

Governor signs school bond bill

By RORY SCHULER

Johnston's public schools have been serving the town's students for more than 520 cumulative years.

Rhode Island's governor joined the town's elected officials and school administration in the basement of Johnston's oldest school, Thornton Elementary on Tuesday.

"This school that you're ... in now, it just had a birthday," said Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena. "It's over 100 years old."

The officials packed into a tiny — clean but cramped — room that serves as the schools cafeteria and gym. They gathered to celebrate the signing of legislation allowing the town to go out to bond for new school buildings, should the measure gain voter approval in April.

"And I will tell you that the only school I ever got thrown out of was the Thornton Elementary School," Polisena joked. "My parents put me in the wrong school. And I got thrown out in first grade."



BILL SIGNED: Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee joined Johnston's elected officials and school administration in the basement of Johnston's oldest school, Thornton Elementary on Tuesday, for a ceremonial bill signing. The bill allows a \$215 million bond referendum to go before the voters on April 5. (Sun Rise photo by Rory Schuler).

■ BOND - PAGE 5

Crash victim's family demands 'Justice for Olivia'

By RORY SCHULER

Some motor vehicle crashes are accidents. Others are preventable. On rare occasions, a crash can be intentional.

On New Year's Eve a young woman lost her life in a Warwick crash. The other driver fled the scene, but was quickly apprehended and charged.

Now, as the family attempts to cope with unimaginable grief, they're urging prosecutors to levy the most serious charges possible against the driver police say traveled at speeds around 100 miles per hour before he slammed into the victim's Nissan.

Do a series of desperate Facebook posts from just hours before the crash illustrate the driver's intent?

What happened on Interstate-95 in the first early morning hours of 2022?

What repercussions will follow?

Will justice be served?

Last Goodbye

Every time Olivia Passaretti walked out the house, she stopped to give her folks a hug and a kiss and an adamant "I love you."

"She never didn't say 'I love you,'" recalled her mother, Janine Passaretti-Molloy. "She was the calm one in the family. She loved karate. She loved softball. She loved her sisters. She loved her family."

The final night of 2021, the last night of Olivia's life, was no different.

"On New Year's Eve ... she was halfway out, and she looked back and she said, 'I love you guys,'" recalled Olivia's stepfather Dennis Molloy. "And then she stopped and ran back in and went behind the couch, and gave me a big hug from the back and gave me a kiss. She came around and gave (her mother) a big hug and a kiss. That's how she was all the time."

The Passaretti daughters lost their father six years earlier. The family struggled, but a sense of normalcy had finally, slowly returned.

"That last night, I had gotten up, and I had said to her, standing at the counter of the kitchen ... 'Olivia this is going to be a good year for us,'" Janine recalled. "Her dad passed six years ago. She was only 11. It was sudden. It was tragic, and we had to go through that. We were finally at the point where we were happy. I could feel it. I looked at her and I said it."

Olivia had two older sisters; one's an EMT, the other a nurse.

Olivia and her middle sister, Victoria, left their parents' East Greenwich home on New Year's Eve, in separate cars, to meet their oldest sister, Jackie, at her Warwick home for Chinese food.

"She drove her car," her mother said. "Her sister Victoria drove her own car. I called them at midnight and said 'I love you, Happy New Year, and I'll see you soon.' And then I'd fallen asleep."

Around 1 a.m., Jan. 1, Rhode Island State Police responded to a two-car crash on Route 95 South in Warwick.

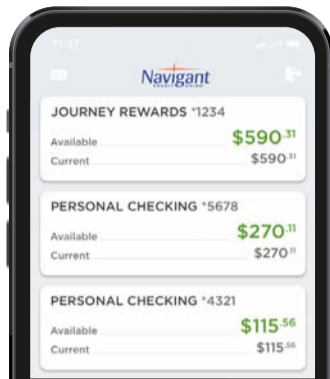
Rescue crews found Olivia's car upside down against a tree. They found a second car on the scene, empty. The driver had fled.



JUSTICE FOR OLIVIA: Dennis Molloy and Janine Passaretti-Molloy hold a portrait of their daughter, Olivia, who was killed in a crash on New Year's Eve. (Sun Rise photos by Rory Schuler)

■ OLIVIA - PAGE 9

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SINGER SENTENCED: On his social media profiles, Anthony Cerbo describes himself as a singer and soloist. In 2018, he volunteered to sing at Senior Night in the Park in Johnston, and posed for photos with the town's elected officials and now-retired police chief.

Johnston singer sentenced to 9 years in prison for child molestation

By RORY SCHULER

Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha announced Wednesday that a Johnston man was sentenced in Providence County Superior Court to serve nine years at the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) after pleading to sexually assaulting a male victim under the age of 14 in 2018.

Anthony Cerbo, 43, entered a plea of nolo contendere to one count of first-degree child molestation and one count of conspiracy to commit first-degree child molestation, according to a press release from Neronha's office.

At a hearing on Feb. 11, before Superior Court Justice Maureen B. Keough, Cerbo was sentenced to 30 years, with nine years to serve and the balance of the sentence suspended with probation, according to Neronha's office.

The court has also issued a no-contact order between the defendant and his victim, and Cerbo will be required to register as a sex offender for the remainder of his life, must attend sex offender counseling, and is subject to community supervision requirements under state law, according to the press release.

Cerbo had been held without bail since his bail hearing in November 2018.

On May 15, 2019, the Providence County Grand Jury returned an indictment charging Cerbo with one count of first-degree child molestation, one count of conspiracy to commit first-degree child molestation, and one count of second-degree child molestation.

"Sexual assaults against children remain an ongoing, devastating problem in Rhode Island – we have charged over 400 such cases over the last five years alone," Neronha said. "Here, the defendant, with the help of a co-defendant, came up with a scheme to use social digital media to identify a vulnerable child, and once identified, execute that scheme and prey on that child. While nothing can reverse the damage he has caused, it is my hope that the defendant's conviction and the long sentence imposed by the Court will bring a measure of justice for the victim and his family. I am grateful to the victim for coming forward and demonstrating strength and resiliency throughout the investiga-

tion and prosecution of this case."

According to Neronha's office, had this case proceeded to trial, the prosecution was prepared to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that during the early morning hours of Nov. 19, 2018, the defendant sexually assaulted a male victim under the age of 14, at his residence in Johnston.

"Prior to the assault, the defendant connected with the victim via the online dating app, Grinder. The defendant and victim exchanged messages, during which the victim communicated to the defendant that he was 14 years old," according to the press release. "The defendant arranged for a co-defendant, Matthew Heuser, to pick up the minor victim and drive him to the defendant's home in Johnston. Subsequently, Mr. Cerbo sexually assaulted the victim. It is alleged that Mr. Heuser also sexually assaulted the victim at that time."

Heuser faces multiple felony charges, including second-degree child molestation and conspiracy to commit first-degree child molestation.

Heuser's prosecution is pending in Providence County Superior Court.

On May 15, 2019, the Providence County Grand Jury returned an indictment charging Heuser with one count of conspiracy to commit first-degree child molestation, one count of second-degree child molestation, one count of assault with intent to commit first-degree child molestation, and one count of aiding and abetting Cerbo to commit the offense of child molestation.

"Detectives from the Johnston Police Department worked very diligently with the members of the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office to ensure that the defendant was brought to justice," said Johnston Police Chief Joseph P. Razza. "Sexual assaults against minors have a resounding and devastating effect on the victims and their families. We are indebted to the victim for providing their full cooperation and assistance throughout these criminal proceedings."

Johnston Police Detectives Brian Lofredi and John DeAngelis investigated, aided by Special Assistant Attorney General Michael S. McCabe and Assistant Attorney General Shannon Signore, who conducted the prosecution of the case.

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PLANNING BOARD

Five new solar fields pitched for western Johnston

By RORY SCHULER

Five new solar array projects have been pitched for western Johnston.

Town Council member Robert Civetti estimates the five proposed solar fields would cover around 328 acres.

Civetti attended last week's Johnston Planning Board meeting, hoping to learn some details about the projects, which have been pitched by Cranston-based Green Development.

Green Development has proposed five master plans for five separate solar fields.

The Feb. 15 meeting went haywire as planning board officials had trouble getting audio and video equipment to function, in order to broadcast the live meeting online.

After more than an hour grappling with the AV issues, the board eventually decided to continue the solar field discussions until next week. Initially, the board agreed to hold the meeting March 1, but then they advertised the next meeting for Thursday, March 3.

So officially, at 6 p.m., Thursday, March 3, the Planning Board will resume hearing from Kevin Morin, Director of Engineering & Project Development for Green Development.

Concerned abutters packed the Johnston Senior Center on Feb. 15. Many expressed skepticism in the plans.

Green Development has pitched a 1.0 Megawatt solar field, called, GD Johnston Elmgrove II, at 25 Elmgrove Avenue (AP 51 Lot 4, zoned R40).

The other four projects include — GD Johnston Harilla I, a proposed 2.25 MW solar field at 28 Harilla Lane (AP 51 Lots 9 & 11, zoned R40); GD Johnston Winsor I, a 4.0 MW solar field at 46 Winsor Ave. (AP 60 Lot 4, zoned R40); GD Johnston Winsor II, a proposed 8.0 MW solar field at 86 Winsor Ave (AP 60 Lots 2, 20, 86, zoned R20 & R40); and GD Johnston Winsor III, a proposed 24.0 MW solar field at 112 Winsor Ave. (AP 59 Lot 15, zoned R40).

Instead of the senior center, the Thursday, March 3 meeting will be held at 6 p.m. in the Johnston Municipal Court building, 1600 Atwood Ave.

The Planning Board had hoped to hold the meeting in-person only, but the meeting agenda indicates it will be held both in-person and via ZOOM online broadcast.

"My opinion is mixed," Civetti said following the conclusion of the botched Feb. 15 meeting. "I don't have enough details. I was hoping to get them tonight."

If the Planning Board approves the Master Plans, Green Development will also be required to appear before the town's Zoning Board.

Morin said that Green Development would like to add to its "115 MW of solar and wind projects in Rhode Island."

THE SOLAR PITCH: The Johnston Senior Center was packed on Feb. 15. Abutters and other concerned town residents were eager to hear details connected to five proposed solar field projects in town. (*Sun Rise photo by Rory Schuler*)



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DRINK AND PAINT: From top left to right, Karen Russo, Laura Sherlock, Judy Rafenelli, Karen Carcieri, Ilda Fillippini, Lorraine de Lorenzo (instructor) and Joan Boissey enjoyed the JSC Wine & Paint Night event.

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Senior Center hosts Wine & Paint Night

By Denise Bell
 Special to the Sun Rise

On Wednesday night, Feb. 16, the Johnston Senior Center multipurpose room was turned into a paint studio. Around 25 attendees enjoyed a wonderful time of painting a lovely picture of dandelions upon a background of purple and blues, while being instructed by Lorraine De Lorenzo of Cherry Hill Nursing & Rehab Center. The event was sponsored by De Lorenzo, by donating not only her time, artistic abilities, but also all of the painting supplies. The JSC provided complimentary wine, along with snacks of cheese, crackers, and grapes. JSC staff Ellen Trementozzi, Jacqueline Bell-Conroy and Brenda Martin were instrumental in planning this event. Trementozzi stated that everyone had such a great time, many asking her, "When can we do this again?" The painting results were all very similar with a personal touch. I'm sure we will plan this event again soon! The JSC will be planning more fun events coming up. Stop by the Center for a tour or call 401-944-3343 for info on daily activities, parties and upcoming events.

Editor's Note: Denise Bell serves as Johnston Senior Center Assistant Director. She can be reached at 401-944-3343.



MERLOT WATERCOLOR: From bottom left to right, Tess Mc Afee, Lynn Campanella, Karen Esposito and Amy DeBiasio were among some of the drinking artists at the Senior Center's Wine & Paint event. (Photos courtesy Denise Bell)

Bond

(Continued from page 1)

It was embarrassing. But I ended up going to Winsor Hill School. So I do have some roots in ... Thornton."

The town's voters will cast ballots on April 5 to decide whether to fund a \$215 million school building project.

