard and Rashaune Vilane.

Representing West on the Division I-B Second Team were Dimitri LeBlanc and Domenic Schiavulli.

Pilgrim's Kenny Irizarry, Marcus Pascual, Matt Santos and Brandon Whitman made the second team for

Division III, along with Toll Gate's Christopher Scalzo and Miguel Gonzalez. Representing Johnston on the second team were Phillip Costantini, Dylan Martins and Malakai Quinones.

Making the Division I-A Third Team was Hendricken's Joel Felix and Luke Mead, along with East's Peyton Ginolfi and Devin Smith.

Steven Girouard and Derek Rocchio were named to the Division I-B Third Team.

Johnston's Anthony Gawlik and Joseph Forte made the Division III Third Team, along with Pilgrim's Dylan Roberts and Jacob Smith, and Toll Gate's Zack DeCorpo.

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