"This is going to change our town in such a direction it's going to be phenomenal," Polisena said Tuesday. "This is probably the biggest investment that we've done in the history of Johnston, since it was incorporated in 1758, I believe."

The district plans to construct 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.

"You're going to get a great deal of support from this community," said Gov. Dan McKee. "Because they are very supportive of what's in the best interest of Johnston. And this is in the best interest of Johnston."

The schools in Johnston have simply grown old, as the pupils inside grew up, graduated and had families of their own.

School Committee Chairman Robert LaFazia stood in a ground floor classroom as Polisena gave McKee a tour of the century-old building.

The Thornton Elementary was originally erected in 1890, but burned down in 1919. The building was rebuilt at its current 4 School St. location in 1920 and opened to Johnston students in 1921.

"Four generations of my family went here," LaFazia said. "My father went to this school. I went to this school. My cousins went to this school; my two sons and now my grandson."

LaFazia said that building new schools in town has been a priority since he joined the School Committee nearly two decades ago.

"I've been working on getting the schools built for just under 19 years," LaFazia said.

All of the town's surviving schools share a similar history. Graniteville Elementary was built in 1930, 90 years ago. Brown Avenue Elementary was built in 1934, 87 years ago. Winsor Hill and Barnes elementary schools were constructed in 1953, 68 years ago.

Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School was built in 1960 (61 years ago) and Johnston Senior High was built in 1968 (53 years ago).

"They're just old," Polisena said. "You can only put so much caulking around the windows."

Polisena was a member of one of the first classes to graduate from the current Johnston High School. He'll soon celebrate his 50th Class Reunion.

Johnston's state Sen. Frank Lombardo III (District 25) and state Rep. Deb Fellela (District 43), both received ceremonial copies of the bond legislation.

"This school bond bill came to fruition when I received a council resolution in which the superintendent and the school committee had met with myself and Senator Lombardo to explain to us the goal of this legislation," Fellela said. "After we heard their thoughts, Senator Lombardo and I had our bills drafted."

Polisena and Johnston Schools Superintendent Dr. Bernard DiLullo Jr. testified, in-person, before the state's Finance Committee.

"The following week, the committee voted to approve the bill and it came to the floor for a full vote, where it was unanimously supported by the house," Fellela said.

Many in Johnston feel the timing is right for a massive school building overhaul.

"This was time sensitive," Polisena said.

The town expects to get more than 50 percent reimbursement from the state.

"I'm happy to be here with you, and Johnston, and the School Committee, and the Council, and your Reps and your Senators," McKee said as he prepared to sign the bond legislation. "There's nobody that does it better than Johnston. Whether it's really embracing families or embracing business, but also your strong support for schools and this is just another reflection of that."

We know that there's a great amount of momentum we have in the state of Rhode Island on many, many levels. And we are going to take advantage of that."

Local elected officials have expressed die-hard support for the project.

"I believe this is an exciting development for our town," Fellela explained. "Having one separate elementary school with the four different pods for each school will be beneficial for our students and having Grade 5 in a wing of their own will help their transition into the middle school."

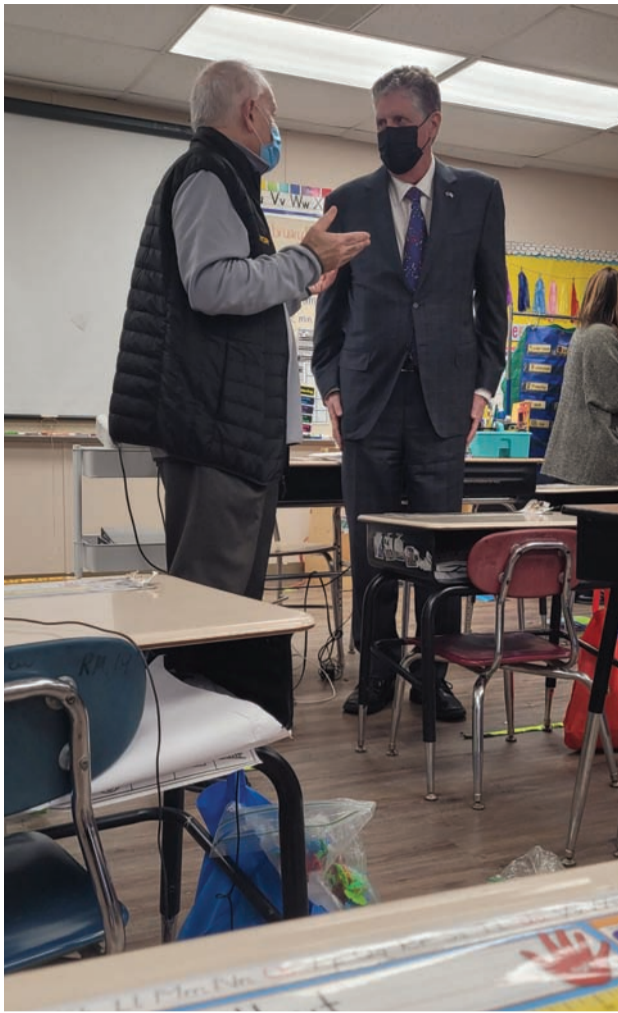
School planners hope to construct a fifth-grade academy, attached to the newly renovated middle school.

"This bill also highlights the refurbishing and updating of the high school," Fellela said. "I anticipate working with the school committee to create an apprenticeship program for our high school. These programs can build skills and trades for the students which can further establish any youth who desire to work in the labor unions."

"It's really important to all of us, but mostly it's important to our students," Polisena said. "Obviously present and future students, it's very very important; and also the teachers."

Polisena's hoping for a strong positive showing at the polls when the bond referendum goes before voters on Tuesday, April 5.

"I'm a strong proponent of our school system here in town," Polisena said. "We've got a great school system. Our teachers are fabulous. They work very hard. We want



CLASSROOM TOUR: Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee and Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena toured Johnston's oldest school, Thornton Elementary on Tuesday, following a ceremonial bill signing. The bill allows a \$215 million bond referendum to go before the voters on April 5. (Sun Rise photo by Rory Schuler).

to give them the tools that they need. We want to make sure our students are prepared as they leave us and go on into the world and make this world a better place for all of us."

If the bond passes and the small town elementary schools close, discussions will follow in town government to determine the fate of the buildings.

"There's a couple of things," Polisena said. "Obviously we have to run it by the (Town) Council and the School Committee. I'm looking at maybe, possibly using them for ... elderly housing. These are strong buildings ... This place has been here for 100 years, but obviously it's not up-to-date. So sometimes, they can come in, remodel the whole place and possibly use it for our elderly. We do need some elderly housing, which would be great. So that's one of the ideas ... There will be uses for them."

The School Committee voted two weeks ago to "authorize Colliers International to draft an RFP and go out to bid for Construction Manager at Risk for the school construction projects approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education."

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.

At its Dec. 21 meeting, the Johnston School Committee passed a resolution supporting the \$215 million bond.

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.

"This is for my grandson, and maybe his children," Polisena said.

Schools like the Thornton Elementary are in desperate need of improvements. LaFazia said the tiny school has been using modular classroom trailers at the site for nearly 28 years, to provide badly needed additional classroom space.

A pile of basketballs and sports equipment overflowed from a makeshift cubby under the stairs. The padding around columns in the center of the all-purpose room has started to split at the bottom, spreading across the clean tile floors.

Polisena assured voters the bond will have a "negligible affect on taxes," and that the "\$2 billion of new investments" lured to Johnston since 2007, will surely help cover the tab.

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Watch Your MOUTH
 by Rochelle Rhodes, D.M.D. and David McFarland, D.D.S.
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SUN RISE SCOOPS

By Meri R. Kennedy

Let's bowl

The General Federation of Women's Clubs, Cranston Community Women's Club would like you to join them for "Bowling for a Cause" to benefit the Cranston Family Center on Saturday March 19 at Lang's Bowlarama, 225 Niantic Ave., Cranston, Rhode Island.

Registration starts at 10 a.m., bowling 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The cost is \$25 per bowler and includes two hours of bowling, shoes, two slices of pizza and a drink. All your donations will benefit the center which works with families to remove obstacles that inhibit their ability to actively participate in their child's education. Raffles and 50/50. If interested, call (401) 451-5073 or send your check to Lisa Giannini, 21 Gordon Street, Cranston, RI 02910. Make checks payable to GFWC-CCWC. Make a difference and help families in need.

Bowling for Animals

Bowling for Animals to benefit Defenders of Animals on March 6, between 2 to 4 p.m. at the Town Hall Lanes at 1463 Atwood Ave. in Johnston.

\$20 per person, includes two hours of bowling, one pizza and pitcher of soda or lemonade for each lane. Please call 401-461-1922 for reservations or send \$20 via the internet at defendersofanimals.org.

Wedding Showcase

Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston will be hosting the 2022 Wedding Showcase on Saturday, March 5, from noon to 4 p.m.

Network with your fellow professionals in the wedding and event industries and meet with future couples who are interested in learning more about your unique services!

For more information regarding exhibitor opportunities, please contact Hillary Williamson at 401-785-4333, or via this email: hillary@rhodesonthepawtuxet.com.

Rhode Island Senior Softball League Updated

The Rhode Island Senior Softball League, who has over 350 players on 20 teams, is currently seeking players ages 50 and over for the upcoming season.

The season will run from the beginning of May until the end of September, including playoffs, and no games will be scheduled on July 4. Games are played on Sunday, double headers.

Masks and/or pitcher's screen will be mandatory, and the league will use the same 11 fields as it did last season. Fields are located in East Providence, Cranston, Johnston, Woonsocket, North Kingston, Barrington and Western Cranston.

Visit www.leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?url=riseniorsoftball for more information. Please fill out player inquiry form, the commissioner will contact you.

Consider donating blood

The Rhode Island Blood Center is in need of blood. Individuals wishing to donate must book an appointment at the donation center; walk-ins are only accepted if safe distancing allows at the person's time of arrival.

Nearby areas to donate include The Shops at Greenwood, which is located at 615 Greenwich Ave., in Warwick.

Sign up by visiting www.ribc.org.

Walk and Talk at Rocky Point

Come join the "Rocky Point Pacers" for a walk around Rocky Point every Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 9 a.m., weather permitting. They meet at the gate on Rocky Point Avenue. Get some sunshine and burn off some holiday pounds.

Prepare RI High School Internships Program

Calling all RI public high school juniors: The 2022 PrepareRI High school Internship Program is accepting applications to participate in on-site/in-person, PAID summer experiential learning internships with local employers across the state.

This program will help you earn, learn, and connect with employers across Rhode Island. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Visit <https://skillsforri.com/prepareri> for more information.

Apple Fest Scheduled

The 34th Annual Apple Festival has been scheduled for: Saturday, Sept 10 and Sunday, Sept. 11 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., both days.

The event will be held at the Johnston Memorial Park - 1583 Hartford Ave. in Johnston.

Register: www.members.nrichamber.com/.../the-34th-annual-apple

Johnston Senior Center offers services

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

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 are now closed for the Winter will re-open in the Spring.

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, www.johnstonhistorical.org or www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical.

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.

For further information: www.warwickcfa.org or 401-737-0010.

Friends of the Mohr Public Library

Friends of the Mohr Public Library is a 501(c)3 nonprofit 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).

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. 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 ob-

taining food. For assistance signing up, call 877-958-8785.

Help make a house a home

The Furniture Bank of RI, a nonprofit corporation, needs bureaus, complete twin or double beds, kitchen sets, mattresses, and other household furniture that you no longer need. To help a less fortunate family through your charitable donation of good used furniture, call 831-5511 to arrange for pick up. All donated articles must be in good condition.

RI Pre-K lottery applications

The 2022-23 RI Pre-K Lottery Email Notification Sign-Up form is now available! Please note that this is not the RI Pre-K Lottery application. This form will sign you up to stay informed of the lottery opening in late spring. You will only need to complete and submit this form once!

You can access the RI Pre-K Lottery Email Notification Sign-Up in three locations:

1. By visiting <http://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSdn.../viewform> to go directly to the Google Form;
2. By visiting the RIDE homepage and clicking the round "Pre-K Lottery Email Notification Sign Up" badge on the right toolbar and
3. By visiting the RI Pre-K webpage on the RIDE website and clicking the "Lottery Application" menu to reveal the link to the form. To be eligible for Pre-K, your child must be four by Sept. 1.

Did you know?

Happy March! The "Ides of March" was a day in the Roman calendar equivalent to March 15th. It was considered a deadline for settling debts. It was also the day Julius Caesar was assassinated. (Source: March Fun Facts)

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

johnstonsunrise.net

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Opinion

EDITORIAL

Schools need continued support

With the Governor's mandate on masking in schools set to expire next Friday, scores of parents will gleefully send their children off to school buildings throughout the state (save for some districts that have elected to continue their own mandates) free of facial obstructions.

Although there is sure to be some disagreement over whether or not this is the correct approach as we continue to navigate in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, those in favor of the mandate's removal feel as though it is a necessary step towards normalcy in a new world — one where we live with the realities of Covid just as we live with the realities of the seasonal flu. Of course, in this area of intense debate, there are reasonable arguments that feel this is a gross comparison, and would prefer to be safer than sorry when it comes to mask wearing to prevent any further unnecessary death or illnesses.

But whether you're pro-mask or anti-mask, there remain many thousands of students who will be returning to a school building that is woefully inadequate for modern learning — whether they attend in a mask or not.

Although significant progress has been made in many schools throughout the state thanks to a \$250 million infrastructure bond approved in 2017, there remains an incredible amount of work ahead to get the state where it needs to be with its educational facilities where the future leaders of our nation are taught to become functioning young adults.

We are heartened to see another large bond, this time for \$400 million, going before the General Assembly to continue to necessary work of fixing up dilapidating school buildings. We are optimistic that Rhode Islanders will once again see the value in this type of work and approve the measure in November.

However, it leaves us with lingering questions regarding whether or not the

state should fight this battle alone.

The Covid-19 pandemic taught us that there are only so many things individual states can accomplish on their own. When the pandemic closed down school buildings and plummeted students into the inefficient world of virtual learning, the federal government had to step in with funding to reopen schools safely and get kids back into physical buildings.

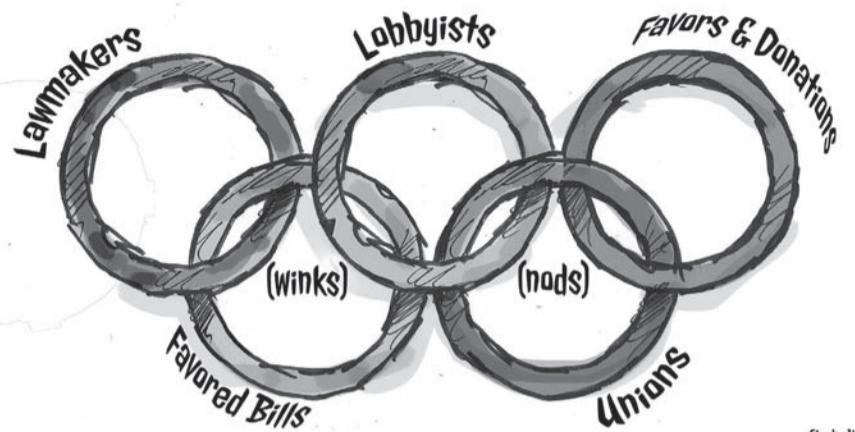
Why, we ask, is the full burden of rehabilitating school buildings placed on local stakeholders? Students from Rhode Island will go on to do amazing things across the nation, just like students from anywhere else will come to Rhode Island to share their own talents. A school infrastructure fund, federally administered, should be a valuable resource to help share the load of this immense and critically important challenge.

The benefits of bonds to assist districts in building new, 21st-century learning spaces can be seen clearly in places like East Providence, where its nearly \$190 million new high school shines as a beacon of what every community should be able to provide for its students. If even one school building in each state could be refurbished or built to this type of standard with the assistance of federal funding, it would pay dividends down the line and create opportunities for hundreds and thousands of jobs in the short-term.

The narrative always was that the federal government could be stretched no further, and that the nation's debt was too great to make these types of investments. And then the pandemic happened, and we were forced to realize how ridiculous that assessment truly is.

The American Rescue Plan Act serves as an example of how the federal government should be able to act as a support to the states that sustain it, and how not doing so could cause catastrophic results. Why, then, should the Rescue American Schools Act not

LET THE GAME\$ BEGIN!



Charlie Hall

Rhody's incestuously entangled campaign fundraiser season has begun

SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



LETTERS

Secure gun storage

To the Editor,

Every adult has a role to play in keeping kids safe from gun deaths and injuries.

Firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens (ages 1 to 19) in the United States. Every year, 18,000 children and teens are shot and killed or wounded and approximately three million are exposed to gun violence. The vast majority of child and teen gun homicide deaths and unintentional shooting deaths and injuries occur in the home.

Johnston is the latest Rhode Island community to experience such a tragic loss, due to the alleged negligence of an adult who has been charged with violating state law on the secure storage of firearms, resulting in the death of a 16-year-old boy.

The onus is on adults to prevent such tragedies. What does that look like?

Adults should Be SMART.

The Be SMART framework is designed to help parents and adults normalize conversations about gun safety and take responsible actions that can prevent child gun deaths and injuries.

SMART stands for the following:

- Secure firearms by keeping all guns

locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition.

- Model responsible behavior around guns, especially in front of children.

- Ask about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes, just as you would ask about allergens, car seats or other safety concerns.

- Recognize the risks of teen suicide and any threats of shooting others. Pay attention to any warning signs to prevent a tragedy before it happens.

- Tell your peers and fellow parents to Be SMART.

I applaud the Barrington School Committee for joining school districts across the country in passing a resolution to distribute secure gun storage information to parents, including the distribution of Be SMART educational materials. The Cranston School Committee should do the same.

Secure gun storage is a critical tool in keeping children and teens safe. For more information on what you can do to prevent gun deaths and injuries and keep your family, friends, and community safe, visit BeSmartForKids.org, or text SMART to 644-33.

Candace Brown Casey
Cranston, RI

Gun safety legislation

To the Editor:

I was flabbergasted as I watched the local television news on Wednesday, Feb. 11 around 6:30 am. I listened as the bullets wouldn't stop for what seemed like forever.

How could a person get access to this much firepower in Providence and hold an entire police department

bay? I worried about the neighbors and law enforcement

on the scene. This is beyond unacceptable and a serious public safety threat.

As a Moms Demand Action volunteer, I understand the importance of gun safety legislation to keep us safe from gun violence. Research shows that the stricter a state's laws, the lower the levels of gun violence in the state.

This is why I am asking my state legislators, Senator Josh Miller and Representative Art Handy, and neighbors to support H6614 and S2224/H6615. H6614 would

prohibit the sale and possession of high capacity magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of am-

munition, and S2224/H6615 would prohibit the sale, transfer or possession of assault style weapons throughout the state.

Please call your state representatives

today and ask them to support these common sense laws.

Our neighborhoods should not be war zones. We don't have to live like this.

Melissa Carden
Cranston



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Hospital merger denied; struggling CNE urged to find new partner

By JOHN HOWELL

“Kent (Hospital) has a bright future; they have to find the right partner.”

That is the assessment of Dr. Michael Dacey, a former president of the hospital, following Attorney General Peter T. Neronha’s issuance last week of his decision denying the proposed merger between Lifespan and Care New England and that the state would join the Federal Trade Commission’s lawsuit to block the transaction.

Kent is one of three hospitals in the CNE system, the others being Women and Infants and Butler. Kent is the state’s second largest hospital behind Rhode Island Hospital, which is a Lifespan hospital, employing more than 2,000 and largely serving the central and southern positions of the state. A merger of the two health systems would give the resulting entity about 80 percent of the state’s health care services.

Dacey, who voiced his opposition to the merger in an opinion piece in this paper, is not alone in saying Lifespan and CNE should sever their agreement

sooner than later. He suggests that CNE first turn to Mass General Brigham (formerly Partners) that knows CNE and was prepared to make a substantial investment in the system until the plan was nixed by former Gov. Gina Raimondo, who with Brown University pushed the merger with Lifespan.

In an interview Saturday, House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi likewise favored an end to the exclusivity agreement between Lifespan and CNE. Asked whether state legislators could circumvent the AG and FTC with a Certificate of Public Advantage (COPA) and grant a merger, Shekarchi said he had only read a summary of Neronha’s decision and would want to more thoroughly research the issue before reaching a personal decision. Regardless, he said, “if a COPA is requested it will be given fair consideration.”

Losses compiling

There doesn’t appear to be much time to waste. At a Jan. 20 Warwick Rotary Club meeting where he was the speaker Dr. James Fanale, president of CNE,

said Kent Hospital is losing \$2 million a month largely due to the pandemic and the interruption of non-emergency services. The \$28.1million loss through January 2022 is net of \$10.1million of provider relief funds received to date according to spokeswoman Raina Smith.

Dacey points out that Brigham has a long relationship with Kent and because of its acquisition offer four years ago knows the operation and the parties could process an application comparatively quickly.

“All the information is out there,” he said.

Dacey thinks a route to explore, whether the marriage is with Brigham or another group - he prefers a not for profit provider although, he said, there are good profit ones - would be for CNE to divest itself of Women and Infants while keeping Kent and Butler.

Fanale’s office declined an interview.

He was quoted last Thursday saying, “Of course, we are disappointed, but I will say that we can truly know that we did everything we could over the past few years of hard work to get

this done. We thought it was the right thing to do, but now we will need to move on to a new path forward. There is always a path forward, and we will explore all options to find the best possible - and acceptable to regulatory bodies - solution for access to affordable, quality, health care.”

Elimination of competition would push up costs

Not surprisingly, as he opposed the merger, Dacey said Neronha’s decision “was very good...I thought he hit all the important issues; his decision was well communicated.”

In a release issued Thursday Neronha said, “I recognize how critical healthcare is for the State and for every Rhode Islander. The COVID-19 pandemic has only further underscored the vital importance of affordable access to high-quality care for all. Put simply, if this extraordinary and unprecedented level of control and consolidation were allowed to go forward, nearly all Rhode Islanders would see their healthcare costs go up, for health care that is lower in quality and harder to access.”

He went on to say, “Our review clearly established that Lifespan and CNE compete aggressively with each other across many inpatient and outpatient service lines. Eliminating this competition will have the same effects here as seen across the country following mergers of this size: rising healthcare costs, lower quality, and reduced access. The Parties simply have not demonstrated why these results would not happen here and how they would be able to deliver on promised benefits that would outweigh these risks.”

Lynn Blais, R.N., President of the United Nurses and Allied Professionals (UNAP), the state’s largest healthcare union, representing more than 7,000 nurses and health professionals, issued a statement disagreeing with the rejection of the merger.

In a statement she said, “It is clear that Care New England is in dire financial straits, and in no financial condition to sustain their operations as they currently are. The merger of these two groups could be our last,

■ MERGER - PAGE 11

LEGAL NOTICES

PUBLIC AUCTION – DEMAND FOR PAYMENT

G. Metz Moving of Johnston RI, 26 King Street, demands full payment from the following storage tenants storing property and owing the following:

Joe Benevides units 12, 13, 14, 201, 196, 270, Mike Carderelli unit 165, Christie Gore units 79,102,220,221, Ira Holtz & Associates unit 164, amount due \$3,053.90. Clinton Cowen Units 31,34,189, Nicola Cipolla/Ann Murphy unit 124, Ramirez & Lidia Garcia units 39,40, J.A. Passarelli unit 136, Mark Lake units 191,212,310,311, amount due \$12,095.81.

Allen Johnson units 170,171,172, Elizabeth Viera unit 215, Jo-el Correia units 230,231, amount due \$614.96.

Wendy Malo unit 54, & 1 Pallet 4x8 amount due 278.25. Belview unit 125, Chris Shields unit 173, Michaels unit 128, Westcott - piano, Bob Forrest - 1 Couch, Radzillo - Entertainment Center.

If payments are not made in full by March 10, 2022, including current amounts due at the time of payment, an auction will be held at G. Metz Moving, 1110 Central Ave., Pawtucket RI, on March 12, 2022, pursuant to the lien set forth in your rental agreement and in accordance with Rhode Island General Laws Chapter 6A-7 - Documents of Title Section 6A-7-210 - Enforcement of Warehouse’s liens.

2/24, 3/3, 3/10/22

TOWN OF JOHNSTON ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW Thursday February 24th, 2022; 6:30 P.M.

Johnston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Ave.
Johnston, RI 02919

PLEASE NOTE: IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNORS EXECUTIVE ORDER 22-01 PUBLIC MEETINGS MUST BE AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY. IF THE ORDER IS EXTENDED BEYOND FEBRUARY 15TH, THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM:

VIA COMPUTER: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83244890870?pwd=OTVKN1pTQTFFKNEJkUUs4cDg1Nk5wUT09>

VIA TELEPHONE: One tap mobile : US: +13126266799, 8324489087 0#,,, *152574# or +16465588656, 83244890870#,,, *152574# Or Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location): US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 or 877 853 5247 (Toll Free) or 888 788 0099 (Toll Free) or 833 548 0276 (Toll Free) or 833 548 0282 (Toll Free)

Meeting ID: 832 4489 0870
Passcode: 152574

PLEASE CHECK WITH THE

ZONING OFFICE TO DETERMINE IF THE MEETING WILL BE AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY. CALL THE ZONING OFFICE AT (401) 231-4000.

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

Old Business

File 2021-42 – Petition of Nicholas Castelli/Daniel Kelley/, Applicant for 1350 Central Avenue, AP 43 Lot 87, zoned R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Dimensional Variance -340 for Proposed Ground-mounted Solar panels.

Remand from Superior Court

File 2019-6- David lascone/DFI , Owner/Applicant; Joy Street; AP 4 Lot 102, R-15 Zone, 13,108 Sq. ft. Table of Dimensional Variance; Section 340 Article III. Proposed Single Family Dwelling.

New Business

File 2022-3 – Petition of Johnston Winsor I, LLC/Ernie & Donna Ricci Jr., Applicant for Winsor Avenue, AP 60 Lot 4, zoned R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit -subsection 5 – Public Utility Uses #2- electric Power Generating Facility in an R-40 Zone, for a proposed ground-mounted Solar Array and associated improvements.

File 2022-4 – Petition of Johnston Winsor II, LLC/Allan Hill, Applicant/ Owner for 86 Winsor Avenue, AP 60 Lot 2, 20, 86, zoned R-40 & R-20. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit -subsection 5 – Public Utility Uses #2- electric Power Generating Facility in an R-40 Zone, for a proposed ground-mounted Solar Array and associated improvements.

File 2022-5 – Petition of Johnston Winsor III, LLC/The Steere Family Trust, Applicant/Owner for 112 Winsor Avenue, AP 59 Lot 15, zoned R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit -subsection 5 – Public Utility Uses #2- electric Power Generating Facility in an R-40 Zone, for a proposed ground-mounted Solar Array and associated improvements.

File 2022-6 – Petition of Johnston Harilla I, LLC/28 Harilla Johnston Realty, LLC, Applicant/Owner for 28 Harilla Lane & Off Greenville Avenue, AP 51 Lot 11 & 9, zoned R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit -subsection 5 – Public Utility Uses #2- electric Power Generating Facility in an R-40 Zone, for a proposed ground-mounted Solar Array and associated improvements.

File 2022-7 – Petition of Johnston Elmgrove/Domenic & Michelle Lancelotta/, Applicant/Owner for

25 Elmgrove Avenue, AP 51 Lot 4, zoned R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit -subsection 5 – Public Utility Uses #2- electric Power Generating Facility in an R-40 Zone, for a proposed ground-mounted Solar Array and associated improvements.

NOTE:

If a Case has not been called for a hearing by 10:30 p.m., the Board, at its discretion, may continue the Case to a subsequent or a special meeting.

The Zoning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at ClerkBase on the Town’s web page or Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Building Office, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.

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

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

2/10, 2/17, 2/24/22

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Thursday March 3rd, 2022
6:00 P.M.
Johnston Municipal Court
1600 Atwood Ave.
Johnston, RI 02919
In Person and via ZOOM

Via Computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85614175130?pwd=Y3BjZzQ5RVlqWWhXSWhuZm9ON3dkQT09>

iPhone one tap: +13126266799 or +16465588656

Via Telephone: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656
Meeting ID: 856 1417 5130
Passcode: 910786

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

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL
II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
III. NEW BUSINESS

PB 22-01 – GD Johnston Elmgrove II – Public Meeting on a proposed Master Plan for a proposed 1.0 MW solar field. Located at 25 Elmgrove Avenue AP 51 Lot 4 – Zoned R40. Applicant: Johnston Elmgrove II, LLC

PB 22-02 – GD Johnston Harilla I – Public Meeting on a proposed Master Plan for a proposed 2.25 MW solar field. Located at 28 Harilla Lane AP 51 Lots 9 & 11 –

Zoned R40. Applicant: Johnston Harilla I, LLC

PB 22-03 – GD Johnston Winsor I – Public Meeting on a proposed Master Plan for a proposed 4.0 MW solar field. Located at 46 Winsor Avenue AP 60 Lot 4 – Zoned R40. Applicant: Johnston Winsor I, LLC

PB 22-04 – GD Johnston Winsor II – Public Meeting on a proposed Master Plan for a proposed 8.0 MW solar field. Located at 86 Winsor Avenue AP 60 Lots 2, 20, 86 – Zoned R20 & R40. Applicant: Johnston Winsor II, LLC

PB 22-05 – GD Johnston Winsor III – Public Meeting on a proposed Master Plan for a proposed 24.0 MW solar field. Located at 112 Winsor Avenue AP 59 Lot 15 – Zoned R40. Applicant: Johnston Winsor III, LLC

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT & SPECIAL ITEMS V. ADJOURNMENT

• The Planning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at ClerkBase on the Town’s web page or Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Office, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.
• Items not heard by 9:30 p.m. may be continued to the next Regular Meeting or a special meeting at the discretion of the Board.
• Facilities are handicap accessible. Interpreter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

2/24, 3/3/22

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Tuesday March 15th, 2022
6:00 P.M.
Johnston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Ave.
Johnston, RI 02919
In Person and via ZOOM

Via Computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82286716874?pwd=NXhWbWVmOWI5enJ5cmE1a2Fhb3Ztdz09>

iPhone one tap: +13126266799 or +16465588656

Via Telephone: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 822 8671 6874
Passcode: 537536

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

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL
II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
III. NEW BUSINESS

PB 22-16 – Advisory Opinion – Sale of Town Land

PB 21-21 - Establish bond amount for Sciacca-Veltri Administrative Subdivision

PB 20-39 – A. Duie Pyle Building Expansion – 4 Green Earth Avenue AP 30 Lot 63 – Waiver Request of Site Plan Review Process

PB 21-48 – Advisory Opinion to the Town Council on the request to abandon a portion of Genoa Street

PB 22-08 – Advisory Opinion to the Town Council on the request to abandon a portion of Mathew Drive

PB 22-13 – Advisory Opinion to the Town Council on the request to abandon a portion of Buck Hill Road

PB 19-56 – Meadowbrook Estates – Establishment of bond amount for Cross Road.

PB 22-06 – Meadowbrook Estates Phase 2A & 3A – Public Meeting on Phase 2 of a proposed Minor Subdivision for the creation of 1 buildable lot Cross Road and Phase 3 the creation of 1 lot Central Pike. Located at Central Pike AP 43/4 Lot 90 (Sub Lots 6 & 18) – Zoned R40. Applicant: Steven Perry

PB 22-11 – Stonebridge Phase II – Public Meeting on a proposed Preliminary Plan for a 3-lot Minor Subdivision. Located at Orchard Ave AP 59 Lot 338 – Zoned R40. Applicant: Peter and Pamela Del-Ponte

PB 22-12 – Wildflowers Estates – Public Meeting on a proposed Master Plan for a 5-lot Major Subdivision. Located at 1757 Plainfield Pike AP 27 Lots 2 & 146 – Zoned B2 & R20 – Applicant: Dennis Cardillo

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT & SPECIAL ITEMS

1. Comprehensive Plan Update

2. 2022 Schedule of Meetings Discussion

V. ADJOURNMENT

• The Planning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at ClerkBase on the Town’s web page or Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Office, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.
• Items not heard by 9:30 p.m. may be continued to the next Regular Meeting or a special meeting at the discretion of the Board.
• Facilities are handicap accessible. Interpreter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

2/24, 3/3, 3/10/22



Legal Notice Town of Johnston Adopted Ordinances

At a recent meeting of The Johnston Town Council, the Council did adopt the following Ordinance effective immediately:

Ordinance 2022-1: An Ordinance repealing Ordinance 2017-7, an Ordinance amending Section 125-18 of Chapter 125 of the Town of Johnston Code of Ordinances entitled “Manner of Sale of Tobacco and Drug Paraphernalia Regulated”. Said Ordinance repeals Ordinance 2017-7 regulating the sales of Tobacco and Drug Paraphernalia.

Ordinance 2022-2: An Ordinance for street abandonment. Said abandonment abandons a portion of Rome Avenue on Assessor’s Plat 5

Said Ordinance is on file and available for review in the Office of the Town Clerk.

Johnston Town Council
Robert V. Russo
President

Attest:
Vincent P. Baccari, Jr.
Town Clerk

2/24/22

Olivia

(Continued from page 1)

The Discovery

After eating their New Year's feast, Olivia left her oldest sister's house and started toward home.

Her other sister Victoria left about 10 minutes later, but when she arrived home, Olivia wasn't there.

"I heard somebody come home," said Dennis Molloy. "We were in bed sleeping. Olivia had left Jackie's house about 10 minutes before Victoria did. So Victoria came home. That's what I heard. And then I heard her leave again. Which was a little weird, but I fell back to sleep."

Victoria went back out, to retrace her sister's route home. She was worried. She called her sister's phone repeatedly. "Victoria must have driven right by the scene but didn't know it because the police weren't there yet," Dennis said. "She drove right by the whole thing, but couldn't see it because Olivia's car was off the road."

When she went back out, looking for Olivia, Victoria found a mass of police cars and rescue vehicles awash in flashing lights.

State troopers from the Wickford and Lincoln Woods Barracks, as well as Warwick firefighters, responded to the highway crash scene, located within the Warwick city limits.

"We're still in bed," Dennis remembered, six weeks later. "So Victoria backtracks to try to find her. And now she sees all the police there, which weren't there the first time she drove by. She had this gut feeling that she should stop and ask. So she pulled up and the State Police wouldn't let her anywhere near the accident, but she explained to the police that her sister is missing, she should have been home."

Victoria gave her name to State Police at the scene.

"A couple of minutes later, five state troopers came up to her and said it was Olivia and she was dead," Dennis said. "So her sister had to see all that. Meanwhile we're back in bed sleeping. We didn't know any of this was happening."

Dennis and Janine felt their bed shake.

"It was Victoria, shaking her mom, but Janine still was sleeping a little bit," Dennis said. "I woke up and I could see Victoria's face, which I'll never forget. It's going to be burned in my memory for life. She was petrified. And I thought maybe somebody was following her home, because she looked really scared."

In hindsight, almost any news would have been easier to hear.

"She goes, 'It's Olivia,'" Dennis remembered. "And then, when Janine heard that, she heard it was Olivia, she sprang up and said, 'What? What?' And Victoria said, 'She's dead.'"

In a second, the New Year lost all its hope and promise.

"And that's how we found out at 1:30 in the morning that Olivia was killed," Dennis said, while sitting next to his wife in his Warwick martial arts studio. "So I went downstairs and our yard was covered in State Police. And I thought I was going to have a heart attack. My wife was inconsolable. We had to put her in an ambulance and take her to the hospital, where she was sedated because I thought she was going to die. And that's when we found out it was a car accident."

The grief was overwhelming; it came in waves that seemed to swell and crash harder with each piece of new information.

"At that point we didn't have any details, other than the guy who did it got away," Dennis said. "And the next day, they were able to track him down."

The Investigation

Rhode Island State Police immediately launched an investigation into the fatal crash. At the scene, police found Olivia's Nissan, crumpled and overturned, and an empty Mercedes.

Crash investigators quickly determined that the "Mercedes was traveling at a high rate of speed," struck Olivia's Nissan from behind, "and forced (it) off the highway where it traveled down an embankment, struck a tree and rolled

over," according to State Police.

Olivia, "the operator of the Nissan, a 17 year-old juvenile, was pronounced deceased on scene by Warwick Rescue personnel," State Police announced in their first press release of 2022.

The driver of the Mercedes ran from the scene, according to witnesses and police.

"The investigation revealed that a Mercedes sedan was traveling at a high rate of speed in the high speed lane of Route 95 South ... as the vehicle approached the Route 117 overpass, the vehicle veered right, traveled across the third lane of travel and entered the second lane of travel," according to the news release. "Upon entering the second lane, the front passenger side bumper of the Mercedes struck the rear driver side bumper of (Olivia's) Nissan Altima that had occupied the second lane. As a result, the Nissan was forced across the first lane of travel and breakdown lane before entering the grassy right shoulder and traveling down an embankment where it then struck a tree, rolled over onto its roof, and came to rest."

State troopers from the Reconstruction Unit and the Forensic Services Unit responded to the crash scene.

"The impact caused the Mercedes to spin several times, cross the first lane of travel and come to rest in the breakdown lane," according to State Police. "The operator fled the scene on foot."

"She was almost home," her stepfather said. "She was going to take the exit. She was literally two minutes from home. So he swerved over to her lane. The witness said he accelerated his car and just rammed her right off the road. And Olivia's car spun and flipped upside down and hit a tree. The guy who did it, his car spun, but he was still on the road. He was in the breakdown lane. And he got out of his car and just left."

Qualified Witness

Kenny Raposo, of Warwick, was driving his pick-up truck on I-95 southbound, with his fiancée, on his way to pick up a friend, when he saw a car enter the highway, traveling far over the speed limit.

Janine Passaretti-Molloy insists her daughter was traveling in the right lane, preparing to exit, just minutes from home.

"The Mercedes, entered the highway, and moved from the slow lane, to the high speed lane; he was going about 100 to 110 miles per hour," Raposo said this week. "I was in the same lane she was."

The speeding Mercedes worried Raposo, a construction worker and part-time North Scituate firefighter.

"Before he hit her, he was doing at least 105," Raposo said. "I thought he might have been a drunk driver or just an idiot on the highway."

Then, the Mercedes veered toward Olivia's car.

"He slightly curved into her lane, and hit her on the rear end of her car," Raposo said. "She spun off the highway. He spun five times in the middle of the highway and ended up in the breakdown lane."

Raposo stopped his truck immediately. "I threw my truck in reverse, backed up where she went into the wooded area," Raposo recalled.

He's a trained first-responder. If he could help, he planned to.

"I ran down to her," Raposo said. "Her car was upside down, and she had a faint pulse at that point."

The car was badly mangled. Olivia was still in the driver's seat, upside down, the seatbelt holding her in place. He called 9-1-1.

"As a first responder, you know the protocols, and they kick in instantly," Raposo said. "Her car was so mangled I couldn't get to her. But I grabbed her hand, and I tried to get her to squeeze mine. I tried to speak to her, but her pulse was very faint."

Raposo has been keeping in touch with Olivia's parents. Dennis and Janine are grateful he was on the scene during their daughter's final moments.

As he held her hand, Raposo could hear Olivia's phone ringing.

"While Victoria was calling her, (Kenny) was trying to save Olivia," Dennis Molloy said. "He could actually hear Olivia's phone ringing while he was trying to get her out of the car."

Meanwhile, Raposo's fiancée stayed with his truck. And she watched in horror and disbelief as the driver of the Mercedes fled the scene, ran into the woods, and then returned to the car a few minutes later.

"She watched him get out the car," Raposo would later tell police. "He went into the woods, came back to the car two minutes later, grabbed something, and went back into the woods. We let State Police know the second vehicle driver had taken off on foot. He pretty much got out of the car, didn't seem injured, and just jogged off."

The Arrest

Later that morning, State Police issued a second press release announcing the apprehension of the driver who allegedly caused the crash.

Aramis Segura, 30, was found in Charlestown hiding under his girlfriend's bed. He was arrested and charged with Leaving the Scene of an Accident Resulting in Death, Driving to Endanger-Resulting in Death, Obstruction of Justice, and Operating on a Suspended License.

Already on probation for prior offenses, Segura remained in custody.

"Segura was also presented as a Superior Court probation violator on a previous charge of Breaking and Entering and was transported to the Adult Correctional Institution, where he is being held," according to State Police.

"Our condolences go out to the loved ones of the victim for their loss," said Col. James M. Manni, RISP Superintendent and Director of the Department of Public Safety. "The investigating Troopers worked very hard to quickly apprehend the suspect and we are working with the Attorney General's office to ensure that justice is served."

The Record

Losing their daughter was bad enough. The weeks following, however, have been worse. The grief seems to grow with each perceived injustice.

After the crash, Olivia's parents discovered the man who allegedly drove their daughter off the road has an extensive criminal record.

Over the past 12 years, Segura has faced a litany of charges from local law enforcement agencies.

He was arrested in West Warwick for breaking and entering in 2010. That same year West Warwick Police also charged Segura with First Degree Child Molestation and Third Degree Sexual Assault.

In 2011, West Warwick Police charged Segura with Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card and Burglary. In 2013, Cranston Police filed Felony Shoplifting charges against Segura.

In 2014, Providence Police picked up Segura and charged him for failing to register as a sex offender, resulting in an Obstruction of Judicial System charge. That year he was also charged with Obstructing a Police Officer.

In 2015, Segura was one of three arrested and charged by Providence Police with Conspiracy, Larceny, Vandalism and Receiving Stolen Goods, for breaking and entering into then-Gov. Gina Raimondo's state-provided SUV. Police said Segura and his accomplices broke the window of the Chevy Tahoe with a rock and stole a cell phone, while the vehicle was parked outside a state trooper's home.

In 2016, Providence Police arrested Segura again. This time he was charged with Receiving Stolen Goods, Possession of a Weapon (Not a Firearm), and Obstructing a Police Officer. Later that year, Rhode Island State Police charged Segura with Burglary, Possession of Stolen Motor Vehicle Parts and Tampering with a Motor Vehicle.

In 2017, State Police charged Segura again with Possession of a Stolen Vehicle, Tampering with Vehicles and Conspiracy.

Providence Police also charged Segura with Unlawful Breaking and Entering of Dwelling House in 2017.

In May 2021, Segura was pulled over in Warwick and charged with Driving With Suspended/Revoked/Canceled License (second offense).

Segura's rap sheet is full of disturbing details, including missed court appear-

ances and suspended jail sentences.

By New Year's Eve, he was free on probation, but still encountering law enforcement on a regular basis.

In December 2021, two days before Christmas and about a week before the crash that claimed Olivia Passaretti's life, State Police pulled Segura over for speeding.

Despite his past record, state troopers let him go.

"You know he got stopped one week to the day before this happened," Dennis Molloy said, frustration rattling his voice. "He was on 95. He was speeding, on a suspended license, on parole! He gets stopped by the State Police. They give him a ticket and let him continue driving. How's that happen? A week later he kills her on the same highway."

The Rhode Island State Police have not responded to requests for comment regarding the December traffic stop.

"He could have had his car towed," Dennis Molloy said. "It was the car he was driving when he killed her. That car could have been towed, it could have been impounded. Any number of things could have happened. I don't understand how you can get stopped like that and just continue to do it. You get stopped by police and they tell you to continue."

Olivia's parents have met with State Police investigators since the crash.

"We sat down with the State Police and they admitted it was wrong," Dennis Molloy said. "They (said) the state trooper will be disciplined. That's your answer? It doesn't help me with my child. All of these things were factors in her death - every single piece of it."

The Prosecution

For now, Segura faces non-capital criminal charges that do not carry life sentences.

Olivia Passaretti's family would like to see a Second Degree Murder charge filed against Segura.

In Rhode Island, where state-sanctioned execution has been abolished, felony charges that carry a possible life imprisonment penalty are called "capitol offenses."

"We are prosecuting in any given year 9,000 felony cases," Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha said Tuesday. "In the vast majority of those cases, we're not there at the time police make the arrest, obviously. We're not there at the time they make the initial charge. And we're not there for the initial bail hearing, either, unless it's a capital case."

A secret Grand Jury may be hearing evidence connected to the crash that claimed Olivia Passaretti's life. If the Grand Jury returns an indictment, Neronha's office will announce the charges. If not, the Grand Jury results will remain secret.

"In this particular case, in consultation with our office, those are the charges that the State Police brought in district court," Neronha explained. "Those charges are effectively place-holders. We have to charge this case in Superior Court within six months of the incident. It's at that point that the case becomes, if you will, a true felony offense, based on charges that are brought ... in some contexts, without the grand jury, by our office. Those would be non-capital cases - so non-murder cases, non-child molestation cases, non-arson cases, non-burglary cases, non-sexual assault cases. We charge those on our own. For any of those other (capital) cases, it has to go to the Grand Jury."

Investigators are weighing possible evidence of Segura's intent on the night he allegedly crashed into Olivia Passaretti's car. Posts he allegedly wrote on Facebook earlier that night have led the victim's family to believe the crash was no accident.

The Posts

"I didn't expect to see, after the fact, all the messages he posted on Facebook," Raposo said this week. "They're not charging him with murder, and that's not right. You killed a 17-year-old girl. She had her whole life in front of her."

The Passaretti-Molloy family has been working with Carolyn Medeiros, Executive Director of the Alliance For Safe

School Committee's mask mandate vote postponed to Monday, Feb. 28

By RORY SCHULER

The Johnston School Committee had planned to vote Thursday night (Feb. 17) on a school-wide mask mandate, but the meeting has been postponed to Monday, Feb. 28.

"The special School Committee meeting originally scheduled for this evening at 6 p.m. has been rescheduled to 6 p.m., Monday, Feb. 28, according to Angela A. Brasil, Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendents and Johnston School Committee Secretary.

At least one member of the Johnston School Committee was unable to attend tonight's meeting on a revised mask policy for staff and students.

Tonight's special meeting of the committee was announced Tuesday, calling for an updated mask policy effective March 4, following Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee's lifting of the statewide school mask mandate.

The committee has now re-advertised the meeting, and an updated agenda can be found at the Rhode Island Secretary of State's website.

"I believe the committee will decide between mandatory masks in school or as other districts have done, strongly recommend but not mandate masks," Johnston Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Bernard DiLullo Jr. said Tuesday.

Last Wednesday, McKee's office and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) announced plans

to lift the executive order requiring masking indoors.

They also instructed school districts to make masking decisions at the local level.

State officials cited a steady improvement in COVID-19 case and hospitalization data across Rhode Island.

Officially, the statewide school mask mandate will now expire on March 4.

Johnston will now decide at 6 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 28, in the Ferri Middle School Library (the meeting will be held both in person and by video/audio conference call).

By Friday, Feb. 11, the number of masks on faces in public spaces across Rhode Island dropped dramatically. The Johnston School Committee voted last summer to make mask wearing voluntary in schools. That decision was eventually usurped by McKee's executive order, as virus counts spiked locally.

"Thanks to Rhode Islanders stepping up to do the right thing, together we've made considerable progress against COVID-19 and the winter surge," McKee said last week. "Based on our decreasing case and hospitalization numbers, our team at the Department of Health feels confident in our plan to safely shift masking guidance for both schools and public settings as we move into an endemic management phase of the virus."

McKee's office said the decision to shift policies was made "in collaboration with the Department of Health and based on current COVID-19 data."

"Since peaking at approximately 6,700 cases a day in early January, Rhode Island's case numbers have decreased by more than 94 percent," according to a press release from McKee's office. "Since peaking at 598 hospitalizations in mid-January, Rhode Island's number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients has decreased by approximately 52 percent. (Hospitalization trends tend to lag behind case trends.) During the week of Jan. 2, there were 9,931 K-12 cases in Rhode Island, compared to 1,547 K-12 cases the week of Jan. 30."

It will now be up to "cities, towns, and school committees" to implement their own masking policies using updated RIDOH and Department of Education recommendations.

Masking will now be just one of several mitigation measures, like testing, social distancing and symptom screening.

"Given the complexities of developing and implementing new COVID-19 policies in schools, the current masking requirement for schools will remain in effect for three weeks longer than the requirement for businesses and venues of assembly," according to the press release. "During these three additional weeks, school leaders will be able to develop masking policies after reviewing the updated recommendations from RIDOH and RIDE and after gathering input from families. This will also give families additional time to get their children vaccinated."

Masks will still be required for people in public transportation stations and while on public transportation, including school buses, due to federal requirements, according to McKee's office.

"Thanks to the availability of treatment and vaccine, severe COVID-19 illness is now largely a treatable, preventable disease," said Interim Director of Health James McDonald. "We are also seeing that the Omicron variant is often resulting in a much less serious course of illness for many people. Given this reality, the shifts we are announcing today represent a measured approach that will help our schools and our community regain a much-needed sense of normalcy."

Furthermore, the system would account for 50% of commercial healthcare spending on patients whose primary care physician is part of the merged system's Accountable Care Organizations and employ 67% of Rhode Island's full-time registered nurses working at a hospital.

Currently, reads the AG's release, Lifespan and Care New England invest in greater quality and access to compete for Rhode Islanders' healthcare business. Following a merger, the combined system would be empowered to make important decisions - such as cutting service lines that have lower profit margins or delaying innovation or capital investment - without facing the pressure of competition from each other.

As the AG explains, "When a system is so big, so dominant, that it is the only system that the vast majority of patients will go to for, say, inpatient care, that system no longer has to do the hard work to be better than the alternative because, there is no alternative."

Financial constraints

Assuming there was oversight as proposed in the application, Neronha could not reconcile the financial realities of Lifespan and CNE with the promise that, when combined Rhode Island would be left with a financially healthy system that can make substantial investments in ambitious programs without raising costs on consumers, cutting services, or taking steps to keep their labor costs down.

"Taking the hospitals' own estimates at face value, it is unclear where the new system would find the necessary revenue, savings, and financing to support the integration plan and make their proposed investments. Critically, this transaction would leave the vast majority of Rhode Island's healthcare services in a single system that is too big to fail," reads the release.

Merger

(Continued from page 8)

best chance to ensure a healthy, stable, not-for-profit healthcare system that stays under Rhode Island control."

She said the decision opens the door for the CNE hospitals to be sold to an out-of-state for-profit corporation that "will almost certainly put shareholder profits ahead of quality patient care, as we've seen time and again... The people of Rhode Island can't afford another buyer who wants to come in and suck every last nickel out of these hospitals in the interest of making a bigger profit for shareholders."

3.6 million documents reviewed

Following submission of the merger application in April 2021 with the Attorney General and the Rhode Island Department of Health, which has yet to issue a ruling, the process of review commenced. According to its release the office of the AG collected and analyzed more than 3.6 million documents and took statements under oath of over 20 Lifespan and CNE executives, consultants they used for the merger, and representatives of Brown University; reviewed scores of academic studies; and worked closely with retained experts to analyze the proposed transaction.

In his talk at the Rotary Club, Fanale said Lifespan and CNE each spent \$14.2 million on the application process.

The AG's office found a combined CNE, Lifespan system would control 75% of all inpatient acute care hospital beds in Rhode Island; 80% of the Rhode Island market for inpatient hospital care; 79% of the Rhode Island market for inpatient psychiatric care and 60% or more of the Rhode Island market for many outpatient surgery specialties.

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Guard took the fight to Covid



At home force of 3,100 serves in 140 military career fields

By JOHN HOWELL

During the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, deployments of the Rhode Island National Guard military police made headlines. State officials made speeches from the tarmac at Quonset with C-130 transports as a backdrop. In front of them, family members hugged their loved ones, not knowing what the future might bring. These were emotional scenes, made all the more compelling by the uniformed soldiers whose stiff bearing and tight faces were a display of their training; their commitment to the mission.

Then there were the returns. Those were moments of sheer joy from the first sighting of a C-130 like a fly on the horizon to the disembarking of troops and children running ahead to the outstretched arms of a returning soldier.

Those haven't been the scenes of the past two years even though as many as 1,000 members of the Rhode Island National Guard, proportionally more per capita than any other state, have been on the front lines in the battle against Covid-19 Adjutant Major General Christopher P. Callahan told



CALLAHAN



TEST SITE: The RING setting up a Covid testing site at CCRI Knight Campus in April 2020 (Beacon Communications photo. Top photo by Army Officer Candidate Deirdre Salvas courtesy of the RI National Guard)

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The Rhode Island National Guard is home to LeapFest, the world's largest static line parachute competition including teams from all over the world. The event is open to the public and will be held Saturday, August 6, 2022.



Photo by Army Officer Candidate Deirdre Salvus

The RI Army National Guard is comprised of several units including a Blackhawk Helicopter battalion, Field Artillery battalion, Military Police brigade, Infantry and Engineer companies. These soldier train year round in Rhode Island and around the world to ensure they live the motto: "Always ready, always there."



Photo by Air Force A1C Brittini Capozzi

Rotary Club Thursday. The Guard has manned testing and vaccination sites as well as assisted in hospitals in desperate need of staff.

At this point, Callahan said, about 200 members of the Guard are assigned to the fight against Covid. Given that the Guard isn't getting the "front page news" it did in unit deployments to southeast Asia, he said the perception is that they are "being used less, but that it not the case."

Overall, RING is comprised of 3,100 service members of both the RI Air and Army Guards. All but 800 of the force serve part time in one of more than 140 military career fields. The 800 are full-time members of the Guard who ensure the units are ready for mobilization. He said the Guard oversees reserve units of the military that is jointly funded by the federal government and the state. The feds cover 97 percent of the Guard's \$140 million to \$150 million budget with the state picking up \$3 million to \$3.5 million to create a "military readiness" prepared to respond to natural disaster such as hurricanes, floods and blizzards or deployments.

Next to the US Army, Callahan said National Guard units across the country are the most deployed branch of the country's armed forces and are "a foundation of how America projects force."

When questioned, Callahan said he would expect the Guard would play a role if Russia invades the Ukraine and the United States responds. He suggested such action could involve deployment of tanker aircraft from the New Hampshire National Guard for the refueling of fighter aircraft being sent to Europe.

Callahan called the C-130J transports used by the Guard's 143d Airlift Wing "highly coveted for the last tactical mile." He said the planes flying at 180 to 200 knots drop off supplies.

"They're in the fight right away," he said. He said a \$60 million project to rebuild the main runway at Quonset should start this year. "We're going to go in and cut it (the existing runway) out." The cost of the project is to be shared with the National Guard and Federal Aviation Administration each paying about \$25 million and the balance covered by the state. A C130J simulator and building costing \$27 million is also planned.

Asked about recruiting and retention efforts, Callahan said, "we were on the mat, someone hit us pretty hard in the face" when compared to other states. He said the state's ranking in recruiting has climbed from the 40s and close to the bottom to 26th on the Army side of the Guard. The air side of the force is not as good.

The RI National Guard's 143d Airlift Wing is a premier C-130J Tactical Airlift, Cyber Operations and Combat Communications unit. The 143d AW expertise is highly sought after and RI ANG personnel deploy with and train both US and allied foreign military personnel.

"Retention has been exceptional in the last few years," he said.

"The challenge is sustaining the talent," he said.



SUITED UP: Ready to administer Covid tests at CCRI Knight Campus testing site in April 2020 (Beacon Communications photo)

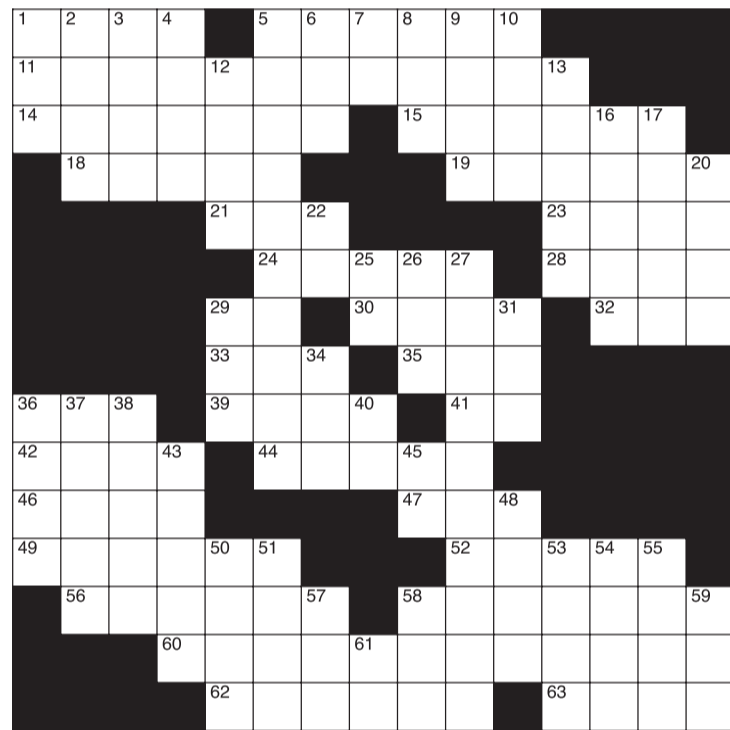


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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Constrictors
- 5. Abounding in rocks
- 11. Speed
- 14. German city
- 15. Lacking sympathy
- 18. Visionaries
- 19. Wastes away
- 21. One precursor to the EU
- 23. Nursemaid
- 24. Unconsciousnesses
- 28. Baby's word for father
- 29. Equal to 64 US pints (abbr.)
- 30. Senses of self-importance
- 32. Midway between south and southwest
- 33. When you hope to get there
- 35. Electronic data processing
- 36. Passports and drivers' licences are two
- 39. Fishes
- 41. Air Force
- 42. Personal computers
- 44. Ecological community
- 46. Wings

CLUES DOWN

- 1. ___ Humbug!
- 2. Devices that alert pilots (abbr.)
- 3. Grocer
- 4. One point east of southeast
- 5. Subjects to hostility
- 6. Work unit
- 7. Atomic #56
- 8. British thermal unit
- 9. "Elusive Butterfly" singer
- 10. Fastened over animal's neck
- 12. Device
- 13. Rechargeable power source
- 16. Ancient sage
- 17. Consist of two elements
- 20. "Pygmalion" writer

- 22. "The Centennial State" (abbr.)
- 25. Of I
- 26. Get older
- 27. Brotherhoods
- 29. Buzzing insect
- 31. Repeating remarks
- 34. Brew
- 36. Leader
- 37. Indigo bush
- 38. Burn with a hot liquid
- 40. Junior's dad
- 43. Horse mackerels genus
- 45. Morning
- 48. Unit of linear measurement (abbr.)
- 50. Double curve
- 51. Small, twisted bunch
- 53. Developed
- 54. Mars crater
- 55. Humanistic discipline
- 57. Word element meaning ear
- 58. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series
- 59. Wood residue
- 61. It cools your home

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By JENNIFER COATES

Business has returned to Rhode Island, though with winter in full swing when Shannon Cornicelli first opened her gym, Dream Big Academy, it was the fulfillment of a long-held dream of her own. As a competitive gymnast whose career began in her youth, Cornicelli knew that, given the chance, she could create a safe and state-of-the-art facility where she could nurture talent and instill in others the love of a sport that had come to define her life. Her big dreams have been realized here at this full-equipped, modern gym in Cranston.

Dream Big Academy is a place where prospective athletes of all ages can come to feel the excitement and thrill of the sport of gymnastics. The classes are not only instructive, they are also fun. The 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.

Some of the many things that sets Dream Big Academy apart from its competitors are the objectives 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 and Back Handspring clinics immediately following the Cartwheel/Pullover clinics. Check out their website for dates and details!

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 once a month from 5:00pm to 10:00pm, including on the upcoming night of Saturday, March 19th. This is an especially exciting night ~ there will be five hours of NON-STOP fun including games, a bouncy house, gymnastics, pizza, and glow-in-the-dark tag ~ the website has all the details. Register today, this is a popular event!

On the weekends, why not host your child's birthday party at Dream Big Academy?

These parties are the "best two-hour, fun-filled parties



Dream Big Gymnastics on Comstock Parkway in Cranston is the premier gym for aspiring gymnasts and Ninja Warriors alike. Visit their website at www.dreambiggym.com for information on the gym, to register for classes and to schedule a tour!

around." This includes an hour and a half of structured gymnastics or Ninja instruction as well as a half hour in the gym's party area. The gym supplies the festive tablecloths, balloons, and goody bags. Every participant receives a celebratory ribbon and the birthday child gets both a medal and a special gift from the team.

What an amazing and stress-free experience with all the help you need from the hosts at Dream Big!

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 has hosted four meets this

year which are the perfect way for gymnasts to showcase their hard-earned skills and talents. As a competitive athlete herself, Shannon recognizes the importance of showcasing ones' hard work, but she also strives to make these meets fun learning experiences.

For more details about these events and to register for upcoming classes, visit their website at www.dreambiggym.com or call 401-228-8946. Dream Big Academy is located at 41 Comstock Parkway in Cranston. t. 235 or email him at BobG@rhodybeat.com. Check out RhodyPrints' website at www.rhodyprints.com. Warwick Avenue (401-884-2211).

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Welcome 2022!!



I hope you all enjoy a happy healthy year of successes

As we've started settling into 2022, we seem to be continuing with the same lack of inventory as 2021 in residential real estate.

At the time I'm writing this article there are less single family homes on the market than when we ended 2021.

With currently 578 listed for sale in R.I., just 418 are priced between \$250,000 to \$1,000,000. In comparison, January 2021 had 2086 single family homes active for sale. Typically, we have lower inventory in the winter months. However, this is extremely low for the number of buyers looking to purchase a home.

Although interest rates have ticked up a bit, they continue to be low, allowing affordable monthly payments.

How long will this last? Will the rates go up? Will the housing market crash? Should I wait for spring?

These are all questions we hear on a daily basis.

Without a crystal ball it is impossible to predict, but it seems inevitable there will be changes along the way.

Market experts indicate interest rates have and will rise from the historic lows of well under 3% we've seen at the end of 2020 through 2021.

If you are thinking about either buying or selling a home in this market you need to have your "ducks in a row" prior to starting.

Buyers please get pre approved before going house hunting, if you are financing the property. It is the only way to determine how to shop appropriately within your affordable price range, and if not prepared properly you may miss out on that perfect home to



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updated advice and accurate analysis of your financial situation and purchasing power.

Sellers waiting for Spring to list your home for sale may want to consider listing now. There is little to no competition, so the chances you will sell quickly are good. Buyers will likely come out in the cold and inclement weather to view your property and make offers.

Sellers looking to buy another property and required to sell your current home prior to closing will be more successful reaching your goals if your current home is already listed for sale, preferably under contract, to be competitive to buyers with no contingency.

A seller will analyze all incoming offers and determine which one will get to the closing table quickly and smoothly.


Working with a professional realtor will help you understand the benefits to preparing for the process of buying or selling and planning the best strategy to achieving your specific goals.

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Nathan Gray & The Iron Roses rock Askew

By ROB DUGUAY

Nathan Gray is looking to bring people together with a new project. The vocalist of the Newark, Delaware post-hardcore act BoySetsFire already has the lineup completed, but he wants to create a much needed dose of unity within the audience. Via his latest solo release Rebel Songs that he put out on December 21 with his backing band The Iron Roses, he aims to accomplish this with messages and themes that everyone can identify with while undergoing a slight artistic reinvention. In support of the album, he and the band will be kicking off their tour at Askew on 150 Chestnut Street in Providence. Cumberland, Maryland alt-folk artist Black Guy Fawkes and Boston rockers The Quins will be rounding out the bill.

Gray and I talked ahead of the show about how the band he's currently with is different than his main band, weaving in different styles, experiencing a musical reawakening and running the cycle of being on tour and writing new material.

Rob Duguay: The music you create



NATHAN GRAY & THE IRON ROSES

with The Iron Roses has more of a straight ahead rock vibe than the post-hardcore and punk leaning material you've done with BoySetsFire. What inspired this artistic route with the new band?

Nathan Gray: The biggest emphasis behind the change in sound was not only going back to the roots of what I loved, which stemmed from punk like The Clash and Elvis Costello. The latter could be taken more as rock but not only that, there's also a lot of experimentation with reggae and hip hop. That's what I think is one of the biggest highlights of our album Rebel Songs, songs like "Look Alive", "Radio Silence", "Grace" and certain parts throughout where I just wanted to expand from where I had been. Obviously for 25-30 years I've been doing hardcore music but that's not the only thing I'm interested in and it's not the only thing I do. If I were to take away my part from BoySetsFire it would have been the more melodic stuff that we did.

Doing a more melodic, power pop vibe and then throwing hints of reggae, hip hop, dub and stuff like that into it was just a way to break away from what's been done already and to forge new ground.

RD: How would you describe the experience of making Rebel Songs? Did you feel like it was a reawakening for you or a new chapter in your career as a musician?

NG: Oh yeah, without a doubt. Despite the fact that I've released a couple of other albums solo, those were very different from this. I count this as my first real solo album because it's really the direction I wanted to go in whereas the other ones were sort of me finding my way to where I wanted to be. With Rebel Songs I finally hit the nail on the head in my own opinion and this is where I'll be going from here with my music.

RD: You mentioned how the album weaves in elements of hip hop, dub and reggae but it's not overbearing. At the same time, they're noticeable within the rock sound that's being created and it makes for an interesting listening experience. It's kind of like a musical trifle in a sense where these different layers of styles and sounds are coming through but it's all digestible.

NG: Right.

RD: What made you want to include hip hop, reggae and dub? Were you listening to a lot of that stuff while making the album?

NG: It's funny, a lot of the stuff that I was listening to was by this artist named Tobe Nwigwe and he's been blowing up recently on the internet. Atmosphere is also definitely something I've listened to a lot but there was a lot of hip hop and a lot of reggae with Toots & The Maytals, Bob Marley and things like that. You have this music that influences you and inspires you but you never go "Hey! Maybe I can do that." I really needed to test myself first before trying it because you could really ruin it by doing something like that. I got in touch with friends and people who were helping me

write that were in touch with the hip hop scene and who were into reggae.

For real, that was their style and I was like "Look, don't let me look like an idiot here, you're my friend and please help me out. If I send this to you and you think it sucks then tell me it sucks and I will steer away from it." When I sent some of that influence up to people who knew what they were talking about they said "This is great, keep going! It sounds like you're doing your own take on it as opposed to just doing a rap song or just doing a reggae song." That was great, it was a great inspiration to keep going with it and honestly it was one of those things where it was organic but I was also looking back at those old punk albums that I listened to. I realized that these types of music can mix so I figured why not?

RD: I totally got that, putting your own spin on it really astounded me. There's ways to do it wrong and there's ways to do it right and you did it right which I really enjoyed while listening to the album. Overall, There's definitely a triumphant and resilient tone within the music. Was that something you were going for from the beginning with this record or did it sort of materialize by itself as the process went along?

NG: It happened fairly early in the writing process which I started in March of 2020 exactly when the pandemic hit and exactly when our tour got canceled right in the middle of it. I came home feeling pretty defeated but of course like a lot of us I figured it would be a couple weeks not nearly two years. Through that time as I started writing I was trying to figure out since BoySetsFire has always been a politically based band with political and social overtones and those were things I brought into the band with my lyrics. I was thinking about bringing this without it being so heavy-handed, without being so angry, without being so frustrated and while also not having any real solution to it. We've all been through some pretty dark crap recently, we've all been through this and I needed to find a way to make this situation a bit more positive, a bit more joyful, a bit more inspiring than just angry.

I've been making angry music for too long and in my own opinion I don't think anybody needs angry music right now, we got plenty of anger going on. In order to inspire folks with the message that I'm bringing, it's the idea of bringing people into your message and your ideas by not being a jerk about it. Not being so heavy-handed and angry, I think that's the main overall focus when I sat down to write. Political and social commentary is going to come up but how do I do it differently than I've done it before in the past and make it a bit more personal, joyful and energetic? That's what I was going for.

RD: After this run of shows you have going on with the Iron Roses until next month, what are your plans?

NG: Usually as far as I'm concerned, I think that the schedule keeps me moving and keeps me on the road but then I start writing after that first tour. We'll go out to do these shows, see how it goes and then just keep moving. We already started planning into October after this summer and we already got some dates in Europe and things like that if that works out. I think that's the cycle, after the first tour you focus mainly on the first album, then you keep moving and touring as you write and then we'll see what comes from there. Right now, since this album is sort of my first solo album with the Iron Roses we really need to get out and prove ourselves. We need to get into these clubs, get out to these shows and play these songs live so people can pay attention to what we're doing.

ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

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Photo credit: Laurel Leaf Photography

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

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COLLECTIBLES



By Joel Bohy
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MAKING FIREARMS AT THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION

Friday I was at the Concord Museum for a visit and got a call to pick up a New England fowling piece I had last seen in 2008. I brought it home and decided I would write my next blog post about it as it was so nice and made in 1774 by a doctor from Sudbury, Massachusetts. It's such a beautiful small-bore gun that I decided to post it on my facebook page and a few hours later someone posted with a question, "how many towns had gunsmiths in the years preceding the war?" I answered the question very briefly and after thinking about what she had asked for a bit, my idea for the blog changed.

Nobody really knows how many gunsmiths there were during this time. And were they making all the parts from scratch? The answer is not many were making the barrels and locks. These parts took a lot of time to make and prior to the war were readily available for purchase from shops in Boston, Providence, and other cities. Most of the guns being built were made from imported locks and barrels and were stocked here. Not that there isn't skill needed to build guns, there was, but by having the parts available, men who were good working with metal and wood could assemble guns and sell them to those that couldn't make them. You also didn't need a large shop if you were assembling guns and not making the parts that needed more tooling. For instance, barrels at the time were made from flat stock that was wrapped around a mandril and hammered into shape with the seam welded together. The barrel was then smoothed and bored. This took a lot of time, skill, and equipment to make properly. You also had to make sure that the gun could be proofed without exploding and hurting or killing the shooter. Making locks was also finicky. All of the parts had to be installed just right for it to function properly.

Nathaniel and Joseph Cranch,
 Ironmongers and Gunsmiths, nearly opposite the sign
 of the Lamb South-End Boston, have lately Imported
 from the Makers, a neat assortment of
Guns and Pistols,
 Also Gun-Barrels, — Stout ditto for fowling pieces, —
 Gun-Locks, — Brass mounting for Guns, &c. &c. —
 Among the above are
 A few very handsome Brass-barrel'd Coach-Guns, —
 and neat Officers Fuzees, with steel Rods, &c. &c. —
 They have likewise for sale, an assortment of
Hard-Ware Goods,
 N. B. Guns Stock'd, Finish'd and Repair'd, also Razors,
 Scissors, — Case and Penknives &c. ground and polish'd,
 all in the neatest manner.

Why go to all of this work when you could purchase the items ready-made?

Sometimes we see names of men like Samuel Hartwell from Lincoln, Massachusetts. He is listed as a clock maker and a gun maker. Clocks were made in a similar manner. The movements and parts were imported, and the clock maker would build the case, put his name on it, and sell it.

In 1774, the British government placed an embargo on the colonies and as the war broke out, the supply of guns and parts dried up. Men who could build guns were using older locks and barrels scavenged from beat up guns to build into new. It wasn't

until the summer of 1777 when French muskets and gun locks were being imported in bulk that the problem of getting guns, barrels, and locks changed. You have to remember that by law, all males from 16 to 60 had to be in the militia and "armed and equipped according to law," so guns were not just a necessity for hunting, but your duty to own one for your militia service.

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Sports

JHS hosts Hoops for Heart

Event raises funds for American Heart Association

By PETE FONTAINE

Johnston High School's "House of Champions" – a.k.a. the Edward DeSimone Gymnasium – and was filled with a flurry of spirited sports activity that took place last Tuesday morning on the Robert L.A. Smith Memorial Basketball Court.

Some undergrads played volleyball while others enjoyed friendly games of badminton.

There were also volleyball and basketball games and some students chose that old-fashioned event known as jump rope.

It all happened amid lively music provided by the day's disc jockey, veteran JHS Head Football Coach/Physical Education Teacher Joe Acciardo.

And, the most unique thing about all the games was that JHS students pair to play!

It was all part of a yet another awesome JHS tradition entitled "Hoops for Heart" that was impressively organized by members of SADD (Students against Dangerous Decision), President Charlie Curci and longtime Faculty Advisor/Science Department Chairman Greg Russo.

The event, which was held to raise money for the American Heart Association, also included a variety of healthy snacks, tangerines, water and a variety to munchies.

In the middle of it all was JHS Physical Education Department team of Peg Guilmete, Ellen Quantmeyer,



OUTSTANDING OFFICERS: Among the SADD officers who organized last week's highly-successful Hoops for Heart at Johnston High School are, above: Sarah Vasquez, Jaylin Molina, Melanie Capraro, Emily Klein, Nikki Aucone, Charlie Curci, Rachel Ixcotoyac, Alan Pineda, Jenna Poland, Rebecca Clements and Charlene Hohlmaier. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)

HOOPS - PAGE 21

Panthers come up short in playoffs

By RYAN D. MURRAY

The No. 12 Johnston Panthers were ousted from the Boys Division II Basketball playoffs on Sunday afternoon when they were defeated by the No. 5 Warriors 62-48 during the Preliminary Round at The Wheeler School in Providence.

Wheeler senior Travis Cobain topped all scorers with 25 points while his teammate Toby Pike, a sophomore, finished with 18 points.

CJ Ragosta, a senior, led the Panthers with 14 points, and Hunter Remington, also a senior, contributed 12 points. Juniors Anthony Corsinetti and Derek Salvatore chipped in 11 points each.

Johnston chased Wheeler for much of the contest, but the Panthers head coach believed his team was just as good as the Warriors, and gave credit to Wheeler for playing a great game.

"They played well," Mike Bedrosian said. "We match up well with them. It's not like we can't beat



PLAYOFF HOOPS: Johnston's CJ Ragosta takes the ball up the court against Wheeler on Sunday afternoon. (Photos by Ryan D. Murray)

SHORT - PAGE 19



TEAM LEADERS: The wrestling seniors take a photo at Senior Night. (Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine)

Senior grapplers leaving a legacy of success

By PETE FONTAINE

"Chet Welch and Jim Brumbaugh would be proud of what's happening here tonight," offered several people who have long followed Johnston High School's wrestling program. "Tonight, though, seems to be extra special."

Thus, as JHS Athletic Director Keith Cory offered: "These kids are having a GREAT year and that makes this ceremony all the more important and impressive."

The ceremony was officially entitled "Senior Night", a tradition many schools throughout the state host for the final home match of a team's senior athlete and their proud parents in a number of Rhode Island Interscholastic League sports.

In the middle of last week's Johnston High Wrestling Team Senior Night was John Antonucci, the Panthers proud and popular head coach who is steeped with

SENIOR - PAGE 21



LEADING THE WAY: Johnston's Derek Salvatore (left) and Hunter Remington battle against Wheeler in the Division II playoffs.

Short

(Continued from page 18)

them, I just feel like they were the better team today.”

Remington registered the first points of the contest when he drove through the paint for a layup and gave the Panthers a 2-0 advantage.

The Wheeler School pulled even at 2 when Cobain made a breakaway layup following a Johnston turnover.

Ragosta and Jake Freeman traded 3-pointers near the end of the first frame and the squads were deadlocked at 13.

Cobain drained three free throws at the start of the second quarter, after he was fouled by Neari Vasquez while shooting a trey, and that gave the Warriors a 16-13 edge.

Salvatore responded with a 3-pointer for Johnston and evened the score at 16.

Cobain then sank both a hook shot and a jump shot to close the first half and that gave Wheeler a 20-16 buffer as the teams headed for a break.

At the beginning of the third frame,

Cobain buried a 3-pointer, and then Jake Faulise, a putback, which upped the Warriors margin to 25-16.

Cobain drilled an off-balanced jump-shot, midway through the third, and then Pike followed with a 3-point basket, which ballooned the Wheeler cushion to 32-20.

Corsinetti concluded the third period with a layup, which cut the Johnston deficit to 35-25.

Then, Salvatore made a layup to begin the fourth frame and that got the Panthers within 35-27.

Nevertheless, Pike answered with a pair of 3-balls for Wheeler and that put the Warriors up 41-29.

Wheeler extended its margin to 46-31 with 5:30 left to play in the contest, when Isaiah Smith-Johnson made a 3-point basket, and Pike a steal, plus a layup.

Remington responded with a trey, two minutes later, and it pulled Johnston within 48-38, but that's as close as the Panthers would get.

Johnston ends the regular season and playoffs with a record of 9-10 overall in

D-II.

With this season now over, the roster will change some next year, naturally, and Bedrosian will lose his seniors to graduation.

“They played hard for me for the past five or six years, since they were little, and especially these seniors, it's tough to watch 'em go, but I love them to death,” Bedrosian said. “I really do, and they know that. These guys would run through a brick wall for us and that's why we love them so much.”

As for the players that do return next season, Bedrosian believes this game against Wheeler will prove to be a posi-

tive teaching tool.

“It definitely was a good experience for next year,” Bedrosian said. “We're very young. We've hit some rough patches along the way, like every team does, but we fought through the rough patches. We ended the season with four out of five wins and we had some momentum going into the playoffs. But I don't regret one thing, I don't. These guys will run through a wall for me and that's the most important thing as a coach to have guys that'll play 100 percent whether they're down 20 or up 20.”



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POWER PUNCH: Kristen Charest blasts away at a picture she attached to a heavy during last week's Valentine's Smash at Christina Rondeau's Kick-boxing and Fitness Center in Johnston.



SUPER SMASH: Bah-bam says Hope Barrett as she attacks a heavy back during last week's unique Valentine's Day event.

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Rondeau's holds Valentine's Day Smash event

By PETE FONTAINE

There has never – ever – been room for negativity in Christina Rondeau's two-time world champion kick-boxing and famous fitness director.

That fact surfaced once again during the unique Valentine's Smash held last week inside Rondeau's well-stocked and designed studio located at 1408 Atwood Avenue in Johnston.

Some 20 people who belong to Rondeau's Kick-Boxing-Fitness Center received free invitations to come and have fun while pounding out what has been a negative situation in their respective daily lives.

"This is all about moving forward and getting rid of negativity," Rondeau offered. "Whether it is a bad diet, bad relationship or bad habits, we SMASH that and move forward!"

So, Rondeau invited members to bring along pictures of something negative that they were trying to overcome and thus, those items and/or photos were attached to heavy bags and the day's participants laced up their boxing gloves and smashed away at those different pictures or items.

"There was a variety of pictures on the bags," Rondeau related. "Some had pictures of those had to pass up after dinner snacks, some had pictures of their ex-boyfriends while others brought pictures of alcoholic drinks that are filled with sugar. Each person taped the pictures to bags and when the bell rang they started the round then they all smashes their way through it."

Then, at the end of a three-minute round, as Rondeau said with a smile on her face: "There was little left of each picture members brought in and each member had looks of satisfaction and

content on their faces. This was without a doubt a great and positive Valentine's Day celebration for everyone!"

When asked what's next on her always-active schedule, Rondeau – who is well-known for her extraordinary efforts of giving back to the community and helping people/and or non-profits – replied: "We will have Fight Night here on March 18 and a portion of the proceeds will go to helping find a final home for rescued senior dogs."

Pre-sale tickets will be \$15 each and \$20 on fight night and the unique contact-less event will benefit an important animal rescue that will be coming to Northern Rhode Island.

Rondeau announced that Suzanne Pellegrino of North Providence, who owns and operates Angelique N' M Salon, is in the process of opening the Cross Animal Rescue of Rhode Island and that CRKB Cooperation is hoping to help jump start her opening via Fight Night.

"There will be several contact-less matchups that night," said CRKB spokeswomen Becky Rhodes. "Winners will be determined by the total points accumulated throughout three rounds on the heavy bags and will be based on speed endurance and power."

Rhodes also explained that divisions will be created based on age and a trophy will be awarded to the winner of each division and the individual with the best score overall will be crowned the Grand Champion and awarded a pro-like Championship Belt.

Rondeau also announced that people can donate to Pellegrino's cause and she can be reached at (401) 935-9200. For more information or tickets, please call CRKB at (401) 996-4225.

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HEART HELPERS: JHS students who enjoyed friendly games of volleyball to help raise money for the American Heart Association are, in front from left: James Guilmete, Talia LaFlamme and Josh Philbirck. Top: Jaylen Molina, Emily Klein, Aymoide Olagundoye, Jacob Muller and Rachel Ixcotoyac.

NET NICHE: Armed with her usual special smile and badminton racquet JHS Homecoming Queen Glorianna Crichlow (right) and Nathan Zalisk, Aliyah Hunt and Nick Villani take a break during last week's annual JHS Hoops for Heart.



Hoops

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Scott Leonard and Acciaro planned the day's non-stop games as Russo pointed out, "to keep the kids excited and active for nearly three hours."

"The event is a unique way to bring together members of the student body to participate in a number of fun games," Russo noted. "There was, however, one special requirement; in order to participate, each boy and girls had to raise a minimum of \$20 each that when

the day finished brought in over \$1,200."

As Russo further added: "The purpose of the event is to promote heart-healthy activities and raise money for the American Heart Association at the same time."

Moreover, as Russo – who has a well-deserved reputation for organizing fun-filled and safe events for JHS students throughout the academic years – also noted: "Hoops for Heart is usually scheduled for Valentine's Day but this year it had to take place the following day because Feb. 14 was a snow day and there was no school in Johnston."

"Hats off to SADD President Charlie Curci, Vice President Rachel Ixcotoyac and Secretary Nikki Aucone who organized the day perfectly and a big thank the faculty and staff that donated money for Dress Down Day which was added to the total amount for this year's donation."

As the close of the 2022 edition of Hoops for Heart, Russo concluded saying: "This is another example of what is known here at Johnston High school as Panther Pride. Thank you to all that participated in this great, great day."

Senior

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many years of experience from the youth to high school varsity levels and exceed an impressive pre-match ceremony honoring senior grapplers with their parents and/or girlfriends.

It was a night that former JHS wrestling coaches like the late Chet Welch and Jim Brumbaugh hosted many years ago when the Panthers enjoyed many special successes and last week was revisited during a picture-flower presentation and applause for all eight Panther senior matmen.

"I have really enjoyed the way the team has wrestled this season," Antonucci offered before Johnston beat back challenges from Pilgrim High of Warwick and East Greenwich and extended their unbeaten seasonal slate to 11-0. "They has really stepped up to another level this season."

As Antonucci said with excitement ringing in his voice: "Let's make that three levels; I have received compliments from school officials about how well the team is wrestling and even about their sportsmanship. I am extremely proud of their effort and desire to compete, both on and off the mat and in the classroom."

By the season's end, some Panthers will land post-season All-Division honors and as Antonucci pointed out "We have many wrestlers that are eligible for Academic All-State. This is a really impressive achieve-

ment, handling school work, sports, working and COVID challenges. We have asked a lot of these young men and they all have delivered – big time!"

Captain Jared Trottier (138 pounds) won both last week and is now 7-0. Likewise, Captain Antonio Bracey (170) won his two matches and is 7-2.

Jose Gonzalez (160) won 1-1 that night and is 5-3 on the season while Captain Thomas Xavier (126) was 1-1 and is a sparkling 9-1 overall. Jian Carlos Lastor Rojas (138) did not wrestle but remains unbeaten.

Felix Guilloty (182) was 2-0 that night and is 8-1 to date while Carlos Monteiro (132) split that night and racked up is 10th win in 11 matches. At 145, Nicholas Harrington was 2-0 and boosted his record to 9-2.

As a team, Johnston defeated East Greenwich 60-24 and Pilgrim 48-28.

